

Tecumseh In The 1950's

From Dave McMullin, 1950 - When Alexander Grant died in September, 1946, his will left camp to a Board of Trustees, chaired by Henderson Supplee. Forrest Gager, Bertram Shover, and Alvin Wagner were left running the actual camp operations. These were three very dedicated and loyal Tecumseh counselors and assistant directors who had basically been running the day-to-day camp operations in Dr. Grant's latter years as his health began to decline. The three men were private school teachers in Detroit, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Each had his particular area of responsibility at camp: Forrest Gager was in charge of the accounting and finances and maintenance, Pinky Shover ran the Junior A campus (the Rock), the tutoring, and nightly prayers, and Al Wagner ran the kitchen and food operations (keep in mind that a lot of what we ate was grown right on camp at the farm). In their respective areas, they did a terrific job.

Two areas for improvement began to become increasingly clear: recruiting campers and central leadership. Henderson Supplee, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, recognized these needs and was successful in recruiting George Munger from Camp Susquehanna. George's presence was felt right away with his bringing a number of his outstanding players from his Penn football team up as counselors. Reds Bagnell, Howie Jackson, Jim Manley, and Buck Rogers were several of his football players. Howie Delmar, Maestro Csiszar, Eddie Lawless, and Al Molloy were some of the terrific coaches that George brought to camp. Not all of the changes that George introduced lasted. Blue-Gray competition was temporarily dropped in favor of camp teams such as the Tigers. In 1953, a Mask & Wig variety show replaced Gilbert and Sullivan. George brought, in addition to his horses, a new momentum to camp. He never broke up a fight between two campers. He would step in between the two boys and keep them separated, until someone could bring a set of boxing gloves for each boy. Once the gloves were securely on, George would then referee the fight himself, until he felt it was time to end it. George had that special knack for getting to know the campers and counselors very quickly and to be respected by all.

One slight blip in that knack occurred, when he assigned the McMullin brothers to paint the white trim on the Counselors Shack (today known as the Sunbeam Shack). Hunter was assigned to paint the white trim along the edges of the roof, while Dave was to paint the trim around the door and the windows. A can of paint was suspended three quarters of the way up a ladder from the ground to the roof, so that both could use the same can of paint. As Hunter would remove the excess paint from the paint brush by pressing the brush against the side of the can, inevitably some of the paint would form a very light spray that happened to fall on Dave's head. Dave explained the problem to Hunter and asked him to be more careful. The two brothers had been known to have a slight disagreement or two before (unbeknownst to George). As tempers rose between the two, a crowd of campers collected on the bank between the tennis courts and the Sunbeam Shack. Soon, the full bucket of paint was in Dave's hand, while he stood on the ground, and Hunter was alone on the roof taunting Dave. The ladder had been taken down by Dave to isolate Hunter on the roof. Dave thought he had Hunter cornered at one edge of the roof and threw the full bucket at him. Hunter was always very quick and managed to dodge the paint which hit the shingles with full impact. That paint remained on the Sunbeam Shack's roof for years. Neither Hunter nor Dave has ever been able to explain George's patience in not throwing both of them out of camp. Both agree that they came very close to having an abbreviated summer. Maybe their parents pleaded with George to keep them up there, so they could have a break.

From Buz Buckley, 1950 - Following a track try-out for Pemi Day, a large group of the twelve and thirteen-year-old campers and wannabe athletes were sitting near the high jump pit, listening to Rough Ralph Evans expound on who was going to do what in the upcoming Pemi competition. At some point, Evans shifted gears and made the audacious prediction that one of us someday would become a very fine college athlete. Of course, each of us was certain that Ralph was talking about him. After some pleading by members of the group, Ralph was forthcoming with his prediction which proved stunning because the young lad he mentioned, Dick Schad, was a mediocre athlete in the so-called major sports. Aware of the group's dismay, Ralph explained: Dick had a very low resting pulse rate and he was a voracious worker and thus had the makings of a great distance runner as he matured. Dick Schad went on to establish many cross country and other long distance IC4A records while a student at Dartmouth and continued top level racing for a number of years after graduation. Hats off to Rough Ralph. He always knew whereof he spoke!

From Buz Buckley, 1950 - One day, I was asked to substitute as a waiter for lunch. This was my first such assignment, and I was a bit nervous about the whole thing. Instructed to arrive well before lunch, I was given my assignment which was to wait on the table furthest from the kitchen and facing the junior baseball field. The counselors at my table were well aware that this was my first go. Everything went quite well throughout lunch. My final task simply was to take my large round tray to the table to clear the plates, glasses, and pitchers of water and milk. In those days, the dishes were built heavy duty and resilient to the typical banging of a camp kitchen. Unbeknownst to me, as I held the tray at the end of the table, the head counselor loaded the tray with the dozen dishes and water glasses and a couple of partially filled pitchers and put the heaviest of these at the far end of the tray, away from my body. When I hoisted the tray, I quickly noted its weight and propped my end under my belt for cantilevered support and struck out for the kitchen. Barely half way there, all the weight had shifted forward, and I attempted to shuffle even faster. At that point, the tray slipped from beneath my belt and over she went. The crash of the breaking china was like nothing I had ever heard, that is, until the eruption of cheers from the assembled. I had made it as far as Mr. Wagner's table or within twenty feet of success. I was not asked to wait again.

From Dave McMullin, 1951 - On one very hot afternoon, Buz Buckley had just completed some job and went down to the lake to clean up. It was not regular swim time, but he received permission to take a soap bath. After undressing in the bath house, he proceeded to walk out on to the dock, completely unaware that a speed boat with several girls from Bald Peak was tied up at the end of the dock. When he finally noticed the boat and the girls, he let out a monstrous howl that was heard all the way across the lake and dove into the water. He had the good sense of humor to laugh and stay in the water, until the girls left. This was not an uncommon experience in those days. (Note: later in life, Buckley became a Trustee at Tecumseh and was Chairman of the Board from 1990 through 2000.)

From Pinky Shover, 1952 - The following is an excerpt from an article written by Pinky Shover in the final issue of the *Sunbeam* in 1977.

For many years, the camp cut its own ice from the lake, brought it to the ice-house in back of the kitchen and stored it there for refrigeration of the old ice-box. Then it was decided to build a new refrigerator for camp food. Before the remodeling took place, many a night Alex Grant would come down to the senior campus around midnight, wake up the boys and counselors and tell us to get the ice-box filled. What a wonderful time we all had with the big cake of ice coming from the ice house down a ramp and then pushed into the ancient refrigerator. When the new one was being built, engineered by Lewis Tabor and Forrest L. Gager, in the main, it was Gager's job to pain the inside of the new "frig" with aluminum paint. He was inside the box day after day for almost a week, when, near the last day, Alfred Curry or someone in the kitchen locked the door and poor Gage was trapped inside, unbeknown to anyone else. When he realized his predicament, he pounded on the door and sides without avail. I'm sure he was jailed for over two hours before Alfred needed something from the box, and not realizing Gager's predicament, freed him.

From 1952 - The following is an excerpt from an article written in the *Sunbeam* in 1972.

Buster McCormack began his first year working for Tecumseh. From 1952 through 1972, Buster was in charge of many significant projects. During his time at camp, Buster built four new cabins, put an addition on to the Dining Room, built a new laundry building, built two new cooks' cabins, a counselors shack and the Farm House apartments (where the chicken coups were located). Probably his biggest undertaking was the building of the Opera House, which opened up in 1960. He also laid numerous pipeline and miles of electrical wires. Buster and his wife also ran McCormack's Store (now Jo-Jo's) for dozens of years. Buster was also the assistant fire chief and assistant forest fire manager. When Buster retired from working for Tecumseh in 1972, his son Dick McCormack took over.

From Bill Lilley and Scott Murphy, 1952 - The summer of 1952, a half a century ago, is memorable for many things to all campers, but most of all, that it was George Munger's first year of his splendid stewardship.

But for a small band of seniors, the year remains memorable for another reason - we were on the "table waiting squad."

Now, this is no small matter. The work was hard, dirty, interminable and - often - scary. You learned no skills and you got no benefits. More about that later.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the table waiting squad is: why would anyone in their right mind do it? And why we did it says worlds about the Camp Tecumseh ethos. We were not tricked into it. This was the very opposite of Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer luring his peers to paint his aunt's fence on the specious grounds that painting was fun. Oh, no. The grounds here were that it was an honor to be chosen to do this admittedly horrible job, day in and day out, for nothing. Indeed, you wanted to be chosen. That was the Camp ethos.

The drill went as follows. Alvin Wagner ran the kitchen - no easy managerial chore given the players - Forrest Gager picked the wait staff; and George Munger assigned the head waiters. Meals were the three punctuation points in camp life - more so than the Blue-Gray morning and afternoon cycles and the evening's assembly. The day's highlight for the campers was when waiters repeatedly dropped the heavy, hideously warped trays, full of heavy dishes and awash with milk or ice tea. Then everyone could cheer and further shame the already fully ashamed camper-waiter.

Waiting on tables ran on a four-point cycle. First: the wait staff had an early meal, tucked away at a rectangular table in the kitchen corner facing the huge ash tree. This was the time for our two head waiters to harass the staff. Our "heads" live on in our nightmares - Jim Manley and Howard Jackson - two gigantic, very rough-and-tumble football protégées of George Munger's. What was terribly hard for us physically was nothing to them, nothing at all; and did they revel in it. Second, the meal period—and this was the endurance race: bringing out the food, carting it away, and fearing the catastrophic dropped tray. Third, the clean up, set up period—swab the tables, mop the floors, and get it ready all over again. And fourth there was Percy, the chef. Percy had two skills: he could cook and he could drink. The former he did every day; the latter he did on the weekends. If Manley and Jackson were scary all the time, Percy was terrifying—if but once a week. Imagine the scene. Our would-be protectors—Manley and Jackson—have departed the scene, the swinging doors from the kitchen fling wide open, and there - brandishing a cleaver—is a very large, very angry African-American gentleman. The race to the two swinging doors was instantaneous. Sam Allen, who once stood up to Percy - perfected his own escape trick of diving headfirst through the side doors and somersaulting down the hill to the safety of the senior campus.

Perhaps that was the skill we learned: the "quick exit." But still - half a century later - we look on it as an honor to be chosen.

From Buz Buckley, 1952 - Ken Keuffel was our Tent Two counselor in 1952. At the time, he was the freshman football coach under George Munger at the University of Pennsylvania and also was working to complete his doctoral dissertation at Penn. Ken had kicked the winning field goal at Franklin Field in 1947 when Princeton upset mighty Penn which then was ranked in the top five in the nation. Ken also was the Ivy League heavyweight boxing champion. He was truly a scholar-athlete, but suffered from one shortcoming. He was forever losing and /or forgetting things. Several of us decided on Mary B night to hide his precious silver gray Lincoln Zephyr which was nearly as long as a football field. It was decided that the perfect hiding place was Shover Hall where Ken had tutored me and several other scholars in the finer points of English. Hiding the car required skill, strength and a lot of luck. First, Shover Hall had to be emptied of tables and chairs. Next, boards had to be found to form a ramp. Finally, the car had to be pushed up the ramp into Shover Hall with the hope that the floor would sustain its weight. It did! The ramp was removed, the doors latched, the deed was done. Ken spent the better part of the following day in search of his vehicle, never dreaming that his chariot was in his "office." When discovered, he was as bamboozled as to how to extricate it as he had been in his day-long search.

From Bill Hamilton, 1953 - The times I remember the best are the Sunday night cookouts at Tent Two in 1951 through 1953, with Walter Buckley, Dave Haslam, Dave McMullin and Bill Pope. Our counselors over the three years were Fred James, Ken Keuffel and Bo Rogers. Randy Stone used to join us on occasion. That memory speaks to comradeship and bonding at CT as some of us remain good friends today.

Another memory I have is of twilight services and the hymns we sang. I think that speaks to the spiritual side of CT and whenever I sing any of the hymns today, I think of CT.

From Peter Stanley, 1954 - Jim Fraser was playing football at Wisconsin while Bob Glascott was playing at Tennessee. Together they cut a wide social swath through the lakes region. They had both returned from a social engagement at the break of dawn, and were up in the Trunk Room changing into their regular counselor garb when they spotted Mr. Gager roaming around the front of the Trunk Room. Thinking unusually quickly for that time of the morning and for the condition they were in, they put on their sweats and sneakers, came bounding out of the Trunk Room, said "good morning" to the Little Red Fox and announced they were off on a morning jog to get in shape for the coming football season. Needless to say, the "morning jog" took them right to the senior campus where they caught a few Z's before the first bell (George Munger always had a rule that all counselors must be at breakfast, clean shaven). Gager was deeply impressed with the energy and zeal of these young athletes, and reported this to Mr. Munger. This was one of Mr. Munger's favorite stories, and he insisted that it be told at the Trustee's dinner at the end of camp.

From Dave McMullin, 1954 - Alfred Curry was a legend during his time at camp. He was Percy's chief assistant, in spite of his being deaf and dumb. There was never a harder worker than Alfred. Of the few words that he could utter, his first question on meeting you was to ask: "How's your mother?", even though we had been up at camp for eight weeks and not seen our mother during that time. I remember the time that Alfred was walking from the tennis courts down the hill to the Dining Room. I noticed that there was a stream of smoke pouring out of the pocket in his pants. I ran down to Alfred and pointed to pocket and the smoke. At about that time, he began to feel the heat and started dancing. He had forgotten that his pipe was still lit, when he put it away in his pocket.

From Buz Buckley, 1954 - One day, the Lodge horn sounded and counselors gathered in front of George Munger to learn that one of the younger campers was missing. A dragnet was formed as the counselors fanned out to double check every cabin and facility on campus. The missing lad was Bobby Schad, a Philadelphia boy and the ten-year-old brother of Dick Schad. No sign of Bobby was found. Reds Bagnell, Bobby's cabin counselor, was told by George to take the camp truck and head down the Neck road. Sure enough, about a mile away was little Bobby carrying his suitcase. The ensuing conversation went like this:

Reds pulled up and said, "Bobby, where are you going?"

Bobby replied evenly, "I'm going home."

Reds: "How are you going to get there?"

Bobby: "I'm going to walk."

From Frank Bartone, 1955 - I had just finished my second year of medical school when I came to camp as the "Doc." I had fenced on the Penn team and I wanted get back in shape and start fencing again. I was surprised at the level and intensity of the athletic activities. I saw many campers with injuries, most seemingly minor, but having had no experience in orthopedics I was a bit taken aback. I remembered that Tom Fraser was the trainer at Episcopal Academy. I asked Mr. Fraser to see these injuries with me. He came very willingly. He and I would examine the lad and then, at Mr. Fraser's suggestion, we would go into the next room, where out of earshot of the patient, he would politely tell me what was to be done. We would then reenter the examining room and Mr. Fraser would announce "the young doctor and I, after long consultation, have decided to treat you in the following manner." We followed this technique for the entire season and had no problems.

On occasion, I would take a patient to see the doctor in town at Mr. Fraser's suggestion. I developed a great liking for "Tom" and had a great respect for him as well, for although he knew that I had little knowledge of athletic injuries, he very carefully let every one know I was the "Doctor." I will never forget this kind gentleman and his courteous behavior toward me, the "young Doctor."

During my duties, I sometimes had to speak with George Munger. While we were talking, a camper would interrupt us asking for a basketball or such. Mr. Munger would interrupt our conversation and give the lad the basketball. At first I thought this was not right but I soon realized that for George, the most important people at Camp were the campers and I soon accepted the facts of life at Camp Tecumseh.

Soon upon arriving, Maestro Csiszar constructed a wooden fencing strip forty feet long and five feet wide. Suddenly, one morning, as the fencing class was assembling, it came to our attention that the fencing strip had disappeared. Maestro and I realized that this was a prank of some sort and we decided to take a "day off." Later that day at lunch, George Munger stated very emphatically that if the said strip did not appear by the following morning he would personally "punch out each of the seniors." Needless to say, the fencing strip reappeared the next morning, as stealthily as it had disappeared.

During my tenure, one of the campers had come in contact with a childhood communicative disease. It became necessary to quarantine this child in the infirmary with me, as his parents were in Europe. The poor lad was not very happy as he soon discovered that I played cards poorly and the only records I had were of classical music. One of my favorites was *New World Symphony* by Dvorak. This piece was not fully appreciated by said quarantined camper.

On Sunday afternoons, the lads were allowed to go to the local store to indulge themselves with a cold drink of pop. I was asked if said "prisoner" might be allowed this privilege. I acquiesced to his request since I had an automobile and told him we would go at a time when all the other campers had departed. The young lad drank down the first cream soda with great alacrity and gusto and was about to indulge himself in a second, when it came to his attention that I was not drinking. He courteously offered to buy me a soda of my choice. I thanked him but refused, whereby he insisted, making the comment that a cold pop "might improve my personality or something."

From Jay Crawford, 1958 - One early afternoon in late June a car full of counselors including Barney Berlinger, Grev Munger and Hewey Black, fresh from the Lawless/Glascott hair stylist specializing in Mohawks, was on its way to Meredith to pick up supplies for camp. It was motorcycle weekend, and on the hill going into town, leather clad macho men surrounded our car. They were riding Harleys revved to the top of the RPMs. Words were exchanged and Barney Berlinger, usually the taciturn member of our group, was the lead antagonist. The exchange reached a point where words were no longer sufficient to convey our full messages so Barney, the driver, pulled the car over to the side of the road. The leathered lads on their spotless roaring bikes, circled us. We were outnumbered by a wide margin.

Barney and Grev were playing football for Penn and Hewey was playing for Yale. They were in great shape and shirtless for all to see. As they stepped out of the car, all of the bikers eyes widened at the look of these huge physical specimens with strips of hair down the middle of their heads. Suddenly, there was another trademark crescendo from the Harley engines and off the bikers sped, leaving us laughing and wondering what would have happened to us if we had decided to wait until after we returned to camp to have our hair cut.

From Jon Greenawalt, 1959 - Barney Berlinger and Jay Crawford caught a two foot snapping turtle in the lake. They brought it up the hill to the kitchen and gave it to Percy Stewart. Percy killed the turtle and made turtle soup for the entire camp.

From Jay Crawford, 1959 - Late one night the *Sunbeam* staff was in final production of the upcoming issue when one of us suggested we make this a special issue by challenging the campers and counselors with all names spelled backwards. The paper was circulated after lunch and, for what seemed to be hours there was almost total silence. Finally, someone broke the code and the place broke into hysteria. And who would ever thought that some of the names would stick?

ETEP YELNATS
YEWEH KCALB
YAJ DROFWARC
YENRAB REGNILREB
VERG REGNUM
RELLIM GIRAF
MAS ATTENNAJ
WEL RELHCSTUM
NHOJ NILLIG

From Frank Heston, random memories from the 1950's and 60's at Tecumseh - I will always have great memories of Maestro Csiszar, former coach of the Hungarian Olympic fencing team, who fled from Communism in the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. He found his way to Camp Tecumseh and coached fencing there for many decades. I spent a lot of time at the fencing platform, just lakeside of the Lodge.

I also have great memories of Tom Fraser, Jim's Dad. He was an institution. I also well remember George Munger's son, Grev, who died so tragically. He was captain of the University of Pennsylvania's Ivy League champion football team in 1959, which was also led by Barney Berlinger and Jon Greenawalt.

I remember leading a hike up Huntington Ravine on Mount Washington. We were hit by an ice storm on the rocks, but had gone too far to go back down. We got to the top and eventually decided that we would have to go down by the cog railway because the storm was just too bad. George Munger was exceptionally upset by the bill we racked up getting down the mountain! Fortunately, nobody was seriously hurt on the mountain (or by George).

(Note: Frank won the prestigious Senior Tecumseh Boy Award in 1960.)



George Munger (at the far right) leading football clinic in 1952. In the center, holding up the boy's legs, is Jim Gibbons. To the right, holding up the boy's legs is Sam Ninness. The boy whose head is in front of the Trunk Room door is Hunter McMullin.



In the Lodge, performing *Patience* in 1950. Back row: John Burall, Pete Jannetta, Peter Benoliel, Doc James, Scott Withrow, Unknown, Unknown. Middle row: Bill Hamilton, Sandy McCurdy, ?, ? Front row: Walter Johnson and Henry Williams.



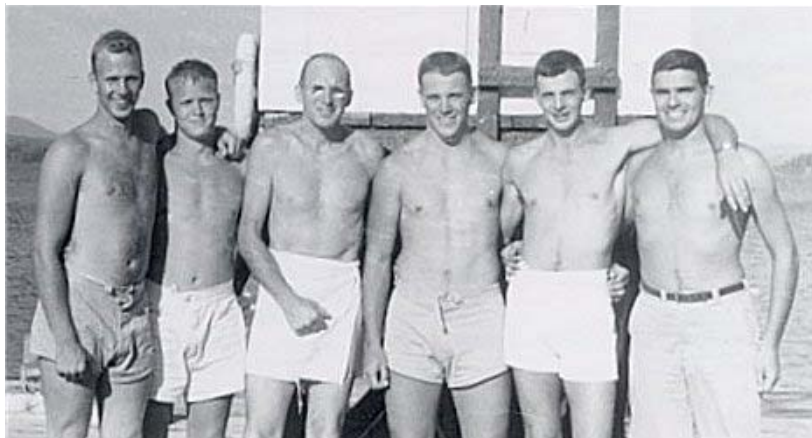
Pete Jannetta and Bob Glascott, 1952.



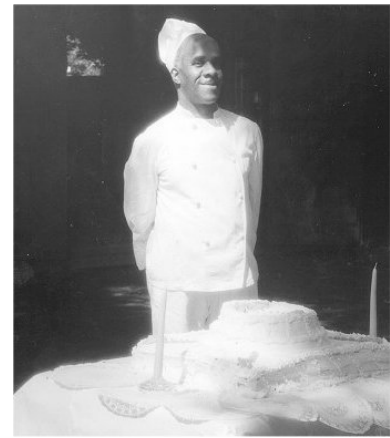
Seniors in 1952: Bill Hamilton, Walter Buckley, Fred James, Dave McMullin, Dave Haslam and Beaver Pope. Hamilton, Buckley and McMullin would all later become Trustees at Tecumseh.



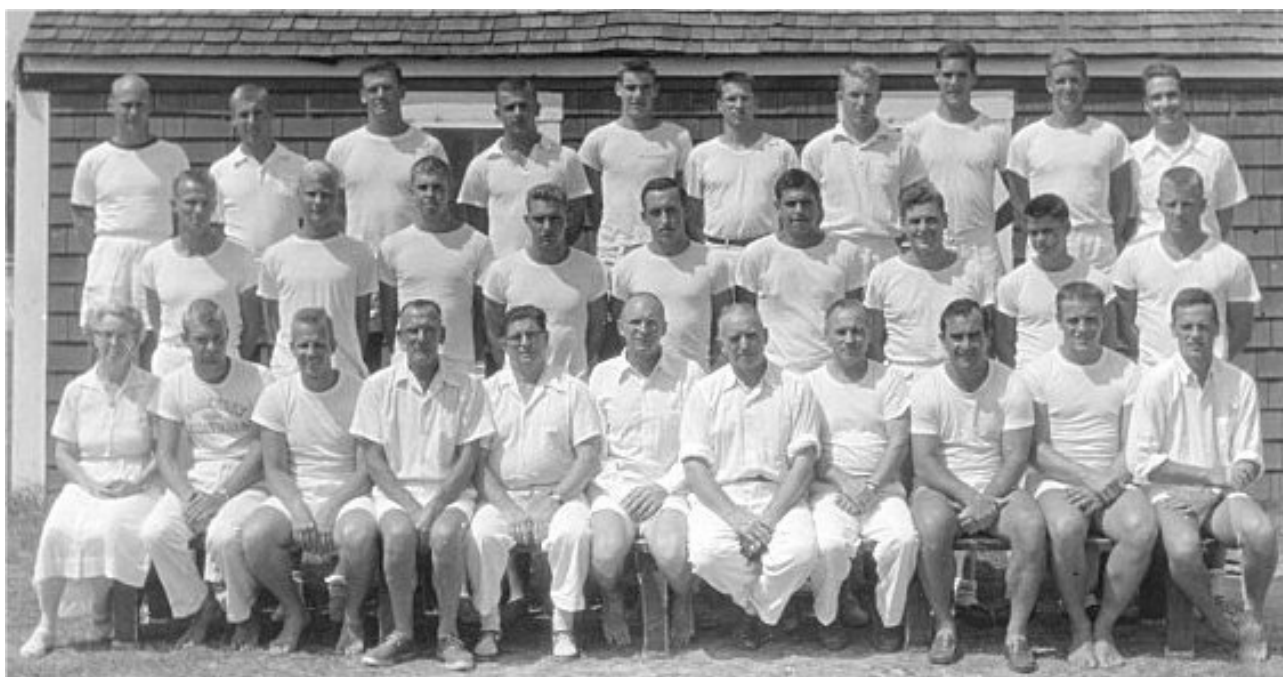
Future Trustee Peter Stanley, 1952.



Fred James, Ken Smith, George Munger (in his first year as Director at Tecumseh), Bob Glascott, John Hubinger and Pete Jannetta in 1952.



Percy Stewart, 1955.



The counsel in 1956. Back row: Carter Hall, Beaver Pope, Jim Fraser, Unknown, David Scott, Unknown, Grev Munger, Sam Niness, Frank Longstreth and Lloyd Tuttle.

Middle row: Ed Flintermann, Pete Glading, Sam Allen, Unknown, Dave McMullin, Jerry Cantini, Unknown, Unknown and Franklin "Buck" Rogers.

Front row: Alice Gottshell, Beetle Fiero, Fred James, Dr. Fred James Sr., Forrest L. Gager, George Munger, Al Wagner, Pinky Shover, Ed Lawless, Bob Glascott and Russ Johnston.



Hugh Black, Kecky Jones, David Scott, Hunter McMullin and Sam Allen in 1955.



Above: George Munger on tractor in 1954.
Below: Munger leading clinic in 1958.





