

70th Anniversary Pageant Script

This document is the script for an All-Camp pageant that took place at the Mashipacong Estate on August 17, 1957 in celebration of the 70th Anniversary of Trail Blazer Camps. Nineteen fifty-seven was a milestone year since it was in that year that Trail Blazer Camps became independent of the association it had with St. John's Guild following its transition in 1953 from Life Camps to Trail Blazer Camps. And, it was also the year that Lois Goodrich was appointed Executive Director, after having served as Director of the Girls Camp from 1934 to 1956 and as a Life Camps counselor from 1931 to 1933.

The pageant script (written for children as the audience) not only tells the story of the history and evolution of Trail Blazer Camps over the first 70 years; it also tells the story of the natural and human history of Mashipacong and the region over centuries of time. The pageant was an elaborate and festive event, with each small camp group participating by creating and presenting a skit (often in costume) to illustrate a part of the story. Although scripts for the small camp skits are not included here, the skit topics and names of the groups presenting them are noted in the pageant script.

The cover page to the pageant script was written by Lois Goodrich. The letter to the Board referenced on the cover page is not included here. The pageant narrative was written by Hilde (Wohl) Adler, and is reprinted here with her permission. The photo at the top of the page (provided by Hilde) shows Hilde reading the script at the event. The script was transcribed and reformatted into a digital file from the original typewritten document, with minimal editing, by Juanita Barrena, who also wrote this introduction.



SPECIAL CELEBRATION OF OUR 70th ANNIVERSARY

Since it was 70 years this summer since our camps were started, we declared Saturday, August 17th, our day of commemoration and worked up and presented a long, historical pageant, with every group of campers in both boys' and girls' camps participating.

From pre-camp training period on, attention was given to collecting data on our history. Mr. and Mrs. Horace Brink, of Sussex View, were brought in as resource people about history of our present locale. Hilde Wohl, one of the counselors, put all the material together in a script for the pageant and read the whole, giving time to each group to act its own part of the story.

A letter sent out to Board members telling of the whole event is included here to serve as a description of the gala day.

Following this is included the script of the pageant in total.

Lois Goodrich

PAGEANT SCRIPT

This is the 70th birthday of Life Camps, and this is its story.
It is a story of faith, and courage, and hard work.
It is a story of great love, of happy laughter, of strong friendships.
It is a story which teaches us, in the words of John Donne, that

“no man is an island, entire for itself; every man is a peece
of the continent, a part of the Maine . . . any man’s death diminishes
me, because I am involved in Mankinde . . .”¹

This was the lay of the land in 1887. Grover Cleveland was president. People either walked, or rode around in buggies with horses pulling them. Potatoes were 30 cents a bushel, eggs 12 cents a dozen, a good hot turkey dinner cost 20 cents, and a man could easily support a family on \$12 a week. There was gaslight in the houses and the people used woodstoves to keep themselves warm. The gold rush was over. The ladies’ hemline was still to the ankles.

Things weren’t quite the same as they are today, but this was still America . . . there were still children in cities, and grownups who had known trees and mountains and who wished to share. And, for a beginning, that was enough.

In 1887, Life Magazine was a humor magazine, a little like the present “New Yorker.” It was read only in the vicinity of New York City and two of its editors were a Mr. Mitchell and a Mr. Gilbert.

SKIT: BEGINNING OF LIFE’S FRESH AIR FUND (FRONTIERSMEN)

In 1891, Life Magazine leased a farm near Branchville, Connecticut and called it “Life’s Farm.” The Fresh Air Fund sent some of the children to this farm, while others continued, as they had done for the four previous years, to go to farms in the neighborhood. The children were sent to get fresh air and sunshine, and were pretty free to do what they wanted most of the day. As a matter of fact, for some time there were only 5 counselors there, and over 200 children. When the director was asked how he managed this, he said, “well-there are 4 stone walls around the place. One counselor watches from the north wall, one from the south wall, one from the east wall and one from the west wall. That leaves one for emergencies!”

By 1894 all the children who were sent to the country by the Fresh Air Fund went to Life’s Farm, and they continued to do so until 1923 when James Cox Brady donated a farm near Pottersville, New Jersey. For the next two years, boys and girls went to both farms for periods of 2 weeks. The necessary money was donated by people from all over the United States and several foreign countries. As “Life” was a local magazine at that time, it seems amazing that word of the Fresh Air Fund spread so far so quickly.

¹ *These are not typos. The quote is in old English from John Donne’s Meditation XVII, in Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions (pub. in 1624).*

In 1925, a man named L.B. Sharp was hired by Life Magazine to become executive director of the activities of the Fresh Air Fund, and the name "Life Farm" was changed to "Life's Camp." Also, from then on, the Branchville farm became the girls' camp; the Pottersville farm the boys' camp (later known as Camp Raritan).

The children who went to Life's Farm in those days are now grown up; many are married and have children of their own - but they still treasure their thoughts of the place and have many wonderful memories. As we can see by the following example, the Life Camp Spirit, which we know now, has been growing for a long, long time.

One day, a man came to the Branchville Camp in a big black Cadillac. He got out of his car and walked around, looking everywhere, saying nothing. A Counselor became curious about him and spoke to him and this is the story he told her. He had been at Life's Farm for two weeks when he was 6 years old; ever since then (and he was in his forties or fifties) he had held very dear memories of the place and had wanted to come back and see it again. He remembered that he slept in the upstairs of the farmhouse in a big double bed; that he played in the hay in the barn loft; that there was a big sled, and all day long he and the other boys used to slide down the grassy hill on it and then drag it back up so that they could go down again; that there was always plenty of molasses and milk for supper. But the most amazing thing of all was that he had made two friends there at the age of 6 . . . and all through the years he had kept up his friendships with them.

These Life Campers of yesterday remember a lot of things – like the White House, dramatics hill, the Scamp (the camp newspaper). which got its name because everybody slurred "Life's Camp" and it sounded like "Scamp"), musical night, stunt night, awards night, talent night, counselor-camper softball game, the swimming hole, and later on the pool and all the fun of scrubbing it.

They can recall that, no matter what, nobody could go to the bathroom until the red light went on at 10:30, and remember the little train called "The Prince of Wales" which ran right through camp every day at siesta time. They remember that if a girl raised her head up in the dormitory after "goodnight," she'd put it down fast enough if Miss Sexton [Girls' Camp Director] waved her little finger. Some of them look back on being a C.A. (counselor assistant) or an A.A. (activity assistant), both of which were much like what our leaders are today, and the fun of living in the A.A. tent all by themselves. There are many names to love and remember – like Hi Sexton, and Mike Stein, and all the counselors. One of the 1925 campers wrote this for the Scamps:

"This camp is about the best place I came to. The dormitory is just wonderful and the games, swimming, stories and crafts which the children love very much. Every morning we have exercising and after we finish the exercise we have flag raising and every group has a chance.

We have stunt night in which we have a lot of fun when we have seen it already. We have talent and musical night which are very nice. The hikes the children enjoy very much. We work very hard for our group points. At the end of camp they give us awards. When we get showers it is nice also because if you stay under it longer, you will not want to get out. We enjoy singing songs. I like to come next year because of all the good things such as nice playground and all of the air and all of the good things around camp."

Let's see what it looked like at Branchville.

SKIT: LIFE AT THE BRANCHVILLE CAMP (BRAE TARN AND TIMBER RIDGE)

In 1928 something happened which has made Life Camps different from all others and one of the best known and respected camps in the whole country. "Outpost" camps were established- "Sherwood" in Connecticut, and "Oshkidee" by Marty Feely at Raritan. These were little places away from the main camp to which groups could go, and where they could learn how to live in the woods and how to love them . . . in other words, how to become real campers. It was the beginning of decentralized camping. . . camping where children live in small groups away from the others, like a real family, and plan and carry out the program just as they want to. Sherwood and Oshkidee were followed by Tuckaway and Conestoga – it was like the gold rush – everyone wanted to stake a claim someplace and as fast as possible. Although there was not enough room for everyone to have a small camp right away, the groups that lived in the dormitory and tent fields also found names for themselves and developed a group feeling and spirit. Raritan used the magical names of Indian nations for their tribes .. Waeka, Weniki, Hill Tepee, Iroquois, Eagle Feather, Lenape, Blazing Arrow, Moccasin, Flying Wolf; the girls were a little more feminine – they claimed the Puppies, the Silver Birches, the Redstarts, the Eagles, the Cotton tails, the Hoot Owls.

In 1931, a young, thin and frightened maiden came to Branchville to be the scouting counselor. She was from Texas and it was difficult for anyone to understand what she said. It was her job to teach the girls fire building, how to handle the axe and saw, what wood to use – when, and she took them on gypsy trips - they went all over the country side and explored. On one of her trips she discovered some covered wagons in an old barn, and with her Texas drawl, she persuaded the farmer to sell her those for \$5 apiece. Those same wagons stand today at our Pioneer small camp! She took the girls across Route 7, the highway, and taught them how to sing "Little Sir Echo" and how to signal from Pine Point down to camp. She enjoyed her summer tremendously. Three years later she became the director of the camp!

SKIT: ABOUT MISS GOODRICH (LEADERS-GIRLS)

In 1937, another boys' camp, Camp Pole Bridge was established in Mata-moras, Pennsylvania, on the other side of the Delaware River, only 11 miles from here. There were 3 Life Camps now - Branchville, Raritan, and Pole Bridge. Pole Bridge Camp was for older boys, 12 to 16, and under the leadership of Chief Marty Feely, their director, they established many wonderful traditions. Many of their chiefs and campers today are active members of the Men's Alumni Association, and come back to Mashipacong every spring to help get the summer started. On the corner of the Pole Bridge Prospector, the camp paper, is written, ". . . as the old prospector of yore was ever exploring, pioneering, breaking the way toward his goal, so too Pole Bridge Camp reaches into new and unknown fields with certain aims and ideals, searching for the best in camping . . ."

SKIT: DEPICTING POLE BRIDGE CAMP (LUMBERJACKS)

In 1938, Nita came to Branchville and had a group called Donkey Trail. She spent most of her time taking care of the donkeys and very little of it watching the children. The donkeys were called Jack and Jenny, and there were two goats, a grown up one named Melinda and a baby named Billy. Billy grew up with the donkeys and thought he was one, and became very upset when the donkeys went anywhere without him. One day he was left home from a vagabond, and became so disturbed that they took him out by truck, just so he wouldn't have a nervous breakdown.

1938 was, in general, a rather normal summer at Branchville. Everybody had a wonderful time, but that was nothing unusual. Martin and Terrace Grassel, our dear caretakers of the preceding year were moved permanently to Raritan and we began a wonderful era with Robert and Elizabeth Dollar. At the end of the summer, as always, the campers left their nicest thoughts for the girls who would come the following summer.

From the Tuckaway scroll:

“To those who will be next to live in Tuckaway, we the Homesteaders of 1938 leave our quiet camp tucked away in the woods near the river. We hope that during your stay in camp you too will enjoy some of the things the first Homesteaders did years ago. We especially liked having a barbecue, making molasses taffy, building a house and riding in a boat we made . . .”

From Sherwood,

“ . . .there's a peace in the woods, too, and you can hug it to you and let it fall about your shoulders like a mantle. You will also find everlasting qualities of friendship, cooperation, understanding and good character. You may reach a changing point in your lives as some of us have done. And when you sit before your campfire at nights, you'll look into it and see your soul laid bare. Look honestly. Find your faults and let the fire cleanse and purify your spirit. Coldness and selfishness and all little petty things will melt away from you and you will have the strong scent of clean wood smoke in your nostrils and a great throbbing follows in your heart.”

Neither the campers nor the counselors knew it till the very last night of camp, but 1938 was the end of an era. There was to be no more Life Camp at Branchville; 1100 acres of woodland, unspoiled and beautiful had been bought at Mashipacong. There was magic even in the name of the place – an Indian name, meaning “place of big waters.” Some people say the whole thing came about like this:

SKIT: LEGEND OF MASHIPACONG (HOMESTEAD)

Others, who have studied some history tell us an even more wonderful story. They tell us that long, long, ago, about 30,000 years, this land was covered by a great sheet of ice – the glacier. It took many thousands of years for the ice to melt and the glacier to recede, but when it did, it left here many of the rocks and stones we see today. For a long time after that, only animals lived in these woods and hills – such strange things as dinosaurs, camels, lions, tigers and buffaloes. We know this because we have found the remains of bones and fossils to prove it.

The first people to whom the land belonged were the Indians. Many of them lived on the banks of the Delaware, about 6 miles from here. Most of them belonged to the Leni-Lenape nation and the tribe that inhabited most of this area was the Minsie tribe. Minsie means "land from which the waters have gone" and the tribe was so named because, according to their history, long ago, before the Delaware river broke through the mountain and made the Delaware water gap, the entire valley was a huge lake. After the water gap was made, the lake was drained and only the river remained while the rest of the land became a fertile valley known as the Minisink land. The Minsies believed that the land was a direct gift from the Great Spirit to them, as the first people. In their language the river was known as "the river of the original people." Their totem was the wolf and their council hall was on a level plateau near Milford, Pennsylvania, called "Pow-wow Hill."

Another of the Lenape tribes was the Unami tribe. Unami means "people further down the river." Its emblem was the turtle and their plaque pictured a turtle enclosed in a circle of gold and set in a seven pointed star. Their chieftain was called Tammany and he was perhaps the most beloved chieftain in the annals of American History. During the Revolutionary War he was known as Saint Tammany.

The Indians grew corn, beans, tobacco, and many squashes and melons. They cracked their corn with a pestle and mortar. The mortar was made of stone or sometimes of hard wood which would not split, such as gum or balsam. The thick forest was a hunting ground for deer, quail, geese and other animals. The lakes and streams were filled with fish and the Indians caught them with bone hooks or nets. Opossum and beaver furnished fur for skins. The Indians never killed or hunted for the sport of it; they were thankful to the Great Spirit for providing for their food, and they killed only what they needed to eat. They worshipped the Great Spirit and showed their appreciation through songs and dances.

INDIAN DANCES (FOREST TEPEE AND UNAMI)

The first Europeans, the early pioneers, came from the direction of the Hudson river. The Indians felt their land was a gift from the Great Spirit and therefore for the use of all mankind, so they sold land to the Europeans and were ready to live with them as brothers. The early pioneers dealt fairly with the Indians and learned many things from them. These pioneers were a hearty and courageous people who wanted only to find freedom in a new land – to build homes and to till the soil, It was not until the white man became greedy that the trouble began.

The Lenapes were not thoroughly aroused until the second "Walking Purchase." It was Indian custom that a man could buy as much land as he could walk in a day. William Penn made the first famous walking purchase, and the land he bought was south of here, below the Lehigh river. He stopped to rest, smoke and eat with the Indians as was the custom, and they considered it a fair purchase and were ready to live in peace. On June 23, 1683, William Penn and the Unami chief, Tammany, signed the Great Treaty which read,

" . . . we will be brethren, children of one Father. If the Indian or Christian shall harm one another, complaint shall be made by the sufferer that right might be done ,and wrong shall be forgotten. We will transmit this league between us to our children. It shall be made stronger and stronger and be kept . . . while the creeks and rivers run and while the sun and moon and stars endure."

SKIT: PENN'S WALK (PATHFINDERS)

But the white man had to have more and more and the second walking purchase was made by men of less character than William Penn. The Indians did not intend to sell any of the land of the Minsies, but were fooled by the white men. When news of another walking purchase spread, two men who walked with great speed and were known for their strength and endurance were chosen to walk. A horse, which carried food and rum, walked before them, and they did not stop to rest, eat or smoke as was expected. When they walked past the Lehigh river into the Minsie land, the Indians realized they were tricked and ran to warn the people in the villages which were no longer theirs. From then on there was never peace between the white man and the Indian. Indian attacks on the whites became more and more frequent. The homes of people who lived in the Minsie land were attacked, the houses and fields burned and the people murdered. Indians were considered wild beasts and regular Indian hunts were organized– but it was always open season for Indians. The man who killed more Indians than anyone else of his time was Tom Quick of Milford, Pennsylvania. Tom swore to kill 100 Indians as vengeance for his father who was murdered by them as he was carrying firewood home along the Delaware. Tom did manage to kill 93 Indians before he died. Many of them were killed along the Old Mine Road, which runs near the Delaware from Kingston to Pahaquarry, and is one of the oldest roads in America.

During the French and Indian War, the French fanned the flame of Indian attacks and during the Revolutionary War, the English allied with the Indians against the Americans. An Indian half-breed called Thayendanega, and also known as Colonel Joseph Brant of the English Tory army, led the Indians against the whites and cruelly massacred 19 settlers. This battle, known as the Battle of Minisink, is one of the most tragic stories of the American Revolution. After the Battle of Minisink, General Washington sent Generals Clinton and Sullivan to teach the Indians a lesson. These completely destroyed the Indian strength and never again could the Indians revenge themselves on the white owners of the Minisink.

In the early 1790's and early 1800's, pioneers flocked to these beautiful mountains and valleys. They tilled the soil, and to do this had to remove the rocks. They made them into stone walls which we can still find in many places, if we look. They planted apple trees and grape vines, and ground their corn in mills. The remains of 2 of these are here at Pioneer Brook. They built homesteads and schools. Everywhere we look we find evidence of their having lived here. They worked hard during the day, and when their work was through, they took time to enjoy themselves – with no need for the type of entertainment we know today.

SKIT: TYPICAL PIONEER DAY (PIONEERS)

Stagecoaches with 4 horses whipped along the old turnpike, the road right here in our camp, and stopped to rest the horses in a building which stood where the Lodge now stands. After 1810, the stage ran every day from Deckertown (which is now Sussex) to Milford. It came through 3 times a week on the long journey between Owego and Jersey City. The stage went about 40 miles a day, and in the evening the people rested at the various inns along the route. People weren't in any great hurry in those days. It is said that one of the early presidents of the United States came along this very road.

But the land was poor for farming, so these homesteaders piled their belongings into the covered wagons and pushed westward toward new frontiers.

Little is known about this land between the time the pioneers left and the early 1900's, but people did live here, and the little school continued. Those who loved the land too much to go struggled along and tried to farm it. In the 1920's there were 21 homes between camp and Sussex View. The little schoolhouse had 13 students and there were the remains of a tollgate between here and the Red Barn.

So . . . right here in our own camp, we can relive the history of our country . . . from the days of the ice cap . . . the Indians . . . the pioneers. We can find evidence to support our convictions. We come to understand that we are a very small part of a very long story!

Back to Life Camp: The land at Mashipacong was bought in 1938²; 1100 acres which have never been broken since King George of England gave the land to Lord Rutherford in return for some favor. The land was bought from a Mr. Robinson. Before Mr. Robinson had it, it belonged to a Mr. Wilson of Sussex and was used by a hunt and gun club. Mr. Wilson sold it to Mr. Robinson for \$3000. Through the years there was a little lumbering done by various people.

The boys camp was to stay at Raritan, but the girls' camp they were to move to Mashipacong. When the children and the counselors found out about this they were excited to be sure, but they were sad too. They loved their Connecticut camp and hated to leave it to go to a place they did not know.

In the fall of 1938, Dr. Sharp, his wife and daughter, Miss Goodrich and Nita Baumgardner came here to the unspoiled forest to look at it and to get some idea about where to put buildings and small camps. They lived in an old house, the foundation of which can still be seen by the old campfire circle, and every evening they listened to the sounds of the lake. They saw many deer swim across it, sometimes whole families – mother, father and a little one. They fished and ate fish every day . . . only one day did they buy a chicken from the people who lived in the house that was where the Lodge is. They discovered Vesper Glen and named it "Vesper Glen" and they took a trip to Lost Lake. At the edge of the lake they carved their initials into an old stick, as a newsletter to anyone who might come after them, and while there, they discovered that the boys from Camp Polebridge had already been there and left a newsletter for them. They decided on a possible location for the dining hall; there was no lawn then, and no view, so they weren't exactly sure.

SKIT DEPICTING ABOVE PARAGRAPH (AWANASA)

² [2] *The land was purchased by Doris Duke and leased to Camp for a nominal fee. In 1991, Doris Duke transferred the land to the Nature Conservancy to create the Mashipacong Bogs Preserve, with provision for Camp to continue to use 200 acres.*

On November 18th, 1938, a group of Life Lifers and B squares came to camp and broke ground for the first building, the Lodge. They dedicated the Girls Camp at Mashipacong with the following words:

“Today we have come to dedicate this site, a new Life Camp.

Today the foundation is to be laid for the first building from which, as from the White House at Branchville, Connecticut, will home the administering of the wants of Life campers.

We also ate our first meal here today. There is no dining room yet to match the bright black and orange one at Branchville, Connecticut, but the same spontaneous spirit was established on this spot to mark the foundation of the future dining room.

For years, Life Campers have dreamed of a lake in which to swim, row and fish. Today we saw the fulfillment of our dream – a shining lake which reflected so brilliantly the blue of the sky.

We have found our ideal camp.

We have come to rest in our covered wagon.

The brake is set!”

Throughout the winter and following spring the buildings were being designed and constructed, and everything from Branchville was moved over here. Can you imagine what strangers thought to see a procession of covered wagons rolling merrily across Bear Mountain Bridge! But roll they did, and the Trailblazers and Pioneers are sleeping in them today. The buildings were designed with thoughtfulness, and purpose, and love; they had to blend into the landscape and become a part of the woods. Only native materials were used and great care was taken not to chip or scratch the stones. Master craftsmen, artisans, experts with the axe and saw, were chosen to be the builders. A sawmill stood where the garden is now and the lumber came from the land. Trees were carefully chosen for strength and shape. Few nails were used in buildings and most of the joints were pegged or notched.

Despite hard work, summer came before the buildings were finished or the paths made. When the counselors came in 1939 they ate their meals on the triangle of grass in front of the Lodge; the food was passed through the windows of the Lodge. They were constantly getting lost and had to abandon all woods etiquette, and yell loudly in order to find each other. One of the counselors who came that year was a young Pennsylvanian named Betty Faust.

When Miss Goodrich and some of the staff went to get the children in the city there was no roof on the dining hall; by the end of the day, magically, it had been finished. Nail kegs were used as serving tables and goats wandered in and out of the dining hall because there were no doors. There was no Big Dipper; all the campers had to shower at the Little Dipper and walk all the way down to the old dock . . . can you imagine that on a cold day? Bathing suits were kept on lines inside the Little Dipper, and the lines sagged and it was rather confusing. There was no front lawn, or any lawn; campers as well as counselors longed for a place to sit down.

When the children arrived the first day, they were divided into 10 small groups - the Dutch Settlers, Amadahi, Homestead, Laynes, Unami, Trail Blazers, Pioneers, Trail Patch, Unaliyi, Timber Ridge. They lived like the real pioneers – it was not easy and bed was welcome at the end of the day, but the fun, the friendship, the joy of work well done made it all more than worthwhile. The tradition of good, clean living in the out of doors is a worthy one for us to carry forward.

SKIT: FIRST YEAR AT MASHIPACONG (TRAIL BLAZERS)

In 1940, National Camp was opened on the other side of the lake. Its purpose was to train educators and youth leaders in how to conduct outdoor education and camping. Several local colleges sent their students to National Camp for training in these areas, and people from all over the country came to take courses during the summer. The girls camp had many visitors from National because on this side of the lake these people could see in practice what was taught them in theory on the other side.

SKIT: NATIONAL CAMP (HERMIT GLEN)

There are, at this point, two gentlemen and two ladies who deserve mention. The gentlemen are Charlie Benjamin and George Babcock. Without them it is difficult to imagine how the camp at Mashipacong could have been a success. Charlie took tender care of the donkeys; when they were babies he picked them up in his arms and carried them to the barn; in honor of Charlie, one of the baby donkeys born here was named Charro. Charlie drove the horses for the covered wagon trips, and he did many, many other things; and since he has left, he has been sadly missed by all who knew him. George Babcock, and for that matter his whole family, has done and still does every-thing and anything. No matter how busy he is, he always has time to lend a hand when he is needed. Both of them, Charlie and George, have become a part of the tradition of this place, and our hands go out to them with respect and appreciation.

The two ladies are Mrs. Ella Hopewell and Mrs. Ellen Thomas. Miss Ella came in 1940 and Mary Ellen in 1944, and they have been back every summer to make sure all of us are getting enough to eat. Their fame has spread far into New York City through all the campers who have known them through the years. We have all been thoroughly spoiled by them, but we hope that they will continue to spoil us for a long, long time.

The Life Lifers fixed up a campsite at the Mashipacong camp and named it Old Timers Camp. Here the ex-campers come with their families and cook all their meals in the out of doors. The LL Club has become more and more active. The Life Lifers, who are the girls camp alumnae, always find ways to show their appreciation for the wonderful times they had at camp. The boats we are using this summer were scraped, caulked and painted in June by one of the LLs and her family . . . more services than any of us realize are being done by them all the time. The alumni from the boys camp formed a Men's Alumni Association and many of them come every spring to get the camp ready for the children. At the end of summer, every year, the Life Lifers have their camp out here for about 10 days, and attendance is growing every year. Here families live in small groups, and husbands and children get to share some of the experiences the LLs had when they were children.

Winter camping, started in 1937, has become a favorite part of the program. When the mountains are covered with snow and the lake is a shining sheet of glass, campers find a new magic they never dreamed of. The children sleep in the dining hall in front of a blazing fire and cook all meals themselves. They toboggan down the hills, ski, walk on snowshoes and ice skate, and they come home in the evening with red cheeks, feeling just wonderful. Sometimes there is no snow and they take long hikes and learn about winter in the woods and how different the trees look. In the evening they sing favorite songs, and as they go to sleep, to the sound of the fire and the smell of the wood smoke, many wonderful memories of summer come back.

SKIT: WINTER CAMPING (PIXIES)

Many important changes have taken place during the last 15 years. Pole Bridge Camp closed in 1943, 4, and 5 due to lack of staff. Because there were so many men in the service, there were only enough counselors to operate one boys' camp, and Raritan was chosen. The boys who went to Raritan during the war years worked on farms in the neighborhood; they got up at 6:30, had breakfast, packed lunches and were trucked to the farms. They worked all day and came back to camp just in time for a short swim and supper. All hikes and vagabonds had to be fitted in on the weekend. Pole Bridge opened again in 1946, and then was closed permanently.

In 1952, Life magazine, which by then had become an international magazine, decided it could no longer sponsor a local organization, and due to lack of funds, the camps closed totally for half a year. Counselors, campers, life lifers, everyone who had ever been associated with camp worked and thought and prayed. . . . All dreams came true, everyone suddenly burst out singing, when, in the spring of 1953, camp was reestablished by affiliation with St. John's Guild. The name was changed to Trail Blazer Camps, after our Trail Blazer small camp. The boys' camp was moved to Mashipacong and the Brady estate was returned to its owners and is now being used as a camp for the Newark Boys Club. Martin and Terrace Grassel, who were the caretakers at Branchville and then went to Raritan are still there and take care of camp for the people who are now using it. National Camp became an independent organization and is now located where Pole Bridge Camp used to be. This year, Trail Blazer Camps will have its own board, no longer affiliated with St. John's Guild board, but the Chairman of the St. John's Guild, Dr. Phillip Stimson, will also be chairman of the Trail Blazer Board.

And so we have reached the present.

Some day, others will sit here and look out at these mountains.

Some day, others will tell this story.

The spirit of this camp is an ever-growing thing, and, as it has been

Passed to us, we will pass it on to others.

We are Life Campers.

We are Trail Blazer Campers.

And we look to the future with faith!

Hilde Wohl
August, 17, 1957