

Project Wabaningo

[Transcriber's note: A copy of the original manuscript by Charles D. Jenks, printed on a dot matrix printer ca. 1970s, is in the collection of the Evanston History Center at the Charles Gates Dawes House. Some punctuation and spellings have been modified. Illustrations other than the camp map have been added.]

Camp Wabaningo, situated on Duck Lake in Muskegon County, Michigan, served Boy Scouts of Evanston and surrounding areas from 1921 to 1970. Its location was superb with some frontage on Lake Michigan and most of the north side of Duck Lake and Duck Lake Channel. The story of its start, its operation, and its closing are known in parts to many, but in whole to very few. With the help of the people mentioned in the credits I hope to give a picture of how all of this happened.

The impetus for the purchase of the camp came from Doc Kelly (Figure 1) and members of the Evanston Kiwanis Club. Don Boulton and a group of Evanston Scouts had spent some time at Camp Owasippe (Chicago Council Camp near Whitehall) in the World War I era. Here is the discovery of the Camp Wabaningo property in Don's own words: "After five years of hunting for camp grounds, we heard of this site while camping at the Chicago scouts' grounds. So we put our packs on our backs and hiked eleven miles until we stumbled on it by luck." The money raising for the purchase of the camp property came from Scout Executive Dr. Earl D. Kelly, Henry W. Carlisle and members of the Kiwanis Club. Other prominent early Scouters were Charles Gates Dawes, U.S. Vice President under Coolidge (1925-1929) and George S. Dryden. Both of these men were honorary presidents of the council as long as they lived.



Dr. E. D. Kelly

Figure 1



(Ev. Photo)
Mr. Bischel

Figure 2



Figure 3

According to Dwight Bischel (Figure 2), Chief Wabaningo was a chief of the Potawatomi tribe who lived near Whitehall, Michigan. This tribe began cessions of their tribal lands in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin starting in 1807. This process came to an end in 1833 when all lands east of the Mississippi belonged to the "white man." This paved the way for

Michigan's statehood in 1837 and development of the lumber industry. Lumbering was at its peak in Muskegon County in 1887 when Muskegon's mills produced 660 million board feet of lumber and more than 500 million shingles. Charles Mears was not one of the 40 millionaires in the Muskegon area at that time because he made his headquarters in the town of Mears in Oceana County. Most of the Mears holdings were in Mason, Oceana, and northern Muskegon Counties. At one point the town of Whitehall was called Mears. By 1900 only five of the Muskegon mills remained; the last went out of business in 1910. Manufacturing had begun to take the place of lumbering in the Muskegon economy.

The original camp acreage was bought from the Mears Slate and Lumber Company. Carrie Mears, close to age 90, was most reluctant to sell the property until she was assured that all efforts would be made to keep the property green and not destroy trees. This is quite the reverse from Charles's value of lumber! The eastern acreage was sold to the then Grand Valley Council, Grand Rapids, Michigan, to start Camp Shawondossee. This helped to keep her dream alive as well as helping the financial condition of the Wabanigo Boy Scout Camp Corporation.

In promotional literature for fund raising in the fall of 1922 it was referred to as "the camp on Duck Lake," so the camp's first seasons may have been held before it was named. Camp staff for 1921 included Doc Kelly, Bob Townley (Figure 3),¹ Don Boulton, Adie Schumacher, Bill Sherrill, Dudley "Dud" Kelly (Doc's son), Bogs Bozeman, Mall Eiselon, Dan Bateman and Fran Bradley.

Committee during this fall of 1922 campaign were David A. Badenoch, Edwin Balmer, Victor C. Carlson (later the builder of the Library Plaza Hotel and the Carlson building), W.A. Dyche – campaign treasurer (Dyche Stadium later named after him), Paul E. Faust – publicity, Henry Fitts, John R. Guilliams – vice chairman, James Halsted, Dr. E.D. Kelly – Scout Executive, Leo Koretz – council first vice president, William F. Leggett, Frank D. Potter – council treasurer, William M. Sherrill – council president, Stewart Waring – campaign chairman, and Alan F. Wilson. One prominent name missing from this list is Henry W. Carlisle who had been a Scouter since 1910 and was largely responsible for the creation of the Evanston Local Council No. 124 in 1915.²

The first Scouts camped in tents before any permanent buildings were erected. The tinhouse was among the earliest, if not the first, to be erected because this gave a place to store

¹ [JLR] Robert Townley was Scout Executive of the Evanston Council in 1917 while a student at Northwestern University and before he entered military service following the United States' entry in World War I. After his military service and college career were completed, he became physical education director at Sears School in Kenilworth in 1922. He then began a legendary career as Scoutmaster of the three year old Kenilworth Troop 1, retiring as Scoutmaster of renumbered Troop 13 as well as from the school in 1955, shortly before his death in 1956. Townley Field at the school was named in his honor. See Will Hart, *Boy Scouts of America, Kenilworth Troop 13 1919-2004, an 85 Year Legacy* (2004, with supplements).

² [JLR] A 50-year history of the Evanston Council was published in the *Evanston Review* (2/11/1965) at pp. 52-53, along with Don Boulton's reminiscences for that period of time at p. 3.

equipment over the winter. This building was made of corrugated sheet steel, walls and roof, and a metal floor to discourage rodents. It had a small door on the east side, a larger door on the west side, and no windows. According to a series of pictures taken over the years by Don Boulton, it would appear that some of the other “permanent” structures came as follows: ice house (1921, demolished about 1949), boat house (1922), mess hall (1924), headquarters building and museum (1925), the cutter (1926), handicraft lodge (1931), two visitors cabins (1934), trading post and hospital (1937), Cub lodge (1938), Gertrude R. Carlisle Memorial Stage at the council ring (1939), Carlisle Lodge (1939). The last two were given by Henry W. Carlisle. Later additions included a visitors’ Jerry and an addition to Don’s cabin (Figure 4), two more visitors’ cabins to add to the previous five, as well as a storage building, new boathouses and new caretaker’s home.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

The waterfront (see comments by Chuck Champe in later pages) was one of the prime assets of camp. The H-shaped pier (Figure 5) with the addition of a float line separated the swimming area into sinkers, beginners and swimmers. The sinkers later became “non-swimmers.” Row boats were moored to the west side of the pier. With a high dive at the east end (Figure 6) and a diving board at the west end, experienced swimmers had several options for the afternoon “free” swims. The Wabaningo fleet, besides rowboats, included at various times the cutter on loan from the U.S. Navy (Figure 7), a motorboat, kayaks, surf boards, canoes, two snipes and a catboat (Figure 8). All swimming and boating activities were under the buddy system. Each Scout had a buddy tag (red for sinkers, yellow for beginners, and white for swimmers) which was used for all swimming and boating activities. A watch tower contained a bell from an old C. & N.W. steam engine which was used as an “all boats in” signal. The waterfront director’s “buddy whistle” was used to be sure that each Scout was keeping watch over his buddy. Anyone out of range of his buddy was dismissed from the waterfront. With available floating soap and/or Fels Naphtha (the latter to ward off poison ivy) and flood lights at night, the swimming area became a large bathtub after night games when Scouts were roaming the acreage.



Figure 7



Figure 8

After a severe electrical and windstorm one night in the 1960s, the wooden pier was severely damaged and boats were forced from their moorings. Doug Finlayson designed a new metal pier which was fabricated in Muskegon that winter and put in water the next summer. That pier survived to the end of Camp Wabaningo and was later removed, with other equipment, to the Northeast Illinois Council's Camp Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan in Wisconsin.



Figure 9

The selling of Boy Scout candy, products of Curtiss such as Baby Ruth and Butterfinger, helped many a boy to pay his way to camp (Figure 9). Started by Evanston Council Vice-President Otto Schnering in 1936, the candy sale featured boxes of candy containing five bars and two rolls of fruit drops. According to Otto's son, Phil, the company provided 35,000 boxes per year throughout the rest of the depression and the World War II era.³ Originally the candy sold for \$.25 per box, although it went up to \$.30 later. Half the proceeds of each box went to the seller or a member of his troop towards the camp fee. What most boys didn't know is that the other half went to help run the camp because the Schnerings gave the candy outright. The camp fee for years was \$25.00 per period or \$100.00 for the summer. A boy could go on work crew for \$15.00 per period. This means that an ambitious Scout could sell 120 boxes of candy and go to camp on the work crew without paying anything. In later years the cost of both the camp and the candy increased, but the records of this are missing.

The schedule of four periods, each twelve days long with a two-day "stayover" in between, apparently started early. The daily schedule often went like this: reveille, breakfast, details, troop site cleanup and inspection, Scoutcraft, required swim, lunch, rest period, optional activities and boating, optional swim, dinner, boating period, game or activity, tattoo, taps.



Figure 10

³ [JLR] The caption for Figure 9 stated that the 1955 delivery was for 46,420 boxes. *Evanston Review* (4/28/1955), at p. 40.

For many years the camping area (16' x 16' pyramidal tents for the campers, "popcorn" tents for the counselors) were organized in tribes, two tents to a tribe (Figure 10). Scouts mostly stayed in provisional units with the boys from each unit at home combined into tribes (in the early days) or provisional troops of four tents starting at some point after World War II. While there was some variation in this, the author remembers tribes in this order from the parade grounds east towards the rifle range: Cherokee, Seminole, Apache, Crow, Seneca, Oneida, Sioux (pronounced SIGH-OX) and Mohawk. After troop camping was adopted about 1950, these reverted to Troops A, B, C and D with two former tribes constituting a troop. The former Cub camp "upstairs" became Troops E and F, or sometimes Troops F and G.



Figure 11

Cub Scout camping started in the 1930s and lasted through 1941 when it became National policy that there would be no Cub camping on an organized basis. Ed Budil remembers being in the Cub camp the last three years it operated. The first Cub camp was a horseshoe arrangement of pyramidal tents in the area where Carlisle Lodge was later built. The "upstairs camp" was built especially for Cubs with canvas and screen walls under the pyramidal tents (Figure 11). Cubs had their own activities and an earlier Taps. With campers starting as young as nine, it is easy to see how there could be seven or eight year campers awarded the familiar black-on-red triangular camp patch at the closing campfire (Figure 12).



Figure 12

The tradition of a “special event” each period began rather early. For many years there was a 4th of July celebration each first period with fireworks. Camp Shawondossee cooperated with this activity for many years. A haunted house was a period highlight in early days when such were available. Second period was the water carnival (Figure 13), third period was the land carnival (Figure 14), and fourth period was the trial of the crazy king. This latter activity drew some of the older Scouts back to camp one more time – a shrewd move to add campers for one of the “lighter” periods. The king was supposedly from Abyssinia in the early days, but I imagine that this identification changed as good race relations became important.



Figure 13



Figure 14

“Trips out” became an important part of camp, usually at the start of the second week of the period. The canoe trip was for experienced campers and canoeists and generally plied the Muskegon or Whitehall River. The camping and pioneering hike was for those who built their own lean-tos and stayed in them overnight. The 14-mile hike to Pioneer Park, originally a First Class requirement, was for boys working on that rank. The beach party was held on the Lake Michigan property of the camp and these were the only boys to stay in camp that particular night.

Most of the Scouts at Wabaningo came from the Evanston Council, but from 1933 through 1947 there were Scouts attending from the Oak Park Council. Later in 1940 after a merger it became the Thatcher Woods Area Council and, for a couple of years, the Northwest Suburban Area Council. This was when these councils were not able to operate their own camps. After World War II, each opened its own camp so it was then primarily the Scouts of Evanston Council that kept the camp going. The reduction of minimum age for Boy Scouts from twelve to eleven in the 1950s helped by providing more campers.

Transportation to Camp Wabaningo varied. From 1921 to 1933 Scouts took lake steamers across to Muskegon. George Dutton and Phil Schnering remember this arrangement when they were Scouts. Starting in 1934 the Scouts arrived on special Pere Marquette trains, loading at the Polk Street Station in Chicago and running to Lakewood Crossing southeast of Whitehall, Michigan. These chartered trains were also used by the Owaspippe camps (Chicago) and Camp

Echo (Evanston YMCA) until 1944 when wartime regulations no longer permitted the chartering of trains. Since some of the right of way was not double track, the train would often wait on a siding for an oncoming freight or passenger train to move on schedule. Such a delay in hot weather seemed interminable to young boys anxious to get to camp. The train's water and cup supply usually ran out at about this point, also!



Figure 15

Chartered buses were used in 1944 with each 14-day period starting and stopping in the middle of the week – it was impossible to charter buses on the weekends that year. This meant that a group of Scouts would arrive at camp for second period the afternoon of the last day of the first period. The incoming boys would be housed in the “upstairs lodge” that first night with supper and breakfast served from “beach party” tables just south of the lodge. The evening entertainment would be movies shown on an outdoor screen, the incoming campers’ gear and mattresses being on the floor of the lodge, as the closing campfire was going on in the council ring “downstairs” (Figure 15). The entire camp was reorganized into new provisional troops as soon as the buses departed the next morning. This schedule was necessary for only one year; by 1945 buses could be chartered over weekends and the normal 12-day period with “stayovers” was again resumed.

From 1945 on, bus transportation was used exclusively since it also permitted departure from the council headquarters at 614 Davis Street rather than from a Chicago train station. When the council headquarters were built on the old Boltwood School property at 1225 Elmwood, this became the place of departure (Figure 16). The use of buses also freed the camp from dependency on the Owasippe schedule which had been a factor during the Pere Marquette era.

First 63 Scouts Leave for Camp



Evanston Photographic Service
The first group of 63 boy scouts left headquarters Monday morning for Camp Wabanningo in Michigan.

Figure 16

Mail at camp generally came from a summer post office. There was no delivery to camp; it had to be picked up at the post office. Within your author's recollection two such post office were used: Michillanda at Lakeside Inn, Louis Groessel, postmaster, and Wabanningo which was further west along White Lake towards Murray's Inn. The R.F.D. box on Scenic Highway was serviced by Whitehall and operated all year around for the caretaker or other camp use when the summer post offices were not in operation.



Figure 17



Figure 18

Prior to the 4th period of 1943 there were one or two Honor Camper emblems (Figure 17) awarded at each period's closing campfire to those selected by the staff. Sometimes this selection became lengthy and staff meeting, held while the Scouts were preparing for morning inspection, went on and on. This system was replaced by the Order of the Arrow. The Wabaningo Lodge #248 was organized in 1943 with the first tapping out held 4th period (Figure 18). A ritual team from Owasippe came over for the calling out held on the parade grounds. The first Ordeal ceremony was conducted by the Owasippe team at the Arrow ring of the Jibshe Wanagan Lodge #79 of Camp Shawondossee, which had already closed for the season. The Order of the Arrow continued with elections each period at camp and annual Troop elections at home (Figure 19).



Figure 19 - 1956 ritual team

Fire protection at camp was always a concern. Fire buckets were located at the front of each tent and wooden water barrels, painted aluminum, were by most buildings. Before the running water system fire drills were held with human bucket brigades proceeding from the pumps as well as from the waterfront. One of John Snell's recollections is a trash fire which became a minor forest fire and took hours to extinguish. Sometimes the Scouts went out of the area to fight fires. Mae Finlayson recalls when she went with a group of older Scouts to form a bucket brigade from Lake Michigan to fight a fire in a home in the area north of camp property. After World War II a gasoline-driven water pump drawing water from Duck Lake Channel was procured. This served both for fire protection and as a means of wetting down the parade grounds during dry spells. It was also great for water fights!



Figure 20



Figure 21

There were three professional Scouters long associated with Camp Wabaningo during its existence: Dr. Earl Dudley Kelly, a former medical doctor who was the Evanston Scout Executive from 1918 to his retirement in 1944; Donald MacArthur Boulton, Assistant Scout Executive from 1925 until Doc's retirement, the Scout Executive until 1967 (Figure 20); and Henry Sidney "Sid" Pettett, Assistant Scout Executive from 1945 to the end of Evanston Council (Figure 21). Sid continued on in the Evanston-North Shore Area Council until his death just before his retirement. Don had been Activities Director as long as Doc was Executive. Sid took over Don's place as the camp procurer and business manager. It is interesting to note that, for every summer the camp was in operation, at least one of these three professional Scouters served the camp. In fact, two of them were on hand each summer except 1944, 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970. In 1966, Don's last summer before retirement, he and Sid traded positions so that Sid could have the experience of running the activities program. Few saw the handwriting on the wall that the camp would only operate for four more summers. It is most unfortunate that none of these men are still alive to share their memories with us.

During the 30s and 40s other professional Scouters were active at camp: C.M. "Chief" Arnold from Thatcher Woods Area Council as well as his assistants; also Stanley (P.A.) Huntington from the Northwest Suburban Area Council served the camp.

It is impossible to list staff members for most of these years. The present Northeast Illinois Council's records contain none of this. Certainly a few long-time staff members are most deserving of mention. Of course the record for longevity goes to Don Boulton who started at camp as a teenager and finished on the verge of retirement. Your author knows only one other early staff member, Don's brother George (Pete). Doug Finlayson was handicraft director starting in 1937 for thirty years with hardly a missed summer. Doc Kelly (1921-1943) and Sid Pettett (1945-

1970) deserve mention. Sid had been there earlier as a volunteer during the time that he was simultaneously the Scoutmaster of Troops 7 and 21. George “Cap” Elrick served as a volunteer leader for two weeks each summer from the early days until his death. (See appendix for the available camp staff lists and biographies.)



Figure 22 - 1949 Camp Wabaningo Staff

[Seated – Dwight Bischel, Cooks Mr. Michael and Mrs. Katie Tobin, Nurse Mrs. Rudolph Uhnavy, Ed Budil, Ben Squires, Doug Finlayson; Standing – Scout Executive and Camp Director Don Boulton, George “Cap” Elrick, Nat Norton, unknown (in rear), Eugene Lawler, Bill Lang, Charlie Jenks, Bob Boulton, Roy Grundy, Dave Adams, unknown, Richard Uhnavy, Jim Buntain, unknown, Waterfront Director Chuck Champe]

How many campers did the camp serve over the years? It is impossible to answer this. At its peak, half the boys of Scouting age in Evanston were Scouts and half of these went to camp for at least one period. The largest camper enrollment your author can remember from his experience in the mess hall is 212.⁴ First and fourth period were often smaller and sometimes ran less than

⁴ [JLR] Camp Wabaningo had a record 275 campers during period 3 in 1940. *Evanston Review* (8/22/1940), at p. 51. See Figure 23 for the campers on July 20, 1940. Camp director Don

100 campers. In 1944 more than 300 Scouts and leaders were in camp at the same time when the new campers arrived the day before the old campers left.



Figure 23

There are three catastrophes which befell the camp. While these are not the most pleasant to remember, a few details are needed for those whose involvement did not include those years.

The first of these was the polio epidemic which happened in 1946 and caused the camp to be closed early.⁵ One of the Scouts from Oak Park died in camp and several were afflicted. Nurse Foreman was assisted by medical help from Muskegon during this crisis. In all probability the disease was brought from home. Some important changes were made in the sanitation equipment. Chlorination of the camp water supply, flush toilets in Jerry #1, new Jerries #2 and #3, electric refrigeration and an oil-fired hot water heater in the mess hall all came as an attempt to eradicate

Boulton is far right in the last row. No subsequent period through 1970 was reported as having more campers than that.

⁵ [JLR] The polio epidemic caused the camp to close in August 1946 when three Thatcher Woods Scouts contracted the disease, shortly after assurances were made to parents that polio was not a problem although one Scout had just died of it. *Evanston Review* (8/15/1946) at p. 5, 8/22/1946) at pp. 5, 8.

possible causes of this not-too-well understood disease. Another “casualty” was the G.S. Blakeslee dishwasher which had been donated many years before by the Orrington Hotel. Its replacement was a more efficient Hobart.

The second was the 1955 murder of Scout Peter Gorham during a 14-mile hike. The Muskegon County Sheriff kept what appeared to be a personal vendetta against the camp by grilling staff members, many of whom were miles from the scene and couldn’t possibly have had an involvement, and issuing a continuous volley of alarming news releases. Again camp was closed early. It was a relief to all that, when the murderer was finally found, he had no connection with the camp.



Figure 24 - 1970 Camp Wabanningo Patch

The third catastrophe for the camp was the council merger with what was then the North Shore Area Council in 1968. For a time the new council was known as the Evanston-North Shore Area Council. To satisfy the people further north the name was soon changed to Northeast Illinois Council. The taxes charged by the State of Michigan had increased by a phenomenal level. Even the Owasippe camps have sold Camps Steward, Beard and West in recent years. The new council, taking a look at the number of Scouts using each of their two summer camps vs. expenses, decided to sell Camp Wabanningo soon after the 1970 season. It was almost ominous that, at the same time that the tents and pier were taken down for the last time, there was a “horrible tree-infestation going on- billions of leaf-eating larvae.” This was witnessed by Winchell Hayward who happened into the Duck Lake area in 1970. The only bright spots in the sale are that (1) the Shawondossee property, no longer in use because of the merger of the Grand Valley Council in 1974 with the Timber Trails Council, became part of the available acreage; and (2) except for a small section of the south side of Duck Lake which was previously sold, the entire parcel eventually became a Michigan State Park.

Those who visit the area today will no longer find access from Scenic Drive. One must go north and enter via Michillinda Road. Wabanningo Road only exists as a short stub from Nestrom

Road to serve the remaining private property at the east end of Duck Lake (only one private residence these days) to Scenic Drive and find only a few reminders of the camps which once served Scouts of Illinois and Michigan so proudly.

Camp Wabaningo was held in high esteem by many people. Chuck Champe, rifle range director in 1946 and waterfront director 1947-49, states that “Wabaningo had a significant, lasting effect on my life which continues to this day.” Dr. William Fackler recalls “sassafras tea on canoe trips, the wonderful smell of the pine trees, cots made up to bounce a quarter, ground around the tents raked to perfection – these are the fond memories.” U.S. Senator Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) says that “both the Scouts and the Camp were an important and memorable part of my youth.” These are representative of the comments which could be made by almost anyone who experienced Camp Wabaningo as a part of their life.

Much of the impetus for the sale of the camp property to the State of Michigan came from a committee of local citizens, largely in Whitehall. I am trying to get names here from my Whitehall contacts, one of which is the daughter of two of my church choir members.

* * *

Let us become less serious with some anecdotes from Camp. Check the list of credits to see whose initials are appended to many of these stories:

It was customary for everyone to loosen tent ropes when it rained so that the tension on the seams would not make them split. Residents of Gastronomic Gulch, the kitchen crew tent, forgot that one rainy night. Don Johnson was sitting on his bunk giving himself a shot for his asthma when the tent’s seams split in the middle of a cloudburst. The wet, soggy kitchen crew waded over to the hospital to spend the night, much to the consternation of Nurse Margaret Uhnavy. [CJ]

What year did these events take place? Flower, a skunk, was captured and caged . . . Nurse Clara Wollford arrived in her Nash couple . . . concrete drive installed by the mess hall and tinhouse . . . Nat Norton showed up in his new jeep . . . Doris Arnold attracting staff members . . . Johnny O’Connell milking his goat . . . the Pettetts brought Tippy, who ate wheel lugs as Paul Hare was changing a tire, to camp . . . the senior Scout canoe trip to the Pine River . . . the old green canoe trailer gave way to the new red one . . . Stan Rattenbury replaced Doug Finlayson for one year . . . the motor boat was new . . . the Optimists gave the camp an orange and blue Ford panel truck . . . Sam Buckhoy, cook, first showed up with his aluminum teeth . . . Pal first greeted one and all at the Boulton cabin . . . Gerald (not yet President) Ford was a Camp Shawondossee staff member playing in a baseball game against the Wabaningo staff . . . Bob Boulton organized the Lazy W outdoor closing banquet . . . the bugle megaphone was moved to near Carlisle Lodge . . . the last Haunted House . . . the first Crazy King was dunked off the pier . . . someone made tasty sandwiches for the trip home . . . John “Whitey” Midttomme shot a snake on Sunday morning near the council ring?

Willie Sherrill, council president, was wielding a sledge hammer on the pier during the early days of camp. He missed his target and the impact of his swing knocked both Willie and the sledge into the water. [AP]

Speaking of nostalgia, do you recall the puzzle board with rope and rings . . . the motor driven ice cream freezer which made its last ice cream about 1946 . . . the buddy board for swimming and boating . . . the vegetable cellar which kept canned food over the winter with just the heat of a kerosene lantern . . . the nature pond . . . the skunk named Flower . . . Johnny O'Connell's goats . . . the old swimming hole . . . Sleepy Hollow . . . the yellow bus . . . sassafras tea made on canoe trips . . . Royce Champe cracking his whip and tearing newspaper held by his son, Chuck . . . Don reading *The Mystery of Cell 13* . . . buying candy at the trading post . . . Capture the Flag games . . . moonlight dips after an evening game . . . trying to find Model-T Ford tires for the old canoe trailer . . . inspection for clean hands at the door of the mess hall . . . Pop Jenks' Sugar Bowl . . . horse'n'goggle to dispose of extra food?

Before construction of the Scenic Drive, Lake Michigan by Duck Lake Channel was the method of receiving materials. In an attempt to unload a barge of pre-fabbed construction items, some boards slipped off as removal shifted the weight. One helper, seeing a broad plank sliding into the lake, dove under it and found himself emerging with his head through an outhouse three-holer. Was this the "Jerry" for whom all such structures at camp were named? [GB]

Chick-a-lock-a-ching-ching, chick-a-lock-a-chow.

Chick-a-lock-a-ching-ching, chow-chow-chow.

Boom-a-lack-a, boom-a-lack-a, sis-boom bah.

Mohawks, Mohawks, rah-rah-rah!

Doc Kelly walked into the Tinhouse one day and asked the quartermaster if he had a sharp saw. The QM replied in the affirmative and asked Doc what he should saw. Doc replied: "I want you to go to the jerry and cut all the toilet seats in half. There are too damn many half-assed campers around here!" Bob Nilles also remembers his referring to incompetent campers as "purple-headed piss ants." Doc's language was most colorful.

Do you remember jerries . . . bug juice . . . refilling the fire buckets after dipping sandy feet in them . . . cleaning kerosene lanterns with jerry tickets for inspection . . . the pump on the parade grounds . . . the totem pole by the nature pond which was originally made by George "Pete" Boulton . . . the wooden trash barrels . . . swimming to the Old Swimming Hole for quarter mile swim . . . when the bugle megaphone was by the handicraft lodge . . . Don making announcements from the first mess hall bench by the screen door . . . required letters due by the end of the rest period . . . Gastronomical Gulch . . . Doc whistling for attention . . . the waiters bell . . . the nature trail leading to Scenic Drive . . . loop tennis . . . treks to the Tinhouse for binder's twine . . . Sid's inspirational Sunday morning talks at the council ring . . . staff members prowling after taps?

Along about 1941, bugler Jack Train used to preface his playing of Taps with an occasional rendition of the song *When Day Is Done*. What many of us didn't know is that this was a signal to his girl friend across Duck Lake to "get rid" of her mother as he was on his way over after Taps! [JT]

John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt. That's my name, too.
Whenever I go out – the people always shout
John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt, tra la la la la la la
(Repeat indefinitely, getting softer until after the word "shout.")

One year when both Lake Michigan and Duck Lake were quite high, some of the camp staff began to assemble the H-shaped pier. It was evident that the pier would no longer reach the shore, but we started to set up an arm of the pier on its supports which rested on concrete blocks with pins. Frustration reigned supreme as the whole device fell over several times. Finally Don Boulton from his vast experience told us that we would have to put a diagonal brace on a section or two to keep it from falling. Then we were able to construct a new longer first section to bridge the gap between the pier and the shore. [CJ]

How about the custom of saying "how" for appreciation in the council ring . . . the last will and testament read at the banquet closing each period . . . the "bluebloods" who took a dip each morning at reveille . . . the dusty stuffed birds in the museum . . . John Charles Thomas's recording of *The Lord's Prayer* played on Sunday morning . . . lengthy and solemn silence on V-J Day in the mess hall as the news came via Charlie's small radio from the mess hall mantel . . . Hedblom and Blanding . . . swim meets . . . the cutter . . . waterfront director Dick Uhnavy as Captain Nemo . . . the old C&NW locomotive bell in the guard tower . . . tattoo . . . repainting the pier with silver paint during set-up . . . patching canvas canoes . . . the rifle range . . . King Neptune making awards at the closing banquet . . . searching for Andy's Grave . . . the lone pine near Lake Michigan . . . the Order of the Arrow ring northeast of the rifle range?

Doc Kelly had a cure-all for many ills which is not-too-fondly remembered by several people. There are but two ingredients: equal parts of orange juice and milk. The orange juice curdles the milk and is memorable to all who have partaken of this potion. None of us were sure whether (1) this "drink" was a cure in itself, or (2) we avoided another dose by deciding that we were well! [CC, JS and CJ]

There was a little Dutchman, his name was Johnny Verbeck.
He was a dealer in sausages, and sauerkraut and speck.
He made the finest sausages that ever you did see.
And one day he invented a wonderful sausage machine.

Chorus: O, Mr. Johnny Verbeck, how could you be so mean?
I told you you'd be sorry for inventing that machine.
Now all the neighbors' cats and dogs will never more be seen

They'll all be ground to sausages in Johnny Verbeck's machine.

One day a boy came walking, came walking in the store.
He bought a pound of sausages and laid them on the floor.
The boy began to whistle, he whistled up a tune,
And all the little sausages went running 'round the room.

Chorus

One day the darned thing busted, the blamed thing wouldn't go,
So Johnny Verbeck, he climbed inside to see what made it so.
His wife, she had a nightmare, and walking in her sleep,
She gave the crank a helluva yank and Johnny Verbeck was meat!

Chorus [CJ]

After the sound system was installed, the job of bugler became that of disk jockey except for evening flag ceremonies. In the morning it had become traditional to blow off the cannon as well as play Reveille to be sure that all were awakened. There was one staff member (son of a Scout Executive who shall remain nameless) who with great difficulty found his way out of bed in the morning and often appeared late for breakfast. Some of the staff had a solution for this – they shot the cannon under his bunk in the popcorn tent. There was an unanticipated side effect: the cannon blew a hole in his short which had been casually tossed under the bunk the evening before. [CC]

There was a similar experience waking up Dwight Bischel involving the cannon. In this case, a hole was blown in the side of the popcorn tent. One time sleepy camper Lars Nordmark, upon being awakened by Dwight, grabbed Dwight over his head and threw him into Duck Lake. [EB]

W-A-B-A-N-I-N-G-O, W-A-B-A-N-I-N-G-O, Ooooooo,
Out where the lakes and the skies are blue.
Out where the green woods are calling to you.
("Who, me?" "Yes, you!" "What for?" "You gotta go!" "Go? Go where?")
Let's go to Wabangingo with all the good friends you know.
For a grand old time it's the place for you to go! [CJ]

How many credulous campers over the years were sent into the woods or across Duck Lake in search of shoreline, sky hooks, the cannon report, left-handed monkey wrench, etc.?

Hello, hello, hello, hello!
We're glad to meet you. We're glad to greet you.
Hello, hello, hello, hello!

Don Bolton, who never claimed to be a musician with perfect pitch, always started this song on the D above middle C! [CJ]

Then there is an unnamed staff member whose job it was to prepare a campfire for the opening ceremony. He had a creditable fire ready to start aided by glycerine, potassium permanganate, kerosene and gasoline. After all the campers had filed in, a muffled explosion came from the council ring as a ring of fire as big around as the ring itself rose past tree top level. The intention was to light the campfire with a flame traveling across words written in the sand. The overabundance of gasoline and the lack of wind that evening caused the explosion which would have been devastating to anyone seated in the front row of the ring, which, fortunately, was vacant. The astonished fire builder was still standing on the stage with a match burning in his hand seconds after the explosion. The campers' "HOW!" was more of fright than of appreciation! [CC]

How about the unison clapping which Don Boulton led with great enthusiasm? It was in this rhythm: (Draw in rhythm.) [DC and CJ]

Chuck Champe has several memories from his years at camp which will be meaningful to many of you:

On the train going to camp: "the cinders blowing in the open windows . . . the water where kids would toss a full paper cup out the window, and then 'trip' it with a string tied to the bottom so it would spray in about three windows back." . . .

Regarding canoe trip: "Forest Blanding was counselor in charge. We missed our landing and had to paddle back upstream, making camp just at dusk. No one told me that mosquitos could bite through a mosquito net if your hands were against it. Since it was late and dark by the time we'd finished eating, I just put a pack at my head and pulled the net over it and me. The next day I counted over 100 bites on each hand. They swelled up like balloons. For two nights back in camp I slept on my stomach with my hands in a bucket of ice water on either side of the cot. On the same canoe trip, we'd managed to tip several canoes over by 'horsing around.' We were all up on the bank awaiting the wrath of Blanding who was bringing up the rear. Ten feet from the bank he hung on a post which was just even with the water level. In getting off, he tipped it over. He had tied the silverware box in, but hadn't tied the lid down. He dumped all the silverware. Needless to say, no lecture."

Memories of the cutter: "Sails still useable through '49 – stenciled 'US New York, New York 1908.' Finally learning how to sail it out and back rather than rowing one way. The problem a 12 year old had in 'tossing' one of those small trees called an oar. The tremendous 'weather helm' it had in winds over 10 mph. How devastating a 1 mph bump could be to the pier alignment. All in all, a fun boat."

Comments on the relative merits of the Camp Wabaningo waterfront: “Technically the waterfront layout was better than any of the camps I later visited when working for the Red Cross. Whoever designed the ‘H’ pier had done an excellent job. The water depths in each section were ideal. The water temperatures were perfect. It was relatively easy to take in and take out. It conformed to the then standard 25 yd. pool. The channel gave adequate room for rowing and canoeing, but provided for adequate supervision from the tower. To duplicate it somewhere today would still be building a close-to-ideal waterfront – almost 70 years from its inception.”

On the camp program: “I felt the basic program was superior to that offered by other contemporary Scout programs. I got into long, serious discussion with the Chicago Council when I worked as a Camp Director for one summer and as a volunteer trainer of their waterfront from ’51 to ’57, and the Region 7 personnel for several years at their aquatic schools. I felt that the ‘mass’ camp activities, with graduated skill levels, provided a better opportunity for a boy to acquire and develop outdoor skills than the troop camping then in vogue. There were too many instances of a well-meaning, but unskilled troop committeeman filling in for the scoutmaster at the last minute – too much card playing in camp to ‘fill the time’ – not enough skills in the senior scouts attached to the troop to do a good job in teaching nature, pioneering, water and watercraft skills, etc., and they made little use of the professional help available to them. When I was camp director at Owasippe, most of the skill people on my staff were frustrated by the often haphazard approach of the ‘scoutmasters’ in utilizing their skills. You don’t take a boy 200 miles and then have him sit in his tent and play cards.”

Around 1940 someone did a parody on the old vaudeville Gallagher and Sheen routine. Two verses still remain firmly etched in my mind:

“O Mr. Gallagher! O Mr. Gallagher!
Has Sleepy Hollow ever been clean?”
“O they say it has been so, but I really do not know.”
“Do you think so, Mr. Gallagher?”
“Propaganda, Mr. Sheen!”

“O Mr. Gallagher! O Mr. Gallagher!
Have you seen the way George Dutton combs his hair?”
“Yes, he uses Vitalis and attracts a pretty miss.”
“Do you think so, Mr. Gallagher?”
“Absolutely, Mr. Sheen!”

One of the many summers he spent two weeks at camp, George “Cap” Elrick helped to organize and set up a pontoon bridge from point to point. It was made by tying boats together. Don Boulton managed to be filming the incident as Cap crossed over this tipsy affair and fell into the water. The actual splash was mercifully deleted from the camp promotional movies before they were shown all through the council the next spring. [MF]

I went to see my gal last night,
She met me at the door;
Shoes and stockings in her hand
And feet all over the floor.

I went to see my gal last night,
A pleasure I was seeking.
I missed her mouth and kissed her nose
And the gosh darned thing was leaking.

A man lay by the sewer,
And by the sewer he died.
At the coroner's inquest
They called it sewer-cide! [CJ]

Back in 1938 Doc Kelly had the cooks prepare a main course of codfish. "None of us midwest campers could get it past our noses. After much grumbling and complaining on our part, Doc felt moved to address the group. It was the first time I had heard the term 'molly-coddled brats' and I still remember it years later." [CC]

TATTOO

Softly falls the light of day
As our campfire fades away.
Silently each Scout should ask:
Have I done my daily task?
Have I kept my honor bright?
Can I guiltless rest tonight?
Have I done and have I dared
Everything to be prepared? [CJ]

We close with this poem written by Anne Boulton Perkins after the death of her parents, but before Don's ashes had been brought to Michigan. Many will remember her Grandma Lovejoy.

TAPS

The day is done, the Lone Pine down.
I find but memories her
Of family gone, Scout camp erased –
No vesper bugle clear.

My people gone, the sky is bare

Where sand entombs our pine.
This ancient shore of Michigan
Is hallowed ground of mine.

Through years long past, a channel mark
To boatmen seeking shore,
This seedling pine knew virgin land
With people here no more.

The scouts, the farm, the lumber camp,
Chief Wabaningo's tribe
Were all within deep heartwood rings
Of that old tree enscribed.

Each of us with face turned west
Has stood in wind and sun
And heard the waves and crying gulls
And watched till day was done.

Gramps and Grandma long have lain
As one with earth and sky.
Mother, you are waiting now
For Dad to be near by.

Ashes to ashes – ashes in sand –
The circle closes 'round;
Our spirits joined eternally,
No headstones on the ground.

Our minds are free to ride the wind,
Our spirits are as one;
United through the love of God
Until the day is done [AP]

Note from editor Charlie Jenks:

There will be added an appendix with some biographies, a map of the area and a publicity map of the camp, camp staff lists from the available summers, and some information on the other camps that the Evanston Council used as well as a chronology of events within the Council. Pictures will be included as far as room and finances will allow – probably in a separate section. I am still seeking the most inexpensive way of reproducing these.

Thanks not only for the help you have given, but for the help you can still give.

Charles D. Jenks
1120 Greenfield Lane
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
Phone 708-255-6796⁶



Figure 25 - 1941 Staff

[Doc Kelly is second from the left in the rear row, Don Boulton is far left in the second row]

⁶ [JLR] According to ancestry.com, Charles Dedrick Jenks, a member of the Class of 1945 at Evanston Township High School, was born on October 25, 1927 in Evanston and died on February 20, 1995 in Mt. Prospect.

PROJECT WABANINGO CREDITS

A thousand and one pardons to anyone who contributed information and can't find their name listed here. Such omission is not intentional. If initials appear in brackets, this person also volunteered a story, anecdote, yell or song. Other people were primarily helpful in giving factual information.

Dwight Bischel (Figure 27), staff member, raconteur, and author of the 1952 Wabanningo Lodge Emblem Handbook (Figure 26).⁷

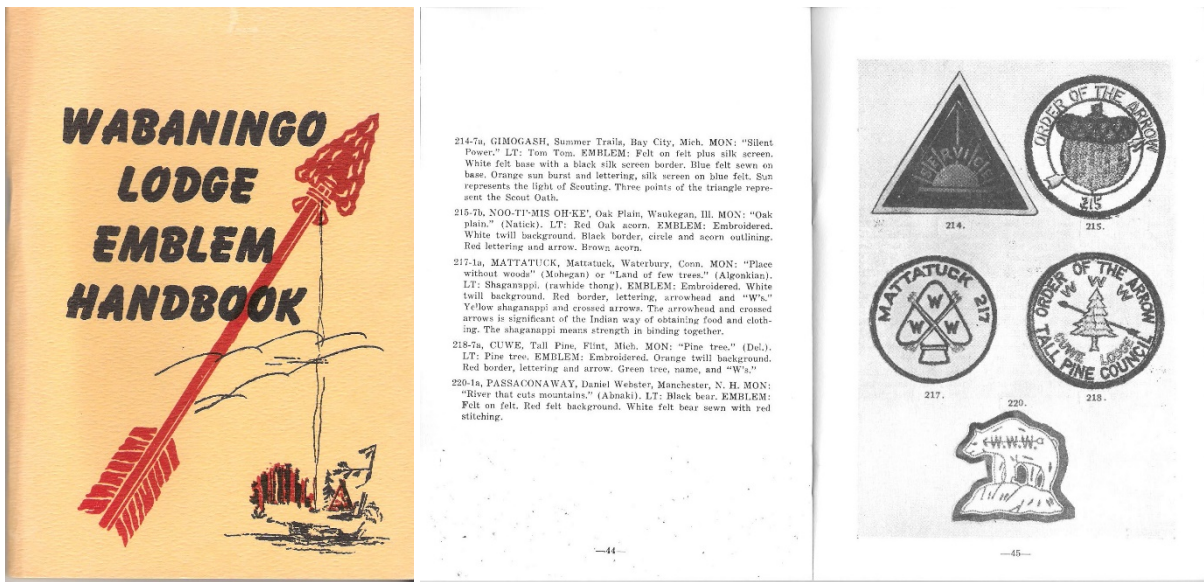


Figure 26

Margaret Beattie Bogue, author of *Around the Shores of Lake Michigan* who helped on 19th century information.

[GB] The late George “Pete” Boulton, an early staff member who told me his story while living in Savanna, Illinois and running a furniture store. “Pete” was Don’s brother.

[EB] Dr. Edward J. Budil, camper (1939-1945), staff (1946-1951).

⁷ [JLR] As reported in *Northwestern* (Winter 2021), at 67, Dwight Bischel, a member of the Class of 1950 at Northwestern University, died on February 28, 2020 in Dubuque, Iowa. This followed a long career as an Evanston Scouter, including service as Troop 21 and Jamboree Scoutmaster, OA advisor, and unofficial council photographer. He was made Lodge 248’s first Vigil Honor member in recognition of his work in producing the Emblem Handbook. *Evanston Review* (12/23/1954), at p. 42, (8/25/1955), at p. 80. See John L. Ropiequet, *Lodges 215 and 248 Merged Into Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan Lodge 40* (March 2019, rev. January 2021), at pp. 5-8.

[CC] Charles Champe, camper and staff member (Figure 28). Chuck wrote a remarkable eight-page letter of vivid recollections.



Figure 27



Chuck Champe

Figure 28



Phillip B. Schnering

Figure 29

[RC] Dick Coldren, camper and staff member. Dick was Doc's truck driver in the early 1940s and has wonderful stories of this fabulous Scout Executive, much of which is preserved on tape.

Roy L. Dodge, author of the 3-volume Michigan Ghost Towns.

George Dutton, camper (1933-1935) and staff member (1937-1941).

Evanston Public Library, for camp map and microfilm archives.

Dr. William Fackler, camper (1943-1944).

[MF] Mae Finlayson, widow of Doug and storekeeper at camp for many seasons.

R.J. "Jerry" Gibson, Evanston Scoutmaster, Troop 16.

The Hon. Slade Gorton, now U.S. Senator from the State of Washington, camper (1942).

Winchell Hayward, camper (1939).

W.B. "Hap" Hecker, camper and staff member at Camp Shawondossee and occasional visitor to the Wabaningo property.

[CJ] Charlie Jenks, camper, staff member, and owner of the computer into which all of this glorious trivia is entered.

The late Olive Jenks, hired as office secretary of the Evanston Council by Doc Kelly in 1936; retired in 1953; Charlie's mother.

Tim Jewett, Field Executive of the Wildcat District, Northeast Illinois Council.

Lee Marks, Thatcher Woods Area Council historian.

Willard Nelson, area Scouter active in the Owasippe camps.

[AP] Anne Boulton Perkins, daughter of Don and Helen Boulton, a preserver of the Boulton archives, and poet.

Philip Schnering (Figure 29), camper and later Scout Commissioner for the Evanston Council; also Curtiss Candy Co.

[JS] John Snell, camp bugler (1942-1943) after Jack Train.

[JT] Jack Train, camp bugler before John Snell.

Tim Weithers, author of the Camp Shin-Go-Beek and Shin-Go-Beek Lodge, Order of the Arrow, history and fellow complainer about people who don't answer letters.

If you want addresses for any of these people, preferably those still among the living, please contact Charlie Jenks at 1120 Greenfield Lane, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056, phone 708-255-6796. Do it before senility sets in.



Figure 30

Illustration List

[Transcriber's note: Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, microfilm copies of the *Evanston Review* were searched for 1940 to 1970 for all Scouting-related news items and the many photographs accompanying them, with digital copies made of all of them. Additional material may be found for the years 1910 to 1939 in post-pandemic research. The Northeast Illinois Council has a large file of photographs that it inherited from the Evanston Council.]

1. Dr. Earle D. Kelly *Evanston Review* (8/31/1944)
2. Dwight Bischel *Evanston Review* (8/25/1955)
3. Robert Townley *Winnetka Talk* (4/27/1929)
4. Don Boulton's cabin Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
5. Camp Wabaningo pier Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
6. Fire dive at Camp Wabaningo pier Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
7. Cutter at Camp Wabaningo Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council (ca. 1930s)
8. Catboat at Camp Wabaningo Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council (ca. 1950s)
9. Curtiss Candy Co. delivery Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council, also *Evanston Review* (4/28/1955)
10. Pyramidal tents Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
11. Cub Scout camp Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council (1939)
12. Camp Wabaningo attendance patches Courtesy of John L. Ropiequet
13. Water carnival *Evanston Review* (8/6/1953)
14. Land carnival Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council (ca. 1930s)
15. Taking the bus to Camp Wabaningo *Evanston Review* (6/30/1955)
16. Closing campfire Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council

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| 17. Wabanningo honor camper award | Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council |
| 18. Wabanningo Lodge 248 emblem | Courtesy of John L. Ropiequet |
| 19. 1956 Lodge 248 ritual team | Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council |
| 20. Don Boulton at retirement | <i>Evanston Review</i> (3/16/1967) |
| 21. Sid Pettett at hiring | <i>Evanston Review</i> (3/15/1945) |
| 22. 1949 Camp Wabanningo staff | Courtesy of Matthew Horbal |
| 23. 1940 Camp Wabanningo campers | Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
(7/22/1940) |
| 24. 1941 Camp Wabanningo staff | Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council
(8/22/1941) |
| 25. 1970 Camp Wabanningo patch | Courtesy of John L. Ropiequet |
| 26. Wabanningo OA Emblem Guide | Courtesy of John L. Ropiequet |
| 27. Dwight Bischel | <i>Facebook</i> (ca. 2015) |
| 28. Chuck Champe | <i>Evanston Review</i> (3/25/1948) |
| 29. Philip Schnering | <i>Evanston Review</i> (8/27/1953) |
| 30. Gate at Camp Wabanningo | Courtesy of Northeast Illinois Council |