



September 14, 1977

Ms. Eleanor P. Eells
Director Emeritus
Fund for Advancement of Camping
19 South LaSalle
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Dear Eleanor:

It was so good to hear from you again, and I am happy to respond to your request for information on Hedley Dimock. My memory is vague at some points, but I'll try to recall things that might be helpful in your chronicle.

Where to start? Probably by saying that Hedley is in my own pantheon of people who most affected and influenced my professional life. Just how he did this is not so important for your research, but the fact that he was teacher, counselor, critic and friend to me can be multiplied many times over among George Williams faculty and students. People across the country who worked with him in the pioneering days of the Camping movement know that more than any single person he had a vision and a working philosophy that would bind practitioners, administrators and teachers together in maintaining the highest possible standard of excellence for the movement.

Hedley's name indeed is linked to standards above all others who sought to achieve true professional status for the field. He was an uncompromising advocate of education for those who would put themselves into a counselor or administrative role. He looked upon the camp, with its 24-hour responsibility for the lives of young people, as a sacred trust, with an unparalleled opportunity for affecting physical, emotional and moral development. He would accept nothing short of one hundred percent effort, on the part of those who considered themselves professional, to put quality into every aspect of camp life.

George Williams College, in the thirties, was the center for a series of seminars on camping, and the monographs produced in connection with these seminars became the tools of professional group work through camping for years to come. Most closely associated with Hedley in conducting these seminars were Chick Hendry, Harvey Boorman, Harleigh Trecker, and Harry Edgren. Key resource people from the "firing line" of what was coming to be known as "the modern camp" were people like Taylor Statten, Lloyd Sharp and many of the Chicago area social work people with whom you and your husband have been associated for more than fifty years, I am sure.

Perhaps a personal note will help illustrate the way in which Hedley worked to make education or Camp leadership a vital force in the movement. I was a graduate student at George Williams from 1938 to 1940, having been recruited by Cliff Drury who directed Camp Hayo-Went-Ha in northern Michigan. Very simply, Hedley was one of the three professors I have ever known in thirty-eight years in higher education whom I call "great teachers". I did my Master's thesis under him, and if ever a sloppy student took a beating from a hard task master it was I. Again after I took my degree I was asked by President Coffman to come back to G. W. as Secretary of the College. My first reaction was that Hedley Dimock, who was Dean, would never accept me. Hal Coffman laughed and said, "Who do you think told me to get you for the job?"

After one year on the staff and four years leave for military service, I went back to the College to work directly under Hedley as director of field work and instructor in camp administration. Naturally I depended on Hedley tremendously. Teaching and supervising that crop of post-war graduate students put us both to the test of re-constituting high principles of education for leadership in a time of mushrooming camps and a new breed of camp directors. Dozens of G. W. graduates took their places as private and agency camp directors. We re-constituted the seminars and went to work inside the ACA. (I had the rare privilege of working with Kit Hammett, and Ethel Bebb in producing a handbook for College Courses in Camp Administration and spent a summer with Elmer Ott who always has headed my list of outstanding directors).

It was working with Elmer at Manito-Wish that convinced me that everything Hedley Dimock stood for could be translated into counselor training and camp administration. Certainly Elmer is one of the brightest stars of camping over the years.

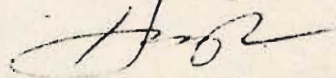
A final observation: Hedley Dimock, although highly respected by practically everyone, often was cited as "too theoretical", a philosopher rather than a doer. The fact that in his early days he, with Taylor Statten, not only set but practiced high standards and experimented successfully with techniques that never had been tried, at least partially negates the criticism. During his war-time work with the USO he again distinguished himself in practice, and finally with Roy Sorenson in San Francisco he became a co-worker in the group work field with younger men who came to love him for his ability to put new ideas to the test.

Eleanor, I have written this not only for you but also for Marguerite Dimock in partial atonement for never having expressed my feelings to her. I will appreciate your passing it along.

I retired from the vice presidency at Aquinas July 1 and when I complete a capital fund project in December will serve as development counsel for several Grand Rapids institutions. I'll also keep a hand in Emeritus College which I helped donate at Aquinas two years ago. My wife will teach for two more years, then perhaps we'll settle down at our cottage for a while. Your own example of lifetime learning, writing, and doing is a great one for everyone whose life you have touched - and there have been so many.

Success to you in your latest venture.

Sincerely,



Hugh Allen

Special Assistant to the President

Eleanor - Please forgive Messer, I made 2 D Copy. We are in a stage of transition and Secretarial output is limited!

On re-reading I don't think I've told you one thing you didn't know - but George William should provide much background material on the same.