



LIFE AT CAMP TECUMSEH AROUND 1970

This paper will hopefully describe life at Camp Tecumseh back around the year 1970. I first went to Tecumseh in 1968 as a Junior III. This paper will discuss a lot of “Tecumseh life” back in my days as a camper. Hopefully Tecumseh people younger than me will enjoy some of the stories in this paper and see how Tecumseh has evolved since those days.

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THE LEGENDARY GEORGE MUNGER

To start to talk about life at Camp Tecumseh around 1970, you must first talk about Camp Director George Munger. He was a phenomenal athlete in his day and went on to become a very successful football coach at the University of Pennsylvania from 1938-1953. George became Director at Tecumseh in 1952 and continued in that position through 1976.

When I first arrived at camp in 1968, George Munger was in his 17th year as Director. George was one of the greatest people that I ever met and he definitely helped shape my life in so many ways. Times were MUCH different back then and George ran the camp with the philosophy that there were to be very few rules, but those rules were never to be broken. Often times, if a camper did something really bad, it was assumed that the counselors, or seniors, would step in and let that camper know he did something wrong. This philosophy would never be accepted today, it is a much different world, but back then, the older counselors made sure to take care of any situation that needed discipline.

George had a lot of trouble remembering names so when he was talking with a camper or a counselor and that person's name escaped him, he'd joyfully say "Hi, hi Squire, how are you?" He would on occasion put his arm around a camper and try to read the name tag sewn into the back of the camper's shirt to try and recall his name. Back then, campers usually sewed small tag tags into their clothing to identify who owned that article of clothing. This proved to be very effective for George on many occasion, but one time he tried on a camper who was wearing someone else's shirt and George called that camper by the wrong name.

Sometime around 1971 or so, Tecumseh added the category of "Rookies" to the age groups of campers. The Rookies were the youngest in camp, younger than the Junior IIIs. One time during announcements, George mistakenly referred to the "Rookies" as the Junior IVs. Another classic Munger mistake at announcements was when he said that the Junior III Blue-Gray Capture The Flag game would be played on Franklin Field, instead of the "Capture The Flag Field." Franklin Field was the name of the University of Pennsylvania's football field where he coached from 1938-1953. Today, that field at Tecumseh is known as "Fraser Field" in honor of another great legend from those times, Jim Fraser.

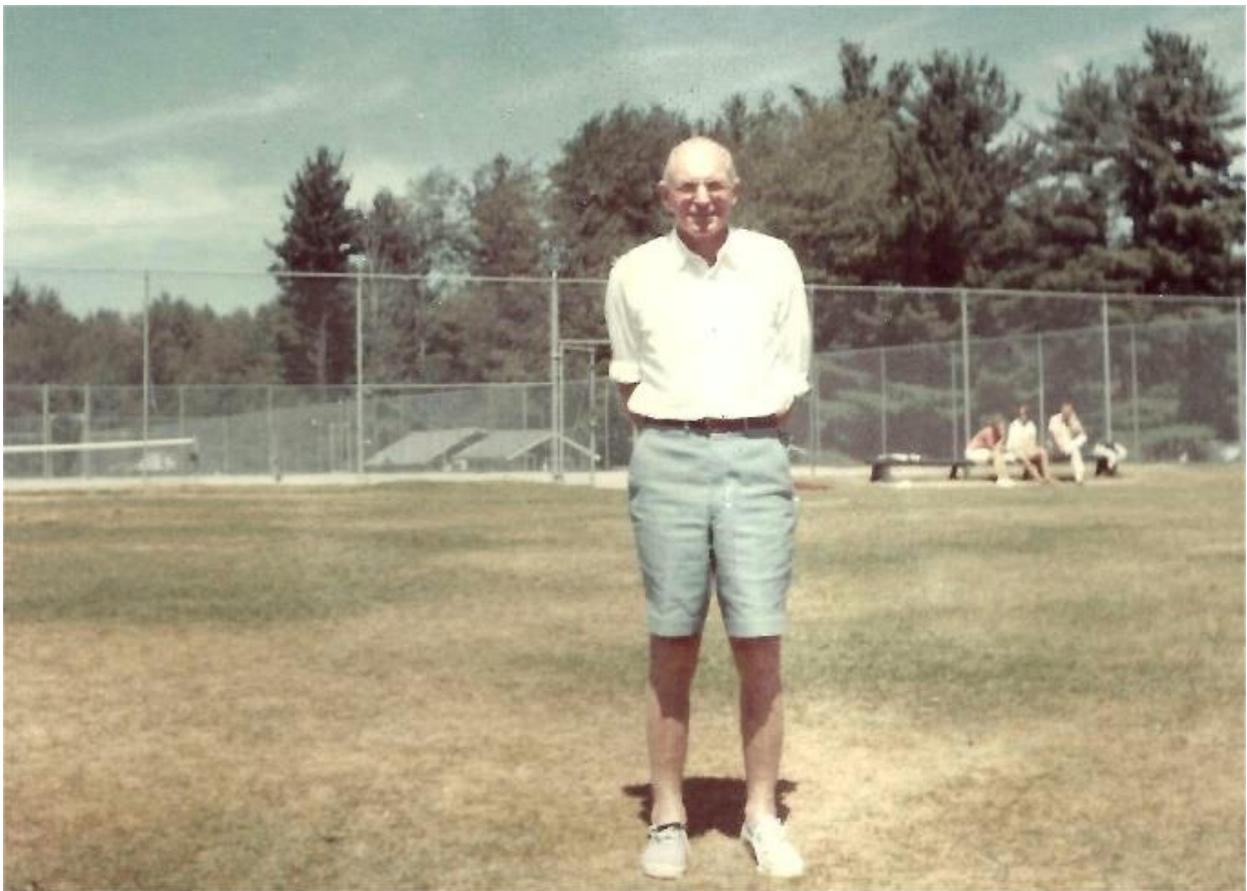
George always had some great words of wisdom that were not only humorous but meaningful. Several times during post meal announcements, he said "Now campers, PLEASE don't hurt the counselors." He often ended his post-lunch announcements by excitedly saying "Happppppppy Rest Hour" and all the campers would enthusiastically sprint out of the Dining Hall. Some of his other famous quotes were "We have clean dirt here at Camp Tecumseh" and "It never rains at Camp Tecumseh."

George stepped down from the Director position at the end of the 1976 season. Camp had never been in better shape and he left camp in the best possible shape for the next director. George continued coming back ever summer until about 1993 but made sure to let everyone

know that Don McBride was in charge. George would spend much of his retirement years at camp on the horses, who he greatly loved.

I have known many, many people through Tecumseh, but there was never a better person, or a better role model, than George Munger. He shaped so many people's lives and there were so many campers who wanted so much to return to camp as counselors.

Munger died from heart failure in July 1994 at age 84. At the time of Munger's death, NFL Hall Of Famer Chuck Bednarik told *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, "[Munger] taught me a secret – the secret of how to approach life. He was a jovial man who would always laugh and act young. When I saw him a few years ago, it was like he had never changed, like he was in his '40s."



George Munger, 1969

THE ATHLETIC FACILITIES AT TECUMSEH AROUND 1970

Before Munger arrived at Tecumseh in 1952, Camp was not nearly the athletic camp that it is today. Being a Hall of Fame football coach at Penn and a former football star, George began to build up Tecumseh's sports programs, but did not have anywhere near the budget for sports equipment as they would in later years.

Basketball was not a big sport in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There was one basketball court, at the same location as one of the courts today, but it was simply a dirt surface with no lines painted on it. I don't remember there being any out of bounds lines or any foul lines anywhere. If it had not rained in many days, the movement of the players in the game would kick up the dirt and make it difficult to breathe. If it had recently rained, it was very tough to play because of the puddles on the court. Fortunately, around 1973, camp upgraded the basketball court by paving it and painting in basketball lines. In the late 1970s, Dan Dougherty built the basketball program into one of the most popular programs at camp. Over time, they created the Senior Basketball League and the Junior Basketball League. In the 1980s, a second court was added and lights were installed for both courts.

Track and Field was always very popular at Tecumseh and track meets regularly took place on Grant Field. The high jump pit back then was located behind the soccer field on Grant Field, not far from Moultonborough Neck Road. Today camp invests in really nice high jump mats to protect the jumpers. Back in those days, Tecumseh simply stuffed a large amount of used Styrofoam into a giant net and used it to break the jumper's fall. The smell of the Styrofoam was awful, especially after it rained. High jumpers had to hold their breath just before landing in the high jump pit to avoid gagging. The high jump bars also were not very good; they usually had severe bends in them so if you jumped right, you were able to go over the part of the bar which was dangling several inches lower than the rest of the bar.

Just below the basketball court was a long jump pit. as well as a shot put ring. Both of those had been in place for many decades and remained there until Tecumseh installed the second basketball court in the early 1980s. Tecumseh later added a pole vault area down there, but this proved to be quite dangerous so pole vaulting did not last very long. A very nice high jump pit was added and placed at the edge of the second basketball court in the 1980s. The new high jump pit was very nice and campers enjoyed playing on it when it was not used for track.

Grant Field was used for soccer games and football games. Tecumseh spent next to no money on soccer equipment since it would not become a big sport until the mid 1970s. The main field was gigantic, but the ground was very uneven and there were several rocks poking out of the ground for players to slide on. Remember that Grant Field had been a giant farm area used for growing vegetables before Munger took over as Director.

The soccer goal at the far end of the field was several feet narrower and about a foot shorter than a regulation goal. The goal was just a few very thick wooden poles nailed together and slammed into the ground. That goal could not be moved anywhere. The goal at the near end of

Grant Field was regulation size and noticeably bigger than the goal at the opposite end of the field. It was made of very thin metal piping, all melded together. The goal could be picked up and moved, but could not be placed anywhere else for soccer since it had to slide into the two holes dug into the ground on the goal line. The worst part of this goal was that there was a diagonal support bar about 18 inches in length attached to each of the upper corners of the goal. If someone were to shoot a ball into either upper corner, it was hit the support bar and not go in the net. I remember around 1970 when we had an all camp game against some team from Wolfboro and their coach got livid upon seeing the support bars in each of the upper corners of the goal. Tecumseh began to invest a lot more into soccer equipment in the late 1970s as they sport became one of the most popular at camp.

For the younger soccer players, there was a smaller soccer field going running cross field on the far half of Grant Field. There were two wooden goals, each secured into the ground and not movable. There were also two football uprights on the near half of Grant Field for touch football games. Neither of these goals were movable so people who were running around the track at Grant Field had to be sure to not run inside the lines or risk running into either a soccer goal or a football upright.



Clinic on Grant Field in 1964

Baseball was a very popular sport and the Junior Baseball Diamond was always busy. The bottom five feet of the backstop was made of wood. There was another 20 feet of wire fencing above the wooden part of the backstop. Behind the backstop, on the third base side, was a small wooden storage facility where bats, balls and catcher's equipment was stored. This shed was only about four feet in height and width, but it was fairly long so people referred to it as "The Coffin." Unfortunately, The Coffin did not do a good job of keeping rain off of the equipment being stored so the balls, mitts, catcher's equipment, etc. would get water logged and for the most part, useless. Also on the third base side of the backstop was a wooden scoreboard attached to the wire fencing. The scoreboard was gray with blue letters. There were two nails sticking out for each half inning so that someone could insert wooden "numbers" on it to show how many runs were scored each half inning. The scoreboard was very nice and was likely designed by Lajos "Maestro" Csiszar.

There were many Blue-Gray games in the mid 1970s at the Junior Diamond. One counselor, Ron Kellogg, a U. Penn football player, always had to face toward the Lodge for the post game cheers since he had no idea how to spell "Tecumseh." This lasted almost all summer.

All of the lines on the athletic fields at Tecumseh were lined in white. Counselors would line them a few days before camp started by mixing bags of white lime with water. This created the white lines. Some rock salt was added to kill the grass where the lines were to go. The lines had to be re-drawn a few times a year. Another challenge each year, before camp started was to find the small holes in the ground where various flags would go, such as at the corners of the "Capture The Flag Field," the corners of Grant Field, etc.

THE LESS CONVENTIONAL SPORTS AT TECUMSEH

Today at Tecumseh, most of the sports that are played are those that are also played at the high school and college level, i.e., baseball, tennis, soccer, swimming, basketball, lacrosse, track, etc. Back around 1970, there were a lot of sports at Tecumseh that were a lot more popular then, but less popular now.

One such sport was canoe and row boat racing which was very big at Tecumseh from 1903 up into the early 1970s. Each age group would have a two Blue-Gray boating competitions each year and medals were awarded at the end of the summer for the best boaters. There would be competitions in row boat singles, row boat doubles, canoe singles and canoe doubles. Some races were short distant sprints while others were much longer, like around the island and back. Also appearing in boating regattas were war canoe races where the blues and the grays would each cram about 10 campers into one canoe and race each other. Interest in row boating and canoeing lessened a lot in the mid 1970s and end of summer medals stopped being awarded. The rowboats were rarely used and the canoes were mainly used for canoe trips.



Canoe race on Tecumseh Day, 1965. A few rowboats are to the far left.

Another “non-traditional” sport was fencing which was led by Lajos “Maestro” Csiszar for many decades. Tecumseh had a fencing strip right behind the Lodge and Maestro would regularly be seen giving fencing lessons. Maestro moved to the USA from Hungary, just after World War II and became the head coach for the University of Pennsylvania’s fencing team. While there, he led Penn to two NCAA National Championships, including the first ever NCAA championship by any team from U. Penn. Maestro was also the head coach for the United States team in the 1956 Olympics, 1970 World Championships and the Pan American Games of 1963 and 1972. He was also an advisor to the US Olympic team in 1972 in Munich. Maestro lived to the age of 93 and kept coming up to Tecumseh until shortly before his death in 1997. The fencing program at Tecumseh disappeared for many years after that, though some loyal Tecumseh alums have run some fencing clinics on occasion.



The Fencing Strip in 1970. Maestro Csiszar is on the far right

Horseback riding was also quite popular at Tecumseh up through the 1970s. Today, in front of the Farm House is Stanley Field, used for lacrosse. That area was used as a horse riding ring up through the 1980s. Tecumseh would always have a large stable of horses and hire a horse counselor to care for the horses and run the horseback program. Beginners were able to learn to ride inside of the horse ring while expert riders could wonder through camp on horses. This always led to the problem of the horses pooping on camp property whenever the urge hit so there would be frequently be large piles of green horse manure on the ground. Unsuspecting campers and campers would occasionally walk through the manure. Given that it was much more common to walk barefoot back in those days, it made for some very unpleasant messes.



The horses, located in front of the Farm House and next to the Barn

The field immediately in front of the Barn used to be a giant corn field. Tecumseh had been an eight week camp up through 1969 so Tecumseh was able to grow a large amount of corn and serve it at dinner every night during the last two weeks of camp. Younger campers were encouraged to go up to the corn area at Swim Horn, pick ripened corn, shuck it and gather it in baskets for the cooks to prepare at dinner.

This occurred almost every night during the last two weeks of camp. Campers who regularly helped pick the corn were awarded with a corn picking patch on Awards Day at the end of the summer. Tecumseh did away with growing corn around 1970 when camp was shortened to seven weeks. With camp ending a week earlier, it became too tough to be able to pick the corn and serve it before camp ended. Also, too many new state regulations were added, making the growing of corn difficult. That area of the camp grounds is currently not being used.

A similar activity that was discontinued around 1970 was to have the Junior IIIs climb a particular mountain (I forget which one) and on the way down, collect blueberries. The campers would spend a lot of time collecting blueberries and take them back to the cooks so that the entire camp would have awesome blueberry muffins at breakfast the next day. I don't know why this was discontinued, but I am again guessing on stricter laws regarding food preparation.

Waterskiing has been a popular sport for many decades at Tecumseh and still is today. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, Tecumseh had a very impressive ski jump that skiers would attempt to go over. The ski jump extended about six feet above the water. Whenever a camper was able to successfully go over the jump three straight times, he would win the coveted Tecumseh ski patch on Awards Day. Special ski jump skis had to be used for ski jumping.



The ski jump around 1970

A few expert skiers would attempt to go over the ski jump at ridiculous speeds. There is a great photo of Hugh Coxe wiping out at super high speeds just after going over the jump. This picture can be found on the Tecumseh Alumni web page in the 1979 section. When skiers were not going out, campers and counselors would sometime swim out to the ski jump to catch a tan (sometimes referred to as an "ABT") and sleep. The ski jump eventually was removed in the early 1980s for insurance reasons since it was a rather dangerous thing to try.

Sometime around 1976, Tecumseh put in a baseball batting cage just to the side of the Trunk Room. Before it was installed, the home plate, backstop and pitcher's mound were still there, but they were instead used for a fun game called "Zap Ball." The game was played by two teams of about three players each. One team would pitch to the other team and the batter would try to hit the ball which was really a tennis ball. If the ball went into the tennis courts, it was a home run, if it went over the Lodge roof, it was a double, if the ball rolled to the tennis court fences or was not cleanly fielded by the fielding team, it was a single, but if the ball was caught cleanly by a fielder, it was an out. Younger players would sometimes use tennis racquets instead of bats. This was always a very fun game during free time or after dinner. Another fun, informal game was Roof Ball, played by two people on the side of the Lodge facing the tennis courts. One player would stand just outside of the Lodge porch, the other player would be about five yards behind him and would throw a tennis ball up on the roof of the Lodge. The first player would have to figure out where the ball was by listening for it as it rolled back down the roof of the Lodge. That player would try to catch the ball before it hit the ground. If the outfielder caught the ball, the two players would switch places. If the batter threw the ball over the roof of the Lodge, the batter was out and the two players would switch places.

Another "non-conventional" sport at Tecumseh, which actually took place inside the Dining Hall, was called "Slide." This game had been played for years, but Maestro Csiszar took the game to another level. Two players were seated at opposite ends of a dining hall table. Maestro made a hollow metal ring which was shaped like a hollow hockey puck. He also made two wooden "L" shaped measuring sticks to help keep score.

The objective of the game was to slide the disk across the table and have it lean on the far edge of the table, without sliding off the table. If a player was able to get the disk to lean over the table, he would get five points. If the player's slide came close to the edge of the table, the other person would use his measuring stick to see if the disk was within a certain distance of the edge of the table. The shorter edge of the measuring stick would earn the player three points, the longer edge would earn the player one point. If Maestro's opponent got at least one point on a slide, Maestro would slam the fingers on one hand onto the table to indicate how many points his opponent got. The game would continue until Mr. Munger rang the bell for announcements. Campers always want to be able to play against Maestro after each meal. Many other people would play this game at a different table using salt or pepper shakers for the disk and use their index fingers for the measuring sticks.

Back in the 1950s, Tom Fraser built a very nice putting green down at the waterfront for golfers. Tom was the father of Tecumseh legend Jim Fraser who was at Tecumseh for about 70 years. The golf green was almost entirely surrounded by a small circular stream which was about two feet below the golf green. There was a small bridge people could use to walk over the stream to get onto the green. Campers could also work on their chipping to get onto the green.



The putting green, down at the Waterfront. built by Tom Fraser

One feature of the putting green back around 1970 was that campers could occasionally find frogs in the water surrounding the putting green. Younger campers would always take delight in catching a frog, playing with it for a while and then releasing it. Campers could also find frogs in the swampy area located between tennis court 5 and tennis court 8. There were huge weeds coming up from the swamp area. Campers would sometime go in there in search of frogs, toads and the occasional snake. I remember one sadistic camper around 1968 or so named Jim Cooke who would take pleasure in torturing the frogs. One time he took a live frog and smashed it against a rock, killing it right away. For his efforts, Jim earned the nickname of "Crusher" for the rest of his years at Tecumseh.

THE BUILDINGS AT TECUMSEH

One thing that has changed very little over the years are the buildings at Tecumseh. Many buildings are upgraded over the winter months, but much effort has been made to keep the main buildings looking the same as always. The Lodge is obviously the main building and has gone through a lot of renovations, but the exterior looks very much the same as it did in the 1970s. The interior looks similar to how it looked in the 1970s, aside from the many new plaques that have since been added. During Maestro Csiszar's time at Tecumseh (early 1950s through early 1990s), Maestro would paint plaques for campers to put on the walls of the Lodge. His art work was tremendous, his painting skills were awesome. About the only drawback to Maestro's work was that he would sometimes misspell a camper's name, or add a year to a camper's plaque which the camper did not attend. After Maestro passed away, the quality of plaques on the Lodge walls went down significantly. A few plaques were downright dreadful (guilty.)

The Trunk Room was also a part of Tecumseh when camp first opened in 1903. It too has had walls redone and the inside floors redone many times, but it still looks quite similar. There was a huge silo behind the Trunk Room but that was removed sometime in the 1940s. Sometime in the 2010 decade, Tecumseh put back an external stairway going from the second floor of the Trunk Room to the ground. While this might seem new to people, there was actually a very similar stairway at that location in the early decades of Tecumseh. One feature that used to be behind the Trunk Room was "The Piddler" which was a small hole in the ground with a mesh covering where boys could go to relieve themselves. This proved to be a very smelly thing and Tecumseh eventually did away with it. Nobody was sorry to see (or smell) it go.

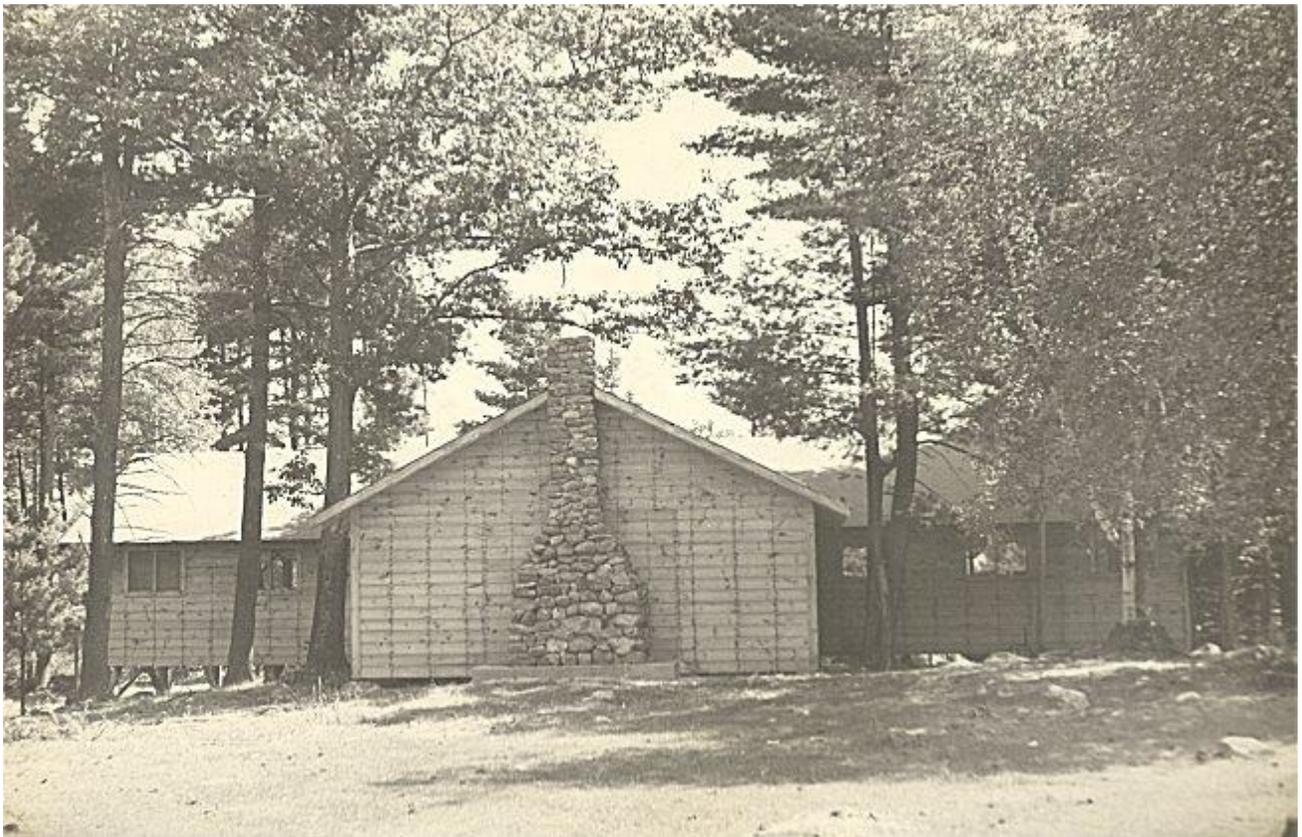
Located behind the Trunk Room for many years was a soccer backboard where soccer players could work on their shooting skills. This backboard could also be used for fun soccer games that campers would invent. Being a long time soccer player, I was often at the backboard, working on my skills. I was saddened when they removed the soccer backboard.

The Dining Hall is still pretty much the same as it was around 1970, except a newer, more efficient roof was added to around 2017. But, the Dining Hall still has the same basic T shape with record boards on the wall, displaying various track records and swim records. For many years, Forrest L. Gager would sit at table one, Pinky Shover and Dave Spooner would sit together at table 4 and Bob Glascott, head of the kitchen, would sit at table 5, so he could get in and out of the kitchen quickly. Camp Director George Munger was always at table 20, right in the middle of the T. The ladies tables were to his right, close to table 1, just under the bell. They would always have a waiter from the kitchen crew get them what they needed for meals. Apparently in those days, having women in the Dining Hall was frowned upon. Similarly, women were not permitted at the Waterfront until sometime in the 1990s.

The newest addition to the Junior Campus was the Mack's Shack in 1968. The seven cabins have remained the same through the late 2010s. Many of the Junior Campus cabins were around in the 1930s and 1940s and remain there today.

Back in the 1970s, there were a couple of "emergency widdows" placed on the Junior Campus. These were designed for campers who could not get to the main widdow in the middle of the night. The problem with these emergency widdows was that they were overrun with assorted scary insects and bugs, as well as some potential extraterrestrial beings from other planets. In short, nobody wanted to use them. One classic story from 1969 came when New Pagoda counselor Kip Lachner had to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. He went outside the cabin, went to the bathroom somewhere just off the walking path, then wiped himself with something that later turned out to be Poison Ivy. This put him in the hospital for several days and made for some great stories in *The Sunbeam*.

The two cabins on the Intermediate Campus were built in 1979, after the Old Intermediate Cabin was destroyed in January, 1979 by a snow storm. The Old Intermediate cabin was built in the mid 1930s and was located quite a bit behind the Crow's Nest. The main problem with the Old Intermediate Cabin was that it was so far away from the kitchen that nobody could hear First Bell for breakfast if it was raining or windy. On several occasions, all of the Intermediate campers and counselors would either miss breakfast or arrive well after breakfast started.



The Old Intermediate Cabin, used from about 1939 until 1978.

The Senior Tents are still in the exact same location as they were in 1970. New tents are bought on occasion and the wooden floors are replaced on occasion as well, but not much has changed there. Back around 1970, there was a small building in front of tents 2 and 3 that seniors could use to get running water, brush their teeth, etc. That building got overrun by bugs and nature and was later removed, but seniors did have a place to brush their teeth nearby.

The showers in front of the Dining Hall were built around 1974. Before then, that space had a small wooden shack known as “The Beam Shack.” This was the building where *The Sunbeam* newspaper would be written and produced every Sunday. In the mid 1970s, Garey Cooper was in charge of the Sunbeam. He basically delegated all the work for *The Sunbeam* to other people, then took a nap every Sunday morning, until lunchtime. When the showers were built in 1974, the building next to it, just up the hill from it became the new Sunbeam Shack. I cannot remember what purpose that building served before then, other than possibly as a dark house for printing photos.



The original Sunbeam Shack in 1955. Today, the showers reside at this location.

The infirmary has grown and expanded over the years and more people are now on staff to care for the campers and counselors. Pat Glascott, wife of Bob Glascott, ran the Infirmary for many years and was later helped by her daughter Beth. There would also be someone at camp labeled as the camp doctor, which was often a joke. For several years, “Doc” Johnson was the camp doctor. If he was really a doctor, then I was really an Olympic track star.

Sometime in the early 1980s, Glascott Hall was built, located just behind the infirmary. Glascott Hall had a television, telephone, pool table and chairs for counselors to relax. Naturally, campers were forbidden in that building.

Sometime around 1975, Tecumseh built a new dock and changed the swimming area from the right side of the dock to the left side of the dock. This was much appreciated as the right side was a lot closer to the trees so the sand was always covered with mucky leaves and pine needles. Moving the swimming area over to the other side of the dock enabled people in the water to stand on sand instead of soggy leaves.



The dock in 1966 with the Outer Float and Ski Jump in the background.

One big change that was made back in the 2000s was the elimination of cabin cookouts on Sunday nights. For many years, each cabin would be given several bags of items to take back to their cabin for a cookout. The main course would alternate between hamburgers and hot dogs. Potato chips were included, as were several cartons of milk and plastic cups to drink out of. It was very important for each cabin to adequately put out the fire at the end of each cookout and throw all trash away. Sometimes this was not done properly and the cabin would hear raccoons and other wild animals scouring through the remains of trash left behind. Each cabin also had a large aluminum fire extinguisher, known as an “Indian Pump,” which contained a lot of water and had a nozzle to spray at fires. These Indian Pumps had to be filled at all times and the people doing cabin inspection each day would check to make sure they were full.

Cabin cookouts were eventually eliminated since it was determined that having fires lit back at the cabins was too much of a safety risk. One of the highlights at the cabin cookouts was telling a first year camper that the cabin needed a “left handed smoke shifter.” A counselor would send some camper over to another cabin to get one. The people at that cabin would then send the camper to a different cabin and the journey went on and on. I did this to Mike Dougherty at the new Intermediate Cabins at the first cookout of 1979 and he wound up at every Junior cabin and the Farmhouse that night. Mike has since been running the basketball program at Tecumseh for several decades, taking over from his father Dan who built the program up. To this day, over 40 years later, Mike is still really mad about this, claiming that he was really hungry that night and never got any dinner.

The Opera House was built in 1960 and is still the same, housing many events, including the annual Gilbert and Sullivan Operetta, several talent nights, wrestling and many other events. In recent years, Mark Luff added a Theatre Program that I have heard is very popular and helps add a lot of diversity to camp life.



The Opera House, when it was first built, in 1960

The Widdow was rebuilt in the mid 1970s. The original one was a small 10 seater, but the new Widdow had four rows of seats and was much bigger. It also had the ability for a door to be locked which would allow the first row to be for women only. This was very helpful during camp socials and on parents’ weekend.

Another small building that disappeared sometime around 1970 was “The Bubbler” which was a very small hut located just down the hill a bit from tennis court # 2. It was simply a tiny wooden hut with a water fountain in it that produced some really cold drinking water. It was located next to a bunch of hedges that ran down the hill, toward the big Oak Tree in front of the Dining Hall. The Bubbler and the hedges all disappeared somewhere around 1970. Tecumseh already had two good water fountains, so The Bubbler was no longer needed. Next to the Bubbler was a large area for laundry to be hung out to dry.



The Bubbler, back around 1939. The Bubbler went away around 1969.

OTHER NOTABLE CHANGES AT TECUMSEH

There were a lot of other differences between Tecumseh today and Tecumseh back around 1970. Below is a list of some of the changes.

AFTER DINNER PRAYER SERVICES

Evening prayer services have been a tradition that has taken place longer than anyone can remember. It was likely started by Alexander Grant, who started camp back in 1903. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, Pinky Shover would run the prayer service every night. Pinky first went up to Tecumseh in 1927 and continued there into he passed away around 1986. Pinky would always have an interesting story to tell each night. His most famous sermon of course was about a man named Dr. Ball who allegedly climbed up Mt. Washington sometime in the 1850s in an attempt to set a new record for climbing up the mountain on a particular trail. When he got to the top, it turned out that nobody officially noted his starting time so he ran down the mountain, turned around and immediately climbed up the mountain again, setting the record. The evening hymns sung back in those days are still sung today at after dinner services.

Pinky was also in charge of the camp store at the front of the Lodge. He would open it up after every meal and allow campers to withdraw money, deposit money or buy basic items such as flashlights, tooth paste or batteries. Pinky kept a little book for each camper with their balance. When a cabin was going over to McCormack's Store after prayers, the campers in that cabin would sprint up the hill to the Lodge after dinner to be first in line to withdraw money from Pinky's Store. Pinky had a plaque above his store window which said "Pinky's Store – Proprietor B.P. Shover 1927." I am proud to say that this plaque is still up there. Pinky also did many of the Sunday Sermon's as well, though many times, a senior staff person would deliver the service. Pinky and his wife Ruth also did a lot of tutoring for campers during the rest of the day.



After Pinky's passing, camp changed the format for evening prayers and a different counselor was assigned to speak every night. The counselor would speak on any subject that he wanted. Some speeches were great, some were really weak and a few managed to get the counselor quoted in the next issue of *The Sunbeam*.



Pinky Shover with his wife Ruth, 1980. To the right is an "Indian Pump," used to put out fires

SMOKING ON CAMPUS

Back in the 1960s and early 1970s, counselors were allowed to smoke on campus, as long as they were in a building, away from campers. This was before research showed how bad tobacco was to people's health, though campers were never allowed to smoke. The tobacco industry was much stronger back then, compared to today. Some counselors would sneak into the Sunbeam Shack to grab a cigarette, thus upsetting and bothering the many non-smokers. One of the main culprits of this was Ed Lawless who was one of the top senior staff members at camp. Also notorious for this bad habit were Paul Luff (brother of Jay and Mark) and Graham Harkins who went on to be a Trustee at Tecumseh for many years in the 1990s. When Don McBride took over as Camp Director in 1977, smoking on campus pretty much disappeared and there was no more smoking anywhere on camp grounds.

MCCORMACK'S STORE

Jo-Jo's Country Store was then owned by the McCormack Family. Dick McCormack followed his dad as head groundskeeper at Tecumseh. He took care of camp grounds and the property during the camp season as well as the off-season. In 1968, when Tecumseh built a new cabin on the Junior Campus, located near the New Pagoda and the Alumni. They named the cabin "Mack's Shack" in honor of Dick McCormack. McCormack's store was different than Jo-Jo's in many ways, most notably for the fact that gas was pumped there. This was in the days before people could pump their own gas so Dick's son, Howard would usually be standing outside the store, waiting for a car to pull up so he could pump the gas for them. The McCormack's lived in the house that was on the opposite side of Moultonboro Neck Road from their store. They would always allow Tecumseh campers to cut across their property to get to the store. Each cabin would go one night a week, after dinner and after the campers in that cabin had time to withdraw money from Pinky's Store.

McCormack's Store had a soda machine right outside of the entrance. This was popular for the seniors to use at night, after the store was closed. While walking back to camp, people would again walk through the McCormack's property. At the edge of the tree line in deep left field of the Senior Baseball Diamond was a huge rock, about four feet in height and eight feet in length. This giant rock was known as "Glass Rock" because people who finished their soda from the store would often smash their empty glass soda bottle on the rock. There was a huge amount of glass there and definitely not a safe place to walk near. Fortunately, that tradition stopped when sodas began being sold in aluminum cans.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MOVIES

Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Tecumseh would rent a movie and show it inside the Opera House every Wednesday night. Remember that this was way before VHS tape or DVDs. So, instead, Tecumseh would receive a flat metallic box in the mail which was about 16 inches square and 6 inches high. The box contained several rolls of movie film which would be played through the camp movie projector stationed at the back of the Opera House, in the upper seating area. The projector would regularly jam and we'd have to stop for a few minutes while the projectionist would reset the film in the projector. During that time, the campers would enthusiastically boo the projectionist until the movie started up. Campers always thought it awesome when they could go to McCormack's Store on the same night as the movies so they could drink a soda and have some candy while the movie played.

Tecumseh did somehow manage to bring in a giant TV into the Opera House in mid-July, 1969 and many campers and counselors brought their sleeping bags and pillows one night to watch the first ever time that a person walked on the moon. Neil Armstrong first set on the moon on July 20, 1969 around 11:00 PM so the audience was captivated by this fantastic event from the early part of the evening until well into the morning the next day. One by one, campers wound up falling asleep as the events on the moonwalk played out.

THE LEGENDARY TRIP TRUCKS

Whenever campers needed to go outside of Tecumseh, they would pile into one of two giant blue flatbed trucks. The trucks had removable wooden fence walls to prevent campers from falling out. There were also a lot of blue benches on the perimeter of the back area as well as benches in the middle for campers to sit on. There were no seat belts. One of the trucks had a speaker in the back which was connected to the truck radio. Each truck also had a brown canvas canopy top that could be quickly thrown on top of the truck in the event of rain. One of the fence pieces at the back end of the truck could be easily removed and lowered to become a stairway for the campers to get on and off the truck.

Tecumseh had a rule that everyone in the back of the truck had to be quiet when the truck was going through a town. The rest of the time, the truck was very loud, rowdy and entertaining with many wrestling matches breaking out. Tecumseh also had a rule of making sure nothing was thrown out of the truck so everyone did their best to make sure trash did not go flying out. Unfortunately, sometimes, a camper's shirt, socks or extra shorts would wind up blowing out of the back of the trip truck, never to be seen again.

These trucks were used in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Before then, Tecumseh had a couple of very old green trucks that performed the same tasks. Sometime in the 1990s, Tecumseh had to switch to using buses and cars for insurance purposes. Older Tecumseh alums will surely remember the "Trip Trucks" which would take us to a nearby mountain to climb, or over to Pemi, Robindel or Winaukee for various activities.



1978 Rookie Trip with counselors Peter Abronski and Mike Molloy

TECUMSEH DAY

The last Saturday of the camp season has always been designated as “Tecumseh Day.” Parents had arrived to pick up their boys and enjoy a day at camp. The highlight of Tecumseh Day has always been the Gilbert & Sullivan Operetta which debuted in 1930.

During the morning of Tecumseh Day, campers competed in a variety of competitions in swimming, boating and track and field. Ribbons were given to the top four finishers in each event with the first place winner receiving a blue ribbon, the second place finisher receiving a red ribbon, the third place winner receiving a yellow ribbon and the fourth place finisher receiving a white ribbon. This tradition continued into the 1980s before being discontinued.

In order for a large number of campers to receive at least one ribbon, each camper was only allowed to enter a certain amount of events in each sport. As a result, some campers would wait until an event where there were very few people entered and sign up, knowing that they could win a ribbon by finishing fourth in a four person event. The most famous person for this was Tecumseh Legend Lee Allman who started as a rookie in 1973 and has continued on at Tecumseh as a Senior Trustee through 2022. Lee was a collegiate wrestler at Penn and an excellent long distance runner, but he was considered one of the weakest swimmers ever at camp. Because of this, Lee would only enter swimming events on Tecumseh Day when he was one of at most four people entered. Over the years, Lee accumulated a tremendous collection of white ribbons in swimming events.





CABIN RAIDING

One thing that was quite popular in the 1960s and early 1970s was inter-cabin raiding where one cabin would sneak into another cabin late at night and tip over all the beds in the cabin, with the campers still in them, while they were sleeping. While this seemed fun, it always got way out of control, beds got broken, personal property got broken and campers occasionally got hurt. Sometime around 1970, the Intermediates sneaked onto senior campus while they were away and flipped every bed. The seniors decided to plot revenge the next day at lunch. The intermediates were aware of this and took off from lunch before the meal was over. Some of the Intermediates hid out on the Islands that night to avoid the wrath of the seniors.

On another occasion, around 1972, the Intermediates did something to upset the Seniors so the Seniors came back the next night and threw the Intermediates' beds through the screen windows and out of the cabin. Naturally, Mr. Munger came down hard on everyone and all involved were put on work detail.

The problem with all of this was that the beds were made of very light metal with light metal springs to support the mattress and the camper. The beds did not weigh much so they were easy to flip. Tecumseh changed all of that in the mid 1970s by making all of the beds out of wood and designed in a way that they were extremely difficult to flip. Cabins were no longer able to go into another cabin and start flipping beds.

The new beds were all double bunk beds and used for the campers. Counselors still had the old medal beds with the light medal springs for support. One of the funnier events of 1974 took place in the Crow's Nest cabin where Garey Cooper was a counselor. Coop was a VERY heavy sleeper and managed to aggravate counselors on a regular basis. Several counselors decided that they would take turns that summer sneaking into the Crow's Nest each night and flip Coop's bed over, while he was asleep. It took Garey a long time to wake up each night, so the counselor had plenty of time to sneak way. This went on night after night for a long time and Garey never found out who the counselors were that took turns dumping him (note to Garey: Tom Armstrong and Paul Luff, among others).



Beds in The Rock cabin in the 1960s

WHO COULD EVER FORGET ALFRED CURRY?

It would not be complete to talk about camp back around 1970 without mentioning Alfred Curry. Alfred was a long time cook at Tecumseh, working in the kitchen from the late 1940s until about 1978. Alfred was a very hard working man who always wore a giant cross around his neck. Alfred was totally deaf and had a lot of very interesting ideas about life. He also had many very interesting things to say about himself. He would often stop a camper or counselor walking by and begin talking with that person, even though most people could not understand most of what Alfred said.

One of his more famous claims was that he owned the state of “Georgialina” as well as Camp Robindel. He also claimed to own his own Lear Jet. Whenever he saw Sam Griffin, who was a very big boy, Alfred would look at Sam and say “Fat Boy look like Old Women.” If a camper came into the kitchen, looking for seconds on some food when there was no more of that food available, Alfred would waive the boy away and say, “Get outta here boy, there ain’t no mo’.”

But, Alfred’s signature line, and the one that made him most famous, was “Feel Like Money.” Many campers and counselors who would see him around camp would greet Alfred by saying, “Hey Alfred, feel like money.” If Alfred did not like one of the campers who worked in the kitchen (then known as the K.C.A.C. or “Kitchen Crew, Athletic Club”), he would torment them. He even locked a few campers in the walk-in freezer for a few minutes if he was mad at him.

Working alongside of Alfred in the kitchen was Percy Stewart who was the main cook and also a master chef. Percy never had anything to say to most campers or counselors, but he was a tremendous cook and everyone appreciated his work. Similar to Alfred, Percy was at Tecumseh for many dozens of years, through the late 1970s.



Jim Fraser, Alfred Curry, Percy Stewart and Bob Glascott in 1968