

CAMP

# COUNSELING

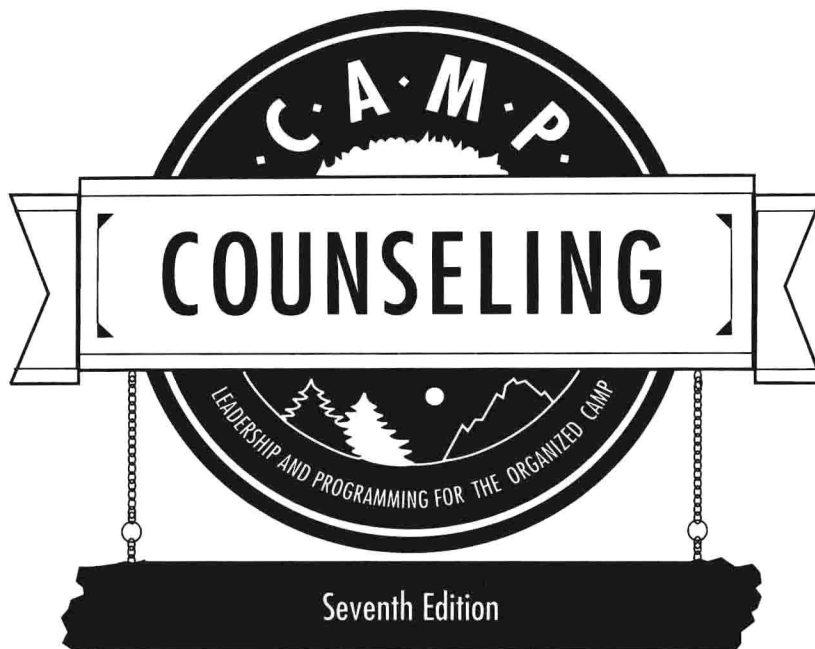
LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAMMING FOR THE ORGANIZED CAMP

Joel F. Meier

A. Viola Mitchell

Seventh Edition





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*to*

THE MODERN CAMPING MOVEMENT

**May it continue to enhance our love and  
appreciation of the outdoors.**



## PREFACE

**T**he seventh edition of *Camp Counseling* continues to do what the previous six editions of this book have done—to emphasize face-to-face leadership skills and programming ideas for the organized camp. Likewise, the book represents a fresh, contemporary view of the trends, philosophies and practices of the organized camping movement. In other words, this edition continues the original intent of *Camp Counseling*—to serve as a useful tool for persons who are or will be engaged in positions of camp leadership. In short, topics covered in these pages serve as a ready resource of things to do with campers and ways of doing them.

The text will be used primarily by students enrolled in college or university courses dealing with the subject of organized camping and outdoor leadership. However, the book will also be valuable to agencies or organizations that sponsor camping programs and related outdoor activities; it can be used in training courses or as recommended reading for prospective counselors and other camp personnel. The book will also be useful to camp directors who conduct pre-camp or in-camp training courses, and to camp counselors and program staff who work independently to prepare to carry out their responsibilities.

Working in an organized camp offers many opportunities to make a contribution to society. In the modern camp, adequate training and skill are required of staff members who fill important leadership roles. A staff member must, first of all, build a professional philosophy of organized camping, including an understanding of its purposes, objectives, background, present status, and future trends. To these ends, *PART I* was written.

Further, a counselor or program leader must work closely with people, and consequently must have the knowledge and ability to understand how to lead them successfully. This is actually more important than the skills that are taught. *PART II* was designed to help in this area. Working intimately with campers in a rustic setting is, of course, not everyone's cup of tea. Therefore, *PART II* also presents a rather detailed picture of the type of person most likely to be a successful counselor/leader and the duties he or she will be expected to perform.

Campers want action and excitement and expect plenty of it in a variety of forms. *PART III* describes a number of activities and programming techniques especially suited for use in the informal, rustic atmosphere of a modern camp. For instance, the chapter on outdoor adventure programs introduces a number of challenging activities that are popular in many camps today.

*PART IV* treats in some detail the skills that are necessary for living in the out-of-doors. These skills represent the basic core of the camping experience. They are essential because they distinguish the camping experience from other forms of recreational or educational activities.

The reader will find countless “program” ideas throughout the book. A wide range of information about all aspects of camp programming and leadership is covered so that the book may serve as a handy reference. Brief descriptions of some of the more specialized activities are given. For those desiring additional information on any of these topics, please refer to the bibliography listed at the end of each chapter, as well as the *SELECTED GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY* in Appendix A. Other handy references are available in Appendices B and C, where you will find updated directories of magazines and organizations promoting outdoor activities. In addition, anyone involved in conducting leadership training programs will find Appendices D and E to be particularly helpful. They present suggestions for conducting courses in camp counseling and CIT training programs.

Various parts of this new revised book have been expanded, while others have been reduced. A number of new photographs and illustrations have been added, and all of the references and bibliographical sources found at the end of each chapter have been updated to include the most relevant materials available today. Following is a sample of changes reflected in the book: *Chapter 6* contains a new section on behavior management, with a focus on dealing with inappropriate behavior in camp. *Chapter 7* includes an in-depth analysis of dynamic leadership, as well as a thorough coverage of the various styles of leadership. *Chapter 9* presents expanded information on helping the homesick child, and how to deal with substance abuse problems in camp. A new section on journal writing has been added to *Chapter 13*. When it comes to designing nature activities for campers, *Chapter 15* produces some powerful but simple ecological concepts and discusses *Project Learning Tree*, *Project Wild* and *Project Aquatic*, three outstanding environmental education pro-

grams with educational content adaptable to the camp setting. For the benefit of star gazers, there is also an expanded astronomy section. *Chapter 18* has been augmented with discussion of common health problems, as well as suggestions on how to deal with Lyme disease and bear problems in camp. The section on food and meal planning in *Chapter 27* has been expanded to encompass current information on carbohydrates, protein, fats, and calorie-counting techniques. Finally, *Chapter 28* presents the latest information on new synthetic garment fabrics, innovative insulating materials, and the theory of the layering system. There is more information on internal frame packs, as well as how to go about selecting and fitting a pack.

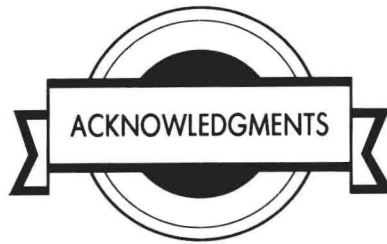
This new book edition points the way to some of the more successful outdoor/environmental education techniques used today. Also, emphasis is placed on understanding and appreciating the natural environment and how to reduce human impact on the land. *Camp Counseling* brings a modern perspective to our concern for the fragility of the environment and suggests ways to enjoy the outdoors without spoiling it for future generations.

In recent years our environmental values have undergone radical change. As a result, certain traditional activities or skills once considered essential in any camp program are no longer appropriate in the modern organized camp. This is particularly so in respect to some forms of camp crafts and construction projects, such as building wood-burning fires and using elaborate cooking devices. However, material relating to some of these traditional skills continues to be included in this book, since these activities are still worthwhile if done in suitable locations under the guidance of leaders who have proper environmental awareness. Obviously, discretion and care must always be applied in respect to potential impact on the natural environment. Throughout the book, emphasis is placed on these considerations, along with suitable alternative program suggestions.

Hopefully you will find the seventh edition of *Camp Counseling* to be a valuable resource and of practical use.

—Joel Meier





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The first edition of *Camp Counseling* was published in 1950, and therefore it is impossible to thank all of the organizations and people who helped with the previous six editions. Nonetheless, many of the ideas and a few of their photographs can still be found among the many new ones in this book.

Sincere appreciation goes to the following people and/or organizations who kindly provided new photographs for this current edition: Howard Boyd of Gwynn Valley Camp, Brevard, NC; Michael Gallacher of *The Missoulian*; photographer Wayne Brill and the National Music Camp, Interlochen, MI; Thayer Raines, Challenge Wilderness Camp, Bradford, VT; Jon Cates, photographer, and Jennifer O'Loughlin, editor, *Western Wildlands*, School of Forestry, University of Montana, Missoula, MT; Dr. Willy Burgdorfer, Laboratory of Vectors and Pathogens, Rocky Mountain Laboratories, Hamilton, MT; and Cheley Colorado Camps, Estes Park, CO. Also, thanks goes to the Ponderosa Council of Camp Fire, Missoula, MT, for allowing me the opportunity to attend Camp Watanopa in order to photograph activities and events.

Sincere thanks to Grechen Perry Throop, director of the American Camping Association's Bookstore Operations and Publishing, for reviewing the manuscript dealing with the American Camping Association in Chapter 2. Her suggestions were most valuable in bringing the material up to date. Grateful

acknowledgment is also given to the individuals and publishers who gave kind permission to use quoted materials.

It would be remiss not to recognize a few others, including my wife, Patricia, who has shown love and tolerance throughout the many hours I've spent on this book. Patricia has continued to be the real backbone for my staying power, and I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the time she spent assisting me in library research. I also wish to thank the members of the editorial and production staff of Wm. C. Brown Publishers for their tolerance and assistance.

Last, but not least, let me say how much I appreciated and respected Viola Mitchell, the leading co-author of the previous six editions of *Camp Counseling*. Almost everyone who has been involved in the camping profession at any time during the past four decades has become acquainted with one or more editions of this book. Consequently, Viola Mitchell's wisdom was imparted either directly or indirectly to the thousands who participated in organized camping over the years. The knowledge and skills she shared cannot fail to have a lasting impact on our attitudes about the great outdoors. This is Viola Mitchell's living legacy to the organized camping movement.

—Joel Meier



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## GROWTH, STRUCTURE, AND VALUES OF ORGANIZED CAMPING





## ORGANIZED CAMPING—WHAT IS IT?

**M**illions of us have participated in camping experiences of one type or another, from short overnight excursions in nearby rural areas to extended outings of several weeks or more with friends or family. The term “camping,” in fact, creates a variety of different images in our minds, depending upon the extent and nature of our experiences. To some, camping means pulling a mobile shelter behind a car and spending the evenings sleeping in it in a forest, park, or private campground. Many associate camping with agency- or organization-sponsored outings at established group sites, where nature-oriented programs are offered on a scheduled basis. To others, camping means carrying essential belongings in a backpack and hiking long distances into wilderness or backcountry areas far away from civilization.

### WHY WE CAMP

Whatever the extent of our camping experience, it usually is associated with a chance to get away from our normal routines and an opportunity to refresh ourselves or relax in the natural world of the great outdoors. There are numerous other reasons why in-

terest is growing rapidly in outdoor life and in living somewhat as our forefathers had. In fact, each person probably has many reasons for enjoying camping.

As our society has evolved, we have grown less reliant upon nature and therefore less familiar with it. The need to reacquaint ourselves with the outdoor world becomes particularly critical as more of us than ever before are living in suburbs and cities. Camping allows us to satisfy our nomadic urge to escape the routine of everyday existence and the daily grind, and to experience our cultural heritage first hand.

For some of us, camping provides a chance to break away from the softness and ease that are so much a part of today’s lifestyle. Camping is appealing because it provides us with an opportunity to rough it, to improvise and make do, to test our wits against the forces of nature, to discover our own potential, and to exercise personal initiative. Camping also helps to develop desirable physical, mental, social, and spiritual qualities. For instance, studies indicate that the effects of camping on an individual often include a positive measurable outcome in terms of self-concept (including self-reliance and self-confidence), development of environmental awareness, aesthetic appreciation, cooperation,

physical fitness, ability to deal with stress, and tenacity.<sup>1</sup> Thus, camping experiences can help people acquire many valuable skills and attitudes that they do not necessarily gain in school or from their usual daily routine.

Many people look upon camping as a prime means of maintaining close family and friendship ties. In fact, very basic concepts of sociology and psychology come into use as we mingle with different people in diverse camping situations. Camping offers us opportunities for developing companionship with others, for sharing joys and hardships, for learning the meaning of humility, and for understanding the importance of open dialogue. Camping is a total experience in itself and unique because it consists of a 24-hour-a-day adventure outdoors. Since campers live together in a small group, there are many opportunities for each individual to assume a share of the work, for cooperative give and take, for group decision making, and for building lifelong friendships.

Some people say that camping provides a way to “get away from it all,” while others prefer to think that it offers possibilities for personal involvement, enrichment, and renewal. Camping is a unique experience that provides an opportunity for reestablishing our roots, bringing us into harmony with our outdoor heritage, and giving us a perspective beyond that obtained in the narrow confines of a crowded society.

## ORGANIZED CAMPING

### What Is Organized Camping?

The previous discussion centered around the variety of camping experiences available. In informal camping, people come and go as they please; how-

ever, since this book is primarily concerned with *organized* camping, we will need to understand more about the nature, design, function, and types of *organized camps*.

What are the key characteristics of an organized camp that differentiate it from other forms of outdoor recreation, including camping in general? Organized camping can be defined and some of its components identified.<sup>2</sup> We may define an organized camp as being comprised of a community of persons living together as an organized, democratic group in an outdoor setting. The related educational and recreational activities or programs are supervised by trained staff so as to meet the personal needs and interests of the participants. The camp program consists of the *total* of all experiences or events in the camp, whether structured or not. In as much as possible, however, the activities of the camp program should focus on the natural environment and should take advantage of experiences that are inherent to living in the out-of-doors. Thus, the natural surroundings should contribute significantly to the mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth of the camper.

From this definition we can easily identify four components or principles that apply to the basic philosophy of organized camping. These are:

1. *Organized camping focuses on the natural environment in an outdoor setting.* The camp experience concentrates on those activities that are natural to the camp environment, including campcrafts, hiking, nature appreciation, and other skills for living simply in the out-of-doors. Similarly, the camp

<sup>2</sup>Hedley S. Dimock (ed.): *Administration of the Modern Camp*. Association Press, 1948, pp. 22–31; Dennis A. Vinton and Elizabeth M. Farley (ed.): *Camp Staff Training Series, Module 1, An Orientation to Camping and the Camp*, a joint publication of Project REACH, University of Kentucky, The American Camping Association, and Hawkins and Associates, Inc., 1979, pp. 25–27; American Camping Association: *Camp Standards with Interpretations*. The American Camping Association, Inc., 1972, p. 12; Jay S. Shivers: *Camping: Organization and Operation*, Prentice-Hall, 1989, ch. 1; Richard G. Kraus and Margery M. Scanlin: *Introduction to Camp Counseling*, Prentice-Hall, 1983, ch. 1.

<sup>1</sup>Minorv Lida: Adventure-Oriented Programs—A Review of Research. In Betty van der Smissen (ed.): *Research Camping and Environmental Education* (Penn State HPER Series No. 11, 1975), pp. 219–241; Joel F. Meier: “Risk Recreation: Philosophical Issues.” *Trends*. vol. 17, no. 1 (Winter 1980), pp. 14–17; Alan W. Ewert: *Outdoor Adventure Pursuits: Foundations, Models, and Theories*, Publishing Horizons, Inc., 1989, ch 4–6.

facility usually focuses on the beauty with which nature has endowed it rather than on manmade additions dictated by urban standards. In other words, the campsite should be somewhat rustic and free of the modern conveniences and contrivances found in an urban environment.

2. *The program consists of the total of all experiences that take place throughout the length of the camp.* The organized camp offers a broad and varied range of activities, and the program consists of every experience each camper has on a 24-hour-a-day basis throughout the total life of the camp, including participation in unstructured or informal aspects of camp life as well as in the more structured and formal activities that more readily come to mind. Thus, the camper is participating in camp life whether he or she is on a group day-hike in the woods or washing dishes after the evening meal. Living fully in a camp community leads participants into a complete range of relationships, experiences, and activities that are part of social and educational growth.
3. *The organized camp revolves around group living experiences in an organized community.* The basic unit of camp life consists of campers and staff who work and live together in small groups. Cooperation and teamwork is necessary in order to successfully meet the requirements of daily life. There is probably no better opportunity for such complete participation in meeting these daily requirements since the camp structure represents a microcosm of a true democratic society. Through this group process campers develop skills in cooperating, sharing, decision making, and assuming leadership and citizenship responsibilities.
4. *The organized camp relies on trained and well-qualified staff.* The staff consists of the camp director and camp counselors, as well as other personnel who might be involved in the operation of the camp, such as program specialists, maintenance personnel, medical

aides, and cooks. People who want to work at an organized camp must be mature, must respect and care for others and be interested in working with them. They must usually have a wide range of interests and skills, including an understanding of the campers themselves, and a commitment to the goals of the camp. Because campers and staff associate with one another over an extended period of time, it is essential that camp personnel be capable of providing guidance and support to campers so that their personal needs and problems receive the very best attention.

### **Types of Camps**

Organized camps commonly are established for young people, usually from 7 to 16 years old, although many camps now offer programs for older people as well. Regardless of age group, all camps offer opportunities for participants to dwell more or less in a world of their own, and to work, recreate, and carry on the daily business of living together under the guidance of a staff of counselors and camp personnel. Organized camps are of many types and are conducted in various ways and for many purposes.

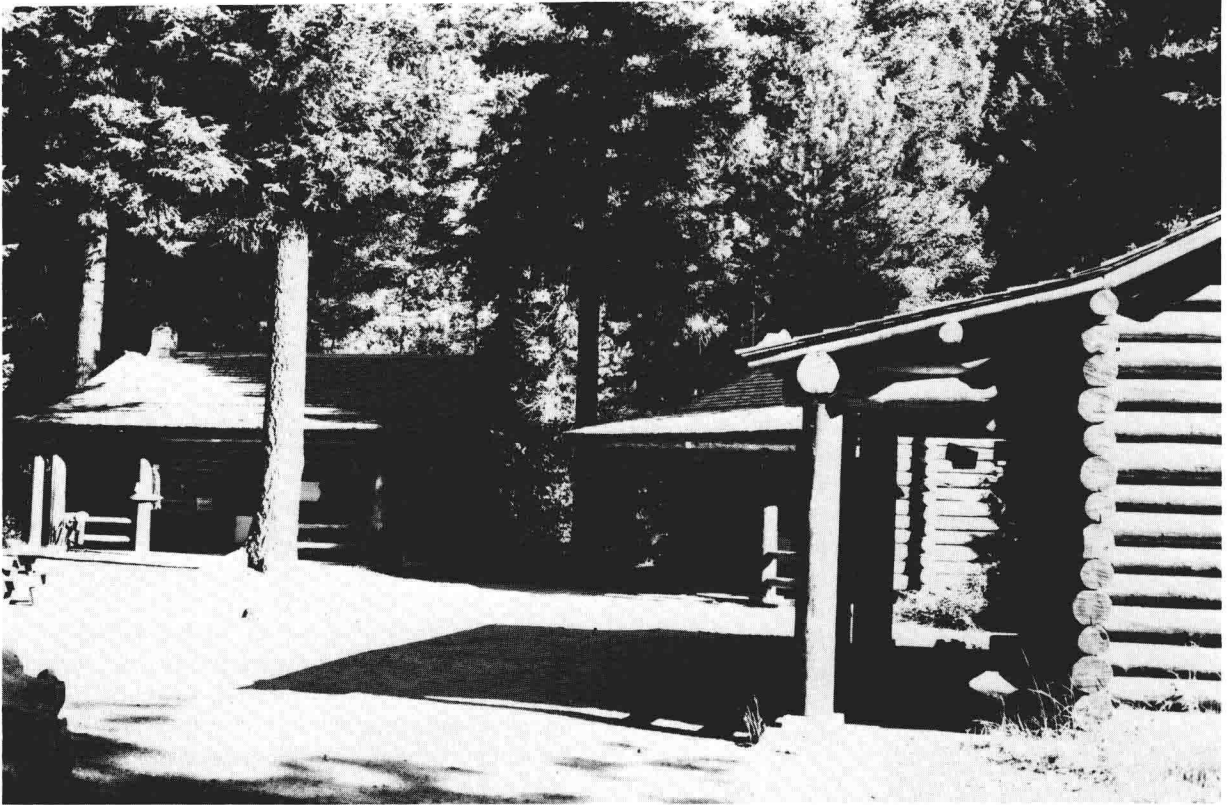
Camps may be classified into five types:

- (1) resident or established camps,
- (2) trip or travel camps,
- (3) day camps,
- (4) special camps, and
- (5) school camps.

### **Resident or Established Camps**

A *resident or established camp* is one in which campers live for a period of time, usually from a few days to eight or more weeks. There are usually several permanent buildings surrounded by a broad expanse of woods and meadows that are left as much as possible in their natural state. The camps are located away from the main roads to provide privacy and freedom from intrusion by those without legitimate camp connections.





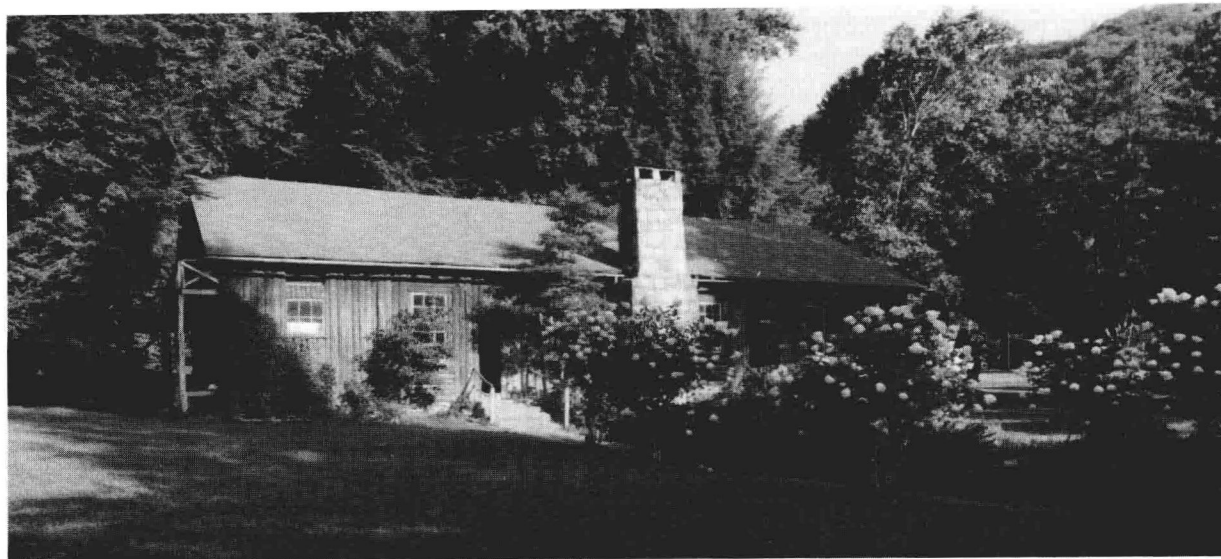
Each resident camp has a personality of its own. (*Camp Summer Life, Odessa, TX*)

Resident camps are of many types, with many points of similarity, yet differing in certain aspects so that each has a distinct personality of its own. Some are purposely kept primitive and rustic, and feature a more rugged and simple way of life that is quite different from the average camper's home environment. Others go to the opposite extreme, and provide most of the refinements and conveniences of modern urban life. These camps might better be termed summer resorts, for they often contribute little to what is generally considered a camping experience. All good camps, no matter how rustic, maintain the qualities essential for good, safe and healthful living.

A typical large camp contains quantities of woodland and meadows, often with brooklets mean-

dering through and crisscrossed by several trails traced by the feet of scores of adventuresome counselors and campers. Here, all types of plant and animal life abound, for the attitude of camp people toward wildlife is one of friendliness and appreciation rather than indifference or destructiveness. These unspoiled natural surroundings provide the background for a real organized camp experience.

Campers and staff may live in rustic cabins, teepees or tents on wooden platforms, which usually are grouped into separate units of from 8 to 20 campers with their counselors. Each unit is somewhat segregated from the others to promote a feeling of solidarity and privacy. In some camps each living unit is entirely self-sufficient; however, most camps feature centrally located buildings, including a common



Campers and staff may live in rustic cabins. (*Gwynn Valley Camp, Brevard, NC*)

dining room and kitchen, a large lodge or recreation room, an arts and crafts shop, washrooms, showers, toilets, laundry facilities, a camp office, tool houses and sheds for camp storage and the caretaker's equipment, a health center, trading post, counselors' retreat, nature museum, camp library and a center to house equipment and supplies for cook-outs or trips away from camp.

Some camps have fields and courts for such sports as tennis, archery, softball, badminton, horseshoes, riflery and golf, an amphitheater, an outdoor chapel and a council ring. Located at the ends of certain trails and at some distance from the main camp will probably be outposts or campsites where those with sufficient campcraft skills can go to break the monotony of camp life and experience the thrill of living comfortably and simply under more primitive conditions. There may be a stable, tack room, riding ring and riding trails. A popular spot is the waterfront on a lake, river or seashore with an array of rowboats, canoes, sailboats and possibly even power boats. Many camps also have a swimming pool, for few are fortunate enough to possess natural bodies of water still free enough from contamination

to be safe for swimming and life-saving activities. Some camps specialize in certain activities, such as tennis, horseback riding or water sports; while others offer a wide variety of activities, from woodworking and ballet dancing to tutoring subjects ranging from electronics to nuclear physics. Most camp programs, however, lie somewhere in between.

This description of a more or less typical camp depicts a busy, thriving community, and that is exactly what camp is. A large camp represents a big investment and may be populated by as many as a hundred or even several hundred lively youngsters and a fairly large staff of counselors and other personnel.

### ***Trip or Travel Camps***

Those participating in *trip camping* start from a common base, then travel by foot, canoe, bicycle, horseback, sailboat, a horse-drawn "covered wagon" or almost any other self-propelled means of transportation. In contrast, at *travel camps*, groups are transported by car or bus, and they usually make camp each night at a new location. Some travel