1954

A study of the camp experiences of fifteen boys who attended Camp Wediko in 1953

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http://hdl.handle.net/2144/8026

Boston University
A STUDY OF THE CAMP EXPERIENCES OF FIFTEEN BOYS
WHO ATTENDED CAMP WEDIKO IN 1953

A thesis

Submitted by
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(B.A., Northeastern University, 1952)
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Social Service
1954
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the following people for their help in connection with this study. Miss Nancy Staver, Dr. Robert A. Young, Dr. Samuel Waldfogel and Mr. Nicholas Verven.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Summer camping has become a by-word in American life. Though the educational and health value of camping has long been recognized, its value in specialized areas has only recently been acknowledged. Physically handicapped children have been given opportunities for summer camp experiences in many places; however, little has been done for the emotionally disturbed child.

The Purpose

In this thesis an attempt will be made to determine what meaning the camp experience had for the boys at a treatment camp in terms of their understanding of the purpose of the camp and their feelings about their camp experience.

The following questions were raised for study:
1. What were the attitudes of the boys in regard to their relationships at camp with staff and campers?
2. How did the boys feel about the camp program?
3. How did the boys feel about being changed from one cabin to another?

Limitations

The interviewer had been a staff member at camp, and it is possible that this might have caused the boys who were interviewed to hesitate to express negative reactions.
Although each boy was interviewed alone and in his own home, it is realized that the boys were emotionally disturbed and their attitudes would depend a great deal on the intensity of the disturbance, however, only the material acquired through the interview was considered.

In this study the writer will not consider the therapeutic or diagnostic goals achieved.

Scope

The camp season started on June 29, 1953 and ran through to August, 1953, a five-week period. This is an adequate period for the purpose of this thesis.¹

However, since there were thirty-four boys at the camp, it was felt that it would be extremely difficult to talk with the entire group as the campers came from all over the state.

Method of Procedure

Fifteen boys were selected to be interviewed. All the boys lived within a fifteen mile radius of the metropolitan area. The age range was from eight to twelve, so that a cross section of all the campers was used.

The writer contacted each referring agency, getting the permission of the worker to see the boys. Each boy was then contacted by telephone and an appointment was made to meet with the boy at his home.

¹ Infra, p. 6.
The interviews were structured to the extent that each boy was encouraged to talk about his camp experience.

The writer felt that by talking with the children who were involved in the camping experience at Camp Wediko in the summer of 1953, it could be roughly determined what the experience meant to those boys as related to the definition quoted from Romona Bachus.2

Value

It is hoped that this study will give some indication as to what the camping experience meant to the boy involved. Though it does not deal with the therapeutic or diagnostic effects as such, it does give an indication as to what a camping experience of this type means to the campers involved.

Also, it is hoped that some indication is given as to whether therapeutic methods can be so carefully integrated into the treatment camp situation that it may be enjoyed by the boys as a real camping experience.

2 Infra, p. 4.
CHAPTER II
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT TREATMENT CAMPS

Literature on treatment camps is not extensive, most of it deals with the grouping of children, program, administration, etc. However, some material has been found which is deemed valuable and has been kept in mind in the course of this study.

The following quotation summarizes the writer's thinking and will serve as a springboard for the stated purpose of this thesis:

If the best preparation for adult life is the remembrance of a happy childhood, then a good camp with its opportunities for exciting, adventurous activity, for living in and related to the world of nature, and for free and happy experiences with other children and adults can make an important contribution to the development of children.1

Though Miss Bachus' statement may be considered valid, one must bear in mind that not all children can be considered good prospects for camp. This point is borne out by the following statement by William C. Morse:

Care in the correct selection of children for camp has been recognized as important by most writers in the field. This assumes special significance with disturbed children, many of whom might be unable to sustain separation from their parents or be incapable of participating in any form of group living.

In general, Slavson's principle of 'social hunger'..., should also be a prerequisite in the selection of prospective campers. Chassel...found that children whose difficulties were manifested most frequently in relation to their homes, made excellent camp adjustments. He added that extremely aggressive

1 Romona Bachus, "Where the Camping Tasks Begin," The Nervous Child, 6:130-134, April, 1947.
children, as well as those completely unable to get along in groups or to share adults, were not to be considered for camp.²

In order that emotionally disturbed children be given a camp experience which would be meaningful it would be necessary that the staff be qualified to handle the problems that the children would present in the camp situation.

However, it is recognized that there is a lack of people so qualified. This lack is pointed out by Doctor Young:

Counsellors skilled in group dynamics cannot be obtained on the open market because therapeutic camping has not been in existence sufficiently long to provide opportunities for the training of many such people.³

Further, in this same vein Doctor Young points out that with children who are disturbed it is necessary to be very well staffed. "The ratio of one cabin counselor to six boys was not adequate for such disturbed children as ours."⁴

The reason for this strong feeling about the number of staff required for a treatment camp is based on the needs of the campers for individual attention.

The theory that an atmosphere of permissiveness, thought neces-

² William C. Morse, "From the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp; Some Problems of Therapeutic Camping," The Child, 6:211, 1947.

³ Robert A. Young, Report to the Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer 1951, Boston, November 1, 1951, p. 5. (mimeographed)

⁴ Robert A. Young, Report to the Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer 1951, Boston, November 9, 1949, p. 7. (mimeographed)
sary, to some degree, must be present does not mean that controls are not of the utmost importance.

Redl presents this concept as follows:

The combination of gratification offering through symptom tolerance and non-interference, on the one hand, and the establishment of a clearly protective role in areas which require it on the other constitutes one of the most important treatment strategies.5

Permissiveness is not a symbol of affection. Total permissiveness does not help in making a child feel secure in a situation. Fantasies of self-destruction in boys such as were treated at Wediko would have been much too threatening if some measure of control were not exercised.

The camp season with which this study is concerned extended over a five week period. This period might seem short, however, Perlman has expressed the concept that:

At camp within twenty-four hours to two weeks children begin to feel at home and grow increasingly at ease in the constant proximity of the adults and children with whom they live.6

However, he does qualify this statement with the following:

"Even if the limited psychotherapeutic value of the summer camp is recognized, we must acknowledge its tremendous and unusual value as a potentially superior diagnostic instrument."7

Thus we see that these are some strong ideas concerning the

7 Ibid., p. 159.
diagnostic value of a camp such as Wediko.

On the side of therapeutic value, the camp also has supporters. After three years with the Guidance Camps Trust and earlier experiences at the Massachusetts General Hospital's camp, Dr. Young has this to say:

"Our limited experience justified our conviction that therapeutic changes are enhanced by these formal techniques and that this is a rich field for further exploration."  

CHAPTER III
CAMP WEDIKO

History

Following a meeting of the Greater Boston Group Work Committee in February, 1948, a sub-committee was organized to work jointly with the Camp Bureau of the Community Council. This committee, numbering six people, had the responsibility of determining the need of a specialized camp program in this area. Also, the committee was to determine the availability of funds for such a venture.

After six months of study, the committee went on record as saying that a treatment camp would fulfill a definite need in the community. This body also agreed to request the Judge Baker Guidance Center to act as a sponsor and to ask the Hood Foundation for funds.

During the course of the study conducted by this group, it was found that there were about two hundred children in the community who needed a camp experience. However, these children would be unacceptable in a regular camp.

Taking the name of Guidance Camps Trust, the board announced definite plans for a camp for the summer of 1949. The purposes as stated were: to serve those children who could not use regular camps, to facilitate treatment, and to study problems.

In accordance with the plans, as outlined by the Guidance Camps Trust, the camp was in operation during the summer of 1949.
After this session, it was realized that a more satisfactory method of processing the applications was necessary. Therefore, a screening committee was set up to process the applications for the season of 1950. This new method was described as successful by Dr. Young in his annual report to the Guidance Camps Trust.

Also, progress was indicated in the following areas: (1) treatment of emotionally disturbed children in a camp setting; (2) training of professional people in the dynamics and therapy of problem children; and (3) research which would contribute to a better understanding of these children and their problems.

In 1951, Doctor Young summarized the three years of operations as follows:

A permanent site is essential in order to afford the proper accommodations for staff and campers.

Our experience over the past three years in the comparatively new field of therapeutic camping has demonstrated that this is a resource, in the modification of unsatisfactory child behavior which is practical and worthy of further study.

The future of Camp Wediko is dependent upon the continued development of both its underlying philosophy and the techniques which permit this philosophy to be realized.¹

The Purpose of Camp Wediko was stated as follows by Doctor Young:

...To treat emotionally disturbed children in a camp setting, to train professional people in the dynamics and therapy of problem children, and to do research which will contribute to a better understanding of these children and their problems.

¹ Robert A. Young, Report to the Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer, 1951, Boston, November 1, 1951, p. 5. (mimeographed)
understanding of these children and their problems. ²

It has been recognized that for some children a camp experience can provide an opportunity for emotional growth. Attention will be focused on attempting to understand why it is that some children become less timid and fearful and learn to get along more adequately with their contemporaries or in other ways show that they are better able to cope with day-to-day living problems.

This is the belief which has been the driving force behind Camp Wediko. The feeling, as described above, that camps can be of use to emotionally disturbed children.

The following material will describe the setting of Camp Wediko.

Physical Plant

Camp Wediko is located in Georgetown, Massachusetts on the banks of Bald Pate Lake.

It is devoid of any mountains or long trails which would enable active boys such as found at Camp Wediko to have the opportunity of some mountain climbing hiking.

The camp proper was made up of five cabins in which the boys were housed. The cabins were located in two areas which made it possible to separate the younger boys from those who were older. The main building contained kitchen, dining hall, a large recreation hall, two bedrooms, a bath, and a large room which was used for a dormitory. There

² Robert A. Young, Report to the Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer, 1950, Boston, November 1, 1950, p. 3. (mimeographed)
were also facilities for an infirmary and cabins for the various activities. The director's house combined office and additional sleeping space. Shower rooms and toilet facilities were located in both areas. The athletic field was inadequate; however, it was used for group games which did not require a smooth playing surface.

**Camp Staff**

The selection of staff for a treatment camp is at best an extremely difficult thing.

The main criteria for selection of staff at Camp Wediko were:

1. Maturity.
2. Interest in children's problems.
3. Well-adjusted to the extent that he does not project his own problems into the child's behaviour.
4. Ability to handle the hostilities and attachments which might arise in his relationship with the campers.

The staff consisted of the following people: the director, a therapist who was affiliated with the Massachusetts General Hospital, a group therapist who was a practising psychologist, a head counsellor who was head of the Group Work Department in a southern university, an administrative assistant who doubled as a therapist and was completing his work toward a doctorate in psychology, a waterfront director who held a Red Cross Water Safety Certificate and had been at Camp Wediko in 1951, a nurse who had worked at a mental hospital in this state and was doing graduate work at Boston University, five counsellors, three
of whom were graduate students at the Boston University School of Social Work, another was a student in the psychology program at that university and still another was a graduate student at Harvard, (additional counsellors included), a crafts counsellor who had completed his work toward a doctorate in education, a nature counsellor who taught science at a local high school, as well as five general counsellors - four of whom were ministers and the other a medical student. These general counsellors worked in the kitchen and substituted for the five cabin counsellors; they also met once a week for an in-training program. A camp manager and cook handled the purchasing and preparation of food. The psychodrama program was directed by a graduate student of psychology. He had been at camp for two previous seasons in the same role. Of this group, two people did not live at the camp; the group therapist and the arts and crafts counsellor commuted each day.

As can be seen, the staff was made up of well-trained personnel who had a great deal of interest in their work and for the most part were psychodynamically oriented.

Two of the counsellors had their wives at camp. Two of the counsellors had their wives at camp. These women had been at camp previously. The wife of the psychodramatist assisted in recording of material. It was felt important to the total structure of the camp that women be included in the camp situation.

The camp directors role was one which required him to remain aloof from too much contact with the campers. He was the authority
figure to whom the boys had to answer in case of seriously deviant beha-

vior. This was explained to the boys at the beginning of the camp season.

The group therapist was to meet with each cabin group once a week during the rest hour. The meeting was held in the cabin of that particular group. This was the group therapist's only real contact with the campers. However, the boys had been told about this activity before the camp opened.

Camp Program

The camp site offered opportunities for activities which are associated in a boy's mind with the enjoyment of camping - archery, boating, swimming, fishing, riflery, crafts, nature study, and overnight camping trips. These pleasure gratifications served as a firm foundation for the therapeutic process.

Upon this foundation was built the rest of the camp program which had to do with the therapeutic and diagnostic aspects of the treatment camp. The group therapy, individual therapy, and psychodrama programs were, therefore, fitted into the program.

The integration of these devices had to be subtle to give the boys a pleasant camping experience as well as a helpful one.

The General Camp Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the camp was one of permissiveness. By this, it is not only meant to imply that deviant behaviour was tolerated, but that it was a working principle not only for the interpersonal relation-
ship between staff and camper but for the program as a whole.\textsuperscript{3} Following the concept presented by Redl, extremely fearful situations were controlled by the staff.\textsuperscript{4} The staff, in assuming the role of protector when necessary, helped give the boys the sense of security which was needed in order for them to function in such a way as to help them benefit from the camping experience.

\textit{Selection of Campers}

Since it is widely recognized that not all children fit into a treatment camp situation, careful consideration must be given to the selection of boys for camp.\textsuperscript{5} Realizing this, a screening committee was set up. The screening process involved interviews by members of the committee with the agency making the referral, with the boy's family, and with the boy himself.

The final decision depended upon whether it was felt that the boy could be helped directly through the camp program, or, at least that a better understanding of the dynamics of his behaviour could be reached.

Through the interviews with the boy's parents, it was possible to discuss directly the purpose of the camp, the make-up of the staff and the nature of the program; as well as to answer questions and, in some cases, allay fears and doubts as to the advisability of the boy's

\textsuperscript{3} Supra, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{4} Supra, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{5} Supra, p. 4.
being in camp.

After selection, the boy was prepared for accepting the therapeutic program by members of the screening committee. Attempts were made to create a favorable mental attitude by explaining to each boy the following: (1) That the purpose of camp was not only to afford him a good time but also to help him work out some of the problems and fears which brought him to his agency; (2) that every other boy in camp was also there for a definite purpose and that the staff would try to help them all by some special activities in which it was hoped they would participate.

**Cabin Groupings**

Great care was taken in forming each cabin group. Since all the children at the camp were there because of emotional disturbances, a great deal of consideration had to be given to the individual's needs before he was placed in a unit.

The following factors were considered in the groupings:

1. Age.
2. Physical Maturity.
3. Interests.
4. Personality of the Counsellor.

The primary aim in the consideration of these factors was an attempt to create group balance. This term is used by Slavson to describe the following phenomenon:

Patients with varying problems are grouped together so that each
may be helped to overcome his specific difficulties; thus, withdrawn and aggressive patients help one another, or the unconflicted member helps one with strong inhibitions break through his defenses.6

The validity of this statement was seen clearly as the camp period progressed.

The total enrollment at Camp Wediko consisted of thirty-four boys. Thirty-three were referred by agencies for therapeutic and diagnostic reasons and one was the son of the camp cook.

A week after the initial assignments were made, it was realized that some of the boys were not suited for the group in which they had been placed and some changes were made.

The effect of these changes is discussed in another chapter.7

7 Infra, p. 27.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

After analysis of the findings, it was discovered that the material could be divided into two areas:

1. Those boys, nine in all, who felt that they had enjoyed the camp experience and would like to return; in other words, those who had a positive experience.

2. Those boys, six in all, who felt that the camp experience was not an enjoyable one and did not wish to return or showed some ambivalence about returning; in other words, those who had a negative experience.

The following is a case presentation of one of the boys in the group who expressed positive feelings about the camp.

Ralph, aged ten, lived with his parents and two brothers, aged seven and twelve.

Ralph had a great deal of difficulty making friends with other boys at school. This hindered his total adjustment at school. His precarious adjustment carried with it the possibility of expulsion from the public school system.

Both Ralph's parents had limited backgrounds. They were described as being very immature by the referring agency. They did not want children because they were threatened by the responsibility of children. Both the parents felt warmly towards each other; however, their positive feelings could not overcome their very immature demands upon one another and this led to a very stormy relationship.

The father was jealous of all the boys but was particularly rejecting of Ralph. He continually criticized Ralph for his interests in art, music and dancing, saying that these were all feminine interests.
The mother, on the other hand, tried to be more accepting of Ralph but found this difficult to do because of father's extreme demands.

The agency hoped that at camp Ralph would have the opportunity to identify with a good father figure and that this experience would help him in relating to his peers.

Although Ralph showed some mixed feelings about camp, he seemed to enjoy his stay. His relationship with the cabin counsellor was positive except on those occasions when the counsellor bore the brunt of his acting out.

Ralph spent a great deal of time talking and walking with one of the women at camp. He seemed to enjoy this pass-time very much. This boy had little to do with the arts and crafts counsellor. However, in his few contacts with that person, Ralph dropped his "tough-guy" role and seemed to talk easily. His relationship with the nature counsellor improved after he was told directly that he would have to do as he was told. Ralph's activity in psychodrama was not good. He seemed to resist drama as a therapeutic medium because of a strong rivalry situation with another member of his group. In group discussions, Ralph participated intermittently.

Ralph seemed to relate quite well to the boys in his cabin and he was well liked by them. However, he showed intense jealousy when the cabin counsellor paid any attention to the other boys in the group.

Ralph's parents were interviewed before the season started. They expressed a sincere desire to know what was bothering Ralph and felt that the camp would help them to find out. Both parents seemed very sincere in their desire to have Ralph attend camp and derive some benefit from his experience.

Ralph was also interviewed before camp. At that time, the camp was explained to him. He was told about psychodrama and group therapy. It was explained that all the boys at camp had problems and these two activities would help them with their problems.

Ralph showed very sincere interest in camp. He said that he wanted to go. He felt that this experience would be more positive than his previous camp experience during which he had been in trouble continually.

Ralph was interviewed at his home by the writer.
He talked very easily, bringing out strong positive feelings about the camp. During the interview, Ralph tried very hard to remember the names of all the staff members. He met with a fair amount of success. He talked positively about the nature, dramatics and swimming counsellors. He said that riflery and archery had been very enjoyable and spoke very warmly about the counsellor in charge of that activity. When asked about arts and crafts, he said that he could not remember who the counsellor was and said, "I didn't like it anyway. It was too crowded in the crafts cabin and there were too many kids in there at one time so the counsellor could not help each kid."

Ralph asked about the camp nurse and the wife of one of the specialists, saying that he had enjoyed his relationship with them.

Ralph could distinguish between the director and the therapist. He had a great deal of contact with both and knew what their roles were.

In talking about the other campers, he expressed very positive feelings about the older boys who were in his cabin area. The only negative feeling expressed was toward J., a boy in his cabin. There had been a strong rivalry situation between Ralph and J.

Although Ralph's cabin assignment had not been changed, he expressed the feeling that he had been quite anxious when he had first heard about the proposed changes, but then thought that since he knew and liked the counsellors in the other cabins, as well as the boys, he was not too worried that he might be changed.

Because of his many contacts with the group therapist, Ralph was able to understand this person's role. He described it as follows: "Dr. S. was the guy who used to come into our cabin about once a week. He tried to help us understand one another." However, the boy was confused as to what the director's role was. He said that he could not understand what that person was supposed to be doing.

Ralph said that he had enjoyed the following activities: nature, swimming, riflery, archery and drama. He did not feel that the arts and crafts activity was adequate nor did he understand the group therapy program. Ralph expressed positive feelings toward the whole staff, both male and female. Generally his feelings about his fellow campers was also positive. He indicated that he was somewhat concerned by the changes in cabin assignments. Also,
confusion as to the role of the director was indicated.

Ralph showed a great deal of interest in attending camp. His parents were also enthusiastic about the proposed camp experience.

The interview with Ralph is representative of the interviews held with the other eight boys in the positive group. The following is a summary of the attitudes of the other eight boys in the positive group.

The boys in this group expressed the desire to return to camp and all felt that their total experience at Wediko had been a good one. They felt the same way about the activities; they had enjoyed nature, riflery, archery, swimming and drama but did not feel that the arts and crafts activity was good because of the crowded conditions in the crafts shop and also because the counsellor was too busy to give anyone individual attention. The group therapy program was an area which none of these boys could remember. They remembered that they had been told about it, they said, but did not remember participating in it.

Their relationships with the staff, they described as good. They liked the staff and felt that those people had helped them to enjoy camp.

All the boys in the group felt that they had made quite a few friends at camp. Not all expressed the feeling that they had good relationships with a great number of their peers, but they all felt that they had made enough friends to insure a good camp experience in that respect.
Their feelings about the cabin changes were the same as expressed by Ralph. None of the boys, save one, had been reassigned. The one boy who had been said that he knew he would be changed because he was so much bigger than the other boys in his cabin. The rest of the group said that they had wondered about the changes. Each boy then was able to give reasons as to why he knew he would not be changed.

In the area of camp activities, seven members of this group indicated that they had enjoyed the psychodrama program and two had nothing to say about it. The response to the nature program was also positive on the whole. Six boys said that they enjoyed it and three were ambivalent about it, saying that at times they had found it enjoyable, at other times not. The feeling about swimming as an activity was overwhelmingly positive, with all nine boys saying that they had enjoyed it very much. Riflery and archery were two activities which, like nature, were enjoyed by six out of the nine. The remaining three boys had not found these too stimulating.

Seven of the nine boys felt that they had experienced positive relationships with the staff and two boys had no comment to make. All nine boys felt they had made friends, in varying numbers, during their five week camp period.

As has been indicated, all the boys had shown some concern about the changes in the cabin assignments.

Six boys in this group were unaware what the role of the director was. The other three had some understanding of what his role was through
previous contacts with him.

The arts and crafts activity was held by eight boys to be uninteresting and one boy expressed a liking for it.

The group therapy program was an area which none of these boys could remember. They did remember that they had been told about it, they said, but did not remember participating in it.

The following case presentation concerns one of the boys from the negative group.

Paul, aged twelve, was an only child. He lived with his parents. His father had felt rejected and neglected as a child and had resented his mother's preference of a younger brother. He felt that for a person to assume full responsibility for his child, one had to be over-protective and had to coddle the child. This he did with Paul. Mother was afraid to manifest any strong feeling for Paul because to show love for someone was to place him in danger. Both parents had good educational backgrounds. Father was a college graduate and mother had graduated from a secretarial school. Paul had a very high I.Q. but was having a great deal of difficulty at school. Paul had trouble making friends; he could not tolerate frustration to any degree; he had trouble sustaining effort in any direction. It was felt that a prolonged break in treatment over the summer months was inadvisable. It was hoped that the camp experience would give him an opportunity for constructive self expression as well as a chance to develop skills.

Paul was the only boy attending Camp Wediko for a second time. He did not show any anxiety about his separation from home and seemed to be making a fairly good adjustment. After the first week, his cabin assignment was changed. He had been placed in a cabin with hyper-active boys and had initiated runaways.

After this change, he seemed to relate quite positively to the new group as well as to his new counsellor. However, it soon became apparent that a very intense rivalry situation existed and Paul's popularity among the campers lessened. He showed a great deal of hostility toward the cabin counsellor when he was stopped from leading a group in a runaway.

Paul's relationship toward the staff was not too good. He be-
moaned the fact that he had been changed from his original cabin and also that he was not allowed to do as he pleased.

Paul organized sleep-outs on a couple of occasions and seemed to enjoy this very much. He was involved to a very limited degree in the nature activity. His progress in swimming was fair. He tried very hard to overcome his fear of the water and was doing fairly well when he began to break out with boils. In arts and crafts he vacillated from outstanding work to infantile work. He could make excellent suggestions as to what could be done, but his projects were of a low caliber of workmanship. At the outset Paul resisted psychodrama but as his group became better organized, he was able to participate more readily. In the group discussions, Paul seemed to be helped in his attitudes toward one of his cabin mates. He responded when controls were consistently applied.

Paul made some gains, but seemed to become more disturbed. When he was convinced of his inability to control others in the camp setting, other anxieties came out.

In the intake interview, Paul expressed a strong desire to be allowed to return to Camp Wediko. He said that he looked forward to all the activities at the camp, saying that he hoped he could learn to swim and take part in the riflery activity. The therapeutic media were explained to Paul and this seemed to have no negative effect on his enthusiasm for camp.

Paul's parents were also very positive in their attitude toward the camp. During their pre-camp interview, they talked quite positively about Paul's previous experience at Wediko.

When the writer discussed Paul's camp experience with him, he was quite negative about the whole staff. He remembered hitting one of the staff members on the head with a rock. He mentioned the nurse only to say that he had hurt him very much when she was treating him for his boils. He said that he could not think of anyone he liked very much. Paul could not select any campers whom he liked very much. He said that there was no one he cared for especially.

He said that swimming was a lot of fun and reminded the writer that he had almost won his beginners certificate. Generally, he felt, none of the activities were much fun, although at one point he was able to say that he had enjoyed drama near the end of the camp season.
Paul did not know who the therapist was. He wondered, "...what that guy was supposed to be doing."

Paul expressed much feeling about his change in cabin assignment. He said, "I had just gotten used to the kids in my cabin and then they changed me."

In the pre-camp interview with Paul, it was felt that he had exhibited a strong desire to attend camp. His parents had also shown enthusiasm at the prospect of their boy's attending the camp.

During the post-season interview with Paul, he indicated that he had not enjoyed camp. The activities, on the whole, were not interesting, he said. He felt that he had not made any friends among the campers and that the staff was not to his liking. His feeling about the changes was intense. He felt that the fact that because he had been changed from one cabin to another, he was unable to have a good time at camp.

The following is a summary of the attitudes of the six boys in the negative group. This group of six boys responded the same way as Paul had. Their feelings about the activities were all negative, for the most part, and they felt they had not made many positive relationships among the staff and fellow campers. They expressed the same feelings about the cabin changes as Paul. However, from this group of six, four boys were consistently negative in their descriptions of the various phases of their camp experience. The other two boys were negative about certain aspects but were able to find some positives.

In this group, four of the boys had not enjoyed the psycho-drama program, one had enjoyed it and one made no comment. None of the boys had any comment to make about the group therapy program. Arts and crafts and nature programs met with strong negative comments.
by four boys and two had no comment to make about either. Riflery and archery were activities which also were negative experiences for four of the six boys, with two boys expressing positive feelings. The swimming activity was well received by all six boys.

Four boys felt that they had not made any friends at camp, and two felt that they had a limited number of friends. In the area of relationship with staff, four boys felt, like Paul, that they had not made any positive relationships and two felt that they had one or two members of the staff whom they liked.

It is interesting to note that the four boys who had expressed negative feelings in every area except swimming were the four boys in this group who had been changed from one cabin to another.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This was a study of fifteen boys who had been at Camp Wediko for the camp season of 1953. These boys were interviewed by the writer in order to determine what meaning the camp experiences had for them in terms of their understanding of the camp.

It was not the purpose of this thesis to present complete material on the value of the camp for individuals. This was done quite thoroughly by Miss Elizabeth Cameron in a study done at Boston University in 1949. Mr. Stanley Suig also did a study on this treatment camp in 1949 at Boston University which indicated the camp adjustment of behavior types.

In the study herein presented, the feelings of the boys were used to describe the meaning of the experience to them in terms of the following:

1. What were the attitudes of the boys in regard to their relationships at camp with staff and campers?
2. How did the boys feel about the camp program?
3. How did the boys feel about being changed from one cabin group to another?

The feeling of the majority of the boys that they had formed good relationships with the staff and campers seemed to be carried over into their feelings about other phases of the camping experience.
These boys were satisfied with the over-all camping experience. Their feelings about the arts and crafts program were quite negative and they were somewhat confused about the group therapy meetings as well as the role of the director. This group did not indicate strong feeling about the cabin reassignments but did verbalize that they were somewhat concerned at the time of the changes.

The negative group's feeling about lack of relationship with the staff and their peers seemed to prevail in every other phase of their camp experience.

Their only positive association was with the swimming activity. Their strongest feelings were expressed in relation to the changes in cabin assignments, which most of these boys had undergone. They, too, expressed confusion about the group therapy meetings and the role of the director.

Thus it is indicated that better facilities for the arts and crafts activity are needed. Also, some provision should be made to cut down the number of boys in the crafts shop at one time or to increase the number of crafts specialists so that more attention can be given to the individual boy.

The cabin reassignments seem to be the most significant feature derived from the interviews. The majority of the boys who had been changed expressed very negative feelings about their camp experience. It would seem advisable, then, that the summaries from the referring agency be required to give a fuller description of the boy in terms
of age, physical maturity, and how the boy may be expected to act in the camp situation.

Both groups indicated confusion as to the group therapy program and the role of the therapist, as well as confusion as to the role of the director.

It might be well to note here that the people involved in the camp program per se whose activities either dissatisfied or confused to a greater degree, the group therapist and the arts and crafts counselor, did not live at the camp. It would seem that since they did not participate in the camp program any more than they did might be the campers were unable to relate to them to a greater degree.

The role of the director had been explained to the boys, but a clearer explanation would seem to be indicated.¹

1 Supra, p. 12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabin #1</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Maturity</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>x-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Thin-Small</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>x*</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Tall-Thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>71/2</td>
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<td>x-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>61/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Thin-Small</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
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### TABLE I (CONT'D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabin #5</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Physical Maturity</th>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>x-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
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<td>x*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
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<td>x-</td>
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<td>34.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
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</table>

x Indicates Type.
xC Extremely Active or Passive, Whatever the Case.
xC- Not Extreme.
SCHEDULE

Name
Birthdate
Others in Family
Agency Making Referral
Workers Name Address
Child's Problems at Time of Camp Referral
Previous Camp Experience

Role of Camp as Seen by Referring Agency

Significant material from each interview, showing feelings about:

Relationships
Staff (Male & Female)
Campers
Camp Program
Changes in Cabin Assignments
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Young, Robert A., "A Summer Camp as an Integral Part of a Psychiatric Clinic," Mental Hygiene, 23:241-256, April, 1939.


Unpublished Material

Young, Robert A., "Report to Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer 1949," Boston, November 9, 1949. (mimeographed)

——, "Report to Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer 1950," Boston, November 1, 1950. (mimeographed)

——, "Report to Trustees of Guidance Camps Trust on the Treatment Camp, Summer, 1951," Boston, November 1, 1951. (mimeographed)