

a friend or relative who you know will appreciate an all-sports, all-action camp. Let us not forget that Chikopi has grown to where it is today because one family has shared the concept with another family for the past 88 years. For that, Chikopi thanks you and all the families that have come before you. Some of you may not realize that there are fewer and fewer camps like Chikopi remaining. Camps that have many years of tradition and value, where campers live together for a month or two each summer for multiple years, are less and less. Many camps have ceased to exist or have cut their time to two or three week sessions. Others have become only specialty camps for sport or even computers.

We believe there are still families who wish their children to have experiences like those they share at Chikopi. We are committed to continue providing these experiences as we have for the past eight decades.

The only way that Chikopi and Ak-0-Mak can succeed for eight more decades is to have our wonderful families share the Chikopi and Ak-o-Mak concept with families of their choosing. That way we know we have families that are similar to you.

Please help us continue the pattern of success. Tell a friend or relative about Chikopi. Give them a tip that will last a lifetime. After you share your stories and excitement with them, we will do the rest. Call or email us and pass on their contact information.

Just this month (February), John Eman (Chikopi 1951-1954) and his wife stopped in to visit the International Swimming Hall of Fame, not knowing Bob or that Bob worked at the Hall of Fame. John knew Matt Mann from his Michigan days and when he met Bob, the excitement of both of their Chikopi days came out. His wife, Carol, said "After all these years, John has never stopped talking about Chikopi".

Thank you from the Chikopi and Ak-o-Mak families.

Swager Shirley 1914 - 2007

We mourn the passing of Chikopi's oldest living camper, Swager Shirley, age 93, of Delaware. Swager attended Chikopi for a few years beginning in 1925. His father was a U.S. Congressman from Kentucky who started coming to Ahmic Lake to fish even before Swager was born. Thus, he was familiar with Ahmic Lake before he started coming to Chikopi as a camper. But, in those



*Counselor Swager Sherley circa 1928
(middle row, third from right)*

early days as a camper, he would arrive at Chikopi on the steamboat that traveled from Burks Falls along the Magnetawan River, Lake Cecebe and Ahmic Lake, all this after having taken the only train from either Toronto or Detroit to the start of the steamboat lines. After his days as a camper and counselor, he always came by boat and later by car to visit Chikopi. His daughter Mary Beth attended Ak-o-Mak in the 1970's and still resides in their summer cottage on Ahmic Lake. Swager loved tennis so much that, in the woods behind his cottage, he built by hand one of the lake's first clay tennis courts, modeled after the Chikopi clay courts.

Alumni Corner

This newsletter is being sent to Chikopi Alumni for whom we have accurate addresses. Please send us contact information for Chikopi alums you know, but whose addresses we do not have. Last summer Tom Dudley (1950's) and his wife, Francis, spent a week at a rented cottage on Rocky Reef across the lake from Chikopi. It was good to see him. Recently we heard from Victor Lownes (1930's) who talked about his porcupine adventure in his autobiography book which we have in the Paul Jackson Library and Game Room at Chikopi.

We need to re-vive our alumni news, so alumni, please send us your current information so that we can establish an informative alumni base. Check the Chikopi website for new features – www.campchikopi.com

Head-Shot Buttons

2006 campers and staff are receiving your 2006 Annual Summer Buttons – your face photo inscribed with "Chikopi 2006" and placed on a 2 _ inch plastic covered lapel button. If you keep them from year to year, the buttons are an excellent photo from which to see your physical growth at Chikopi. Enjoy and wear them with pride.

Chikopi Website Information Generation

The internet has been the most advanced means to keep everyone informed of just about everything. Certainly, that's what we want for Chikopi. Keep your computer screen on Chikopi as we advance our information, news and good-will to you in a timelier and accessible manner beginning soon. This summer, we'll be able to flash event competition results, special events and camp schedule daily. It has been a long time coming to Chikopi, but we are almost there. Stay tuned.

Let's Re-peat Pete's Dinner

When Bob, Colette and Teagan were visiting London, Ontario, on their way driving home for the winter, they were invited

for dinner at Peter Michienzi's house. Pete didn't have to wrestle them through the door as Bob and Colette had always heard of the Michienzi Home-Made Italian Pasta Sauce. Yum! Yum! It was delicious! Home-grown tomatoes from Pete's garden, just the right

amount of spices and spaghetti cooked and drained to perfection. Thanks, Pete. It was delicious! We're going to have to replicate this dinner again next summer for everyone.

A Look Back at Camp Chikopi

The following excerpt is taken from Buck Dawson's book, a history of Camp Chikopi and Ak-o-Mak as written in We Don't Sew Beads On Belts, 1993; page IV, published by Hoffman Publishing Company. Buck talks about Matt Mann's founding and philosophy of Chikopi. The scene is pre-1920:

"Dedication - Matt Mann the Camp Man"

Matt's first experiences in children's camps were in New England where he helped Commodore Longfellow establish his Red Cross Water Safety Camps and Dr. Dudley Sergeant (of Harvard) with his physical education camps. As "Professor



*Matt Mann II (right) with Matty Mann III
at Chikopi in 1951*

Mann", Matt barnstormed through New England each summer. He taught swimming in many camps from dry-out farms for drunks to the most exclusive children's camps for the wealthy all over Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Northern New York.

Matt, himself, had no education beyond grade six in England. Perhaps this is why it meant so much to him to be a part of it. "It" being the children's camp movement that President Eliot of Harvard called "The only original idea in American education." Matt wore his Harvard letter sweater until it was thread bare. The sweater was awarded him as the coach of the Harvard swimmers. At one time or other, this man of little education was

coach and teacher at Syracuse, Yale, Navy, Michigan, Princeton and finally Oklahoma. He was very proud when he was made an honorary member of a fraternity and voted an honorary membership in the M Club at Michigan. To him, trading your athletic skills for a chance at a college education was more valuable than any monetary scholarship. Everywhere he went, he preached what he himself never had – "The value of a good education is the chance of a life time, son."

Matt saw that children learned better "away from home" – that they learned from nature in a natural environment where it is easiest to learn by example. This all spelled CAMP to Matt. He believed he had the ability for a special kind of camp teaching – the value of sport as sportsmanship and competition; "the Golden Rule in action". Naturally it would be a wilderness camp with all its natural challenges to a city boy, a place where boys could teach each other how to get along with their fellow man in a wholesome and controlled environment. His camp curriculum stressed all sports, taught and coached by the great personalities whom Matt knew from his associations on college faculties. He persuaded these great teachers to come for a working vacation; the opportunity to work with real kids in a great environment. Matt would cover swimming as he knew he was capable. "You couldn't find a better sport to save your life," he said, so "Every child will learn how to swim and a whole lot more."

After doing his magic for so many other camps, Matt finally had a chance to have a camp of his own. He'd looked over Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and now Ontario for a camp site with warm, clear water, and at Camp Chikopi he found it. Probably he heard of the area first from Walter Crosswell, the celebrated Ahmic Harbour boat builder who helped design racing boats for Pappy Dodge at the Detroit Athletic Club where Matt worked between stops at the New York Athletic Club and the Duluth Boat Club. At any rate, he came first in winter, the winter of 1920. Cedar Croft's Mr. Stockdale met him in Burks Falls, and together they sledged to the site of the Hollard Farm on Ahmic Lake. At first, Matt had a partner who had fished the lake. Together they rented space from Jack Hollard, whose farm was the site that became Camp Chikopi. Almost immediately the idea took hold, Matt bought out the partner and Jack Hollard began to sell him property as Matt could afford it. The camps grew, at first from the children of friends he knew while coaching at the Detroit Athletic Club and wherever else Matt had been and spread his philosophies and dreams for his kind of a kid's camp.

