

Summer Camp for Little Girls

Before their first National Convention in Mt. Pleasant in 1931, Chapters of T.T.T. had been busy with many types of philanthropy. Now they agreed that they were ready to decide upon a national project. Their love and sympathy for young girls inspired them to choose as their goal the establishment of a summer camp, where deserving little girls could have the benefit of good food, outdoor fun, directed camp activities and warm affection.

The beginnings were modest. First, an old farmhouse near Mt. Pleasant was rented for ten dollars for a two-weeks' period. Miriam Moore was the first Camp Chairman, and active members of T.T.T. joyfully cleaned the place and made it comfortable for 22 girls, who enjoyed busy camp life at a total cost of \$114.29. (There was even a balance of seventeen cents — the tiny beginning of the permanent camp fund!)

Some of the campers that first year were chosen by the United Charities in Chicago, and some were Iowa youngsters. At that time, the railroads provided free transportation for those who came from some distance.

In June, 1933, the second camp was held in the

Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity house in Mt. Pleasant. Chapters contributed money, bedding, towels and food, and even bought uniforms for the girls. The Society paid \$50 rent for the house, and this modest fee covered the expense of light, heat, gas, water, telephone, dishes, silver, and twenty-two cots and pads. The cook was paid a dollar a day. When Helen Warner paid the bills that summer, the National Treasury was tapped for only \$3.79.

Many T.T.T. members helped with camp chores, including the laundry work, washing an endless assembly line of dresses, pajamas and uniforms. Treats for the campers included movies, swimming at Saunders Park, wiener roasts, picnics, hikes and birthday parties.

Grace Oakes was Camp Chairman, and Helen Warner again Director, when the T.T.T. Camp opened its second season in the fraternity house on July 5, 1934. Twelve Chicago girls and nine Iowa children arrived, eager for their long-anticipated outing. They loved the fun and the bounteous meals. There was an average weight gain of three pounds for each child that summer, and one little girl gained seven pounds. There were many donations of food and special treats from chapters and merchants, and when Camp closed, there was a balance of \$19.61 in the treasury.

Enthusiasm for their camp project was running high when, in 1937, T.T.T. members were able to rent Camp Abe Lincoln, a well-equipped

Y.M.C.A. Camp located on a high bluff overlooking the Mississippi River near Davenport. Lucky ten and eleven-year-old girls were delighted with the big lodge with its huge stone fireplace. Here, also, were airy log cabins; a big kitchen; a handicraft building; a council ring for campfires; an athletic field, and later—a swimming pool. Surrounding the camp were sixty-five acres of wooded, hilly countryside.

The usual camp routine was followed at Camp Abe Lincoln, with much volunteer help from members of T.T.T. Even during the war, summer camp was considered a *must*, though activities were somewhat curtailed because of wartime shortages. However, the children enjoyed wood carving, whittling, making scrapbooks and planning dramatic productions and minstrel shows.

Tribute to her camp experience was expressed by one child in this poem:

The T.T.T. Camp is a wonderful place to be;
You have fun, and everything is free.
The people all treat you swell,
And keep you looking healthy and well.
You say a prayer and thank God
For the people who sent you there.

Since Camp Abe Lincoln was owned by the Davenport Y.M.C.A., it was needed primarily for that organization's activities, and it became increasingly difficult for T.T.T. to arrange for convenient camp dates. The time had come, mem-

bers agreed, to investigate the possibilities of establishing a National T.T.T. Camp of their own. Accordingly, in 1949 Helen Warner, Lucille Loomis, and Mary Yates were authorized to investigate possible locations for a national camp. After visiting several sites, suggested by a national real estate firm, the committee recommended a ten-acre, well-improved property near Eden Valley, Minnesota. The Eden Valley location included seven good buildings, set in spacious lawns and shaded by stately trees. The lawns, bright with flower beds, sloped to a safe sandy beach on Rice Lake. It could be purchased for \$18,000 — \$10,000 cash, and five years to pay the remainder at four per cent interest.

At the National Convention of T.T.T. in Chicago, the purchase of the Eden Valley site was approved, and announcement was made that remodeling of the camp would be completed for the grand opening, June 30, 1952. A call went out for volunteer help. Helen Warner, long identified with T.T.T. camp projects, was named Business Manager by the Project Board. She and her husband, W. R. Warner, supervised the remodeling, doing many chores themselves, and set the wheels turning for the dedication of the new camp. Gifts poured in from T.T.T. chapters located in all parts of the country. They included everything from beds and bedding to washers, dryers, and silverware.

Buildings were made functional and attractive. The main house accommodated a big dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms and bath. The barbecue house was put in readiness. A handicraft center was equipped, and the former guest house transformed into an infirmary. The fine new barn became a recreation hall, with a big fireplace, comfortable furniture and books, with accommodations for sixteen girls upstairs.

Shower room, bath house, a small patio and spacious playground all were ready for the *Great Day*, June 29, 1952, when the National T.T.T. Camp for Girls at Eden Valley was dedicated with great pomp and ceremony.

Members of T.T.T. flocked in from North, South, East and West for the dedication. Three of the founders, Mabel Stewart Bales, Bess Cook Budde and Mary Firebaugh Swaney were on hand, and participated in the ceremonies. Helen Warner made the presentation. Edna Eland, National President of T.T.T., made the acceptance speech, and Eda Boshart recalled the history of the cherished project. At the close of the colorful program, Mrs. Budde rang the old farm bell, officially opening the Eden Valley Camp. A tour of the grounds and buildings followed the formal ceremonies.

The next day, June 30, the first little girls arrived for their vacation in the new camp. The campers, ten and eleven years old, came by bus

from their home localities, chaperoned by chapter members.

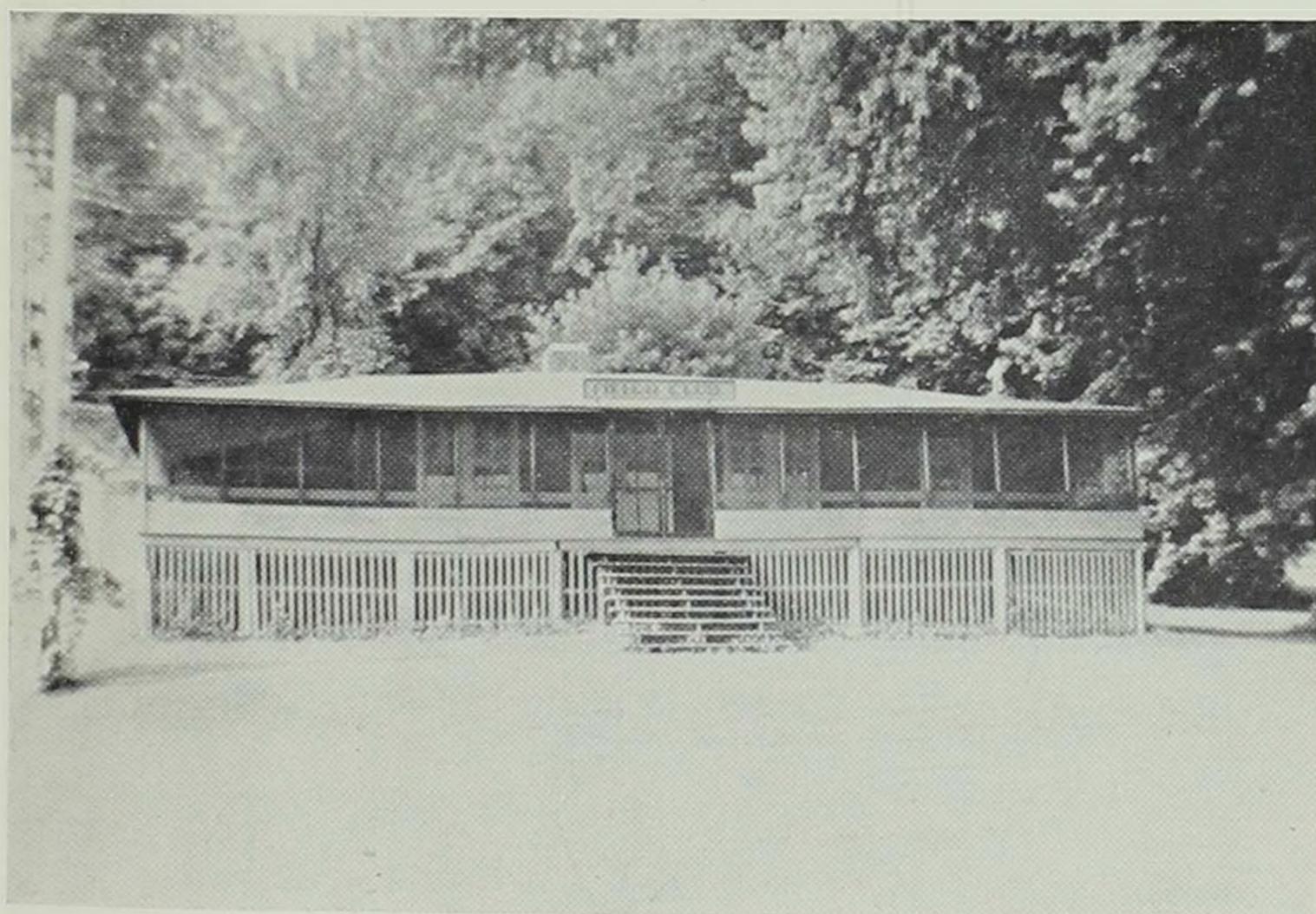
Mary Firebaugh Swaney, one of the distinguished founders, recalls an unforgettable experience as a chaperon for a busload of lively Iowa campers:

We had a wonderful time from the moment we left Mt. Pleasant. The little girls were hilarious! When I told them I was a "K. P." and would wash dishes and do other chores at the camp, they clapped their hands and cheered. "You mean we won't have to wash dishes?" they asked, and when I reassured them they would have other tasks, they shouted and sang.

We were scarcely on our way when they said they were hungry, and wanted to eat their box lunches provided for the trip. I satisfied them for a time with cookies contributed by some of the T.T.T. Chapters. Long before noon they were nibbling at fruit from their lunch boxes, and when the scheduled lunch period arrived their boxes were empty.

Despite several stops for ice cream cones and other treats, the girls were famished and more than ready for the welcoming dinner on their arrival that evening at Eden Valley. But they sang happily most of the way, their young voices harmonizing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hand."

Outfits for the campers are provided by individual T.T.T. Chapters, and include, besides abundant clothing, such articles as bobby pins, rubbers, stamped envelopes and stationery. "We love getting these camp outfits together," one T.T.T. member said. "We try to make them both



Oakland Mills Club house where T.T.T. was founded.



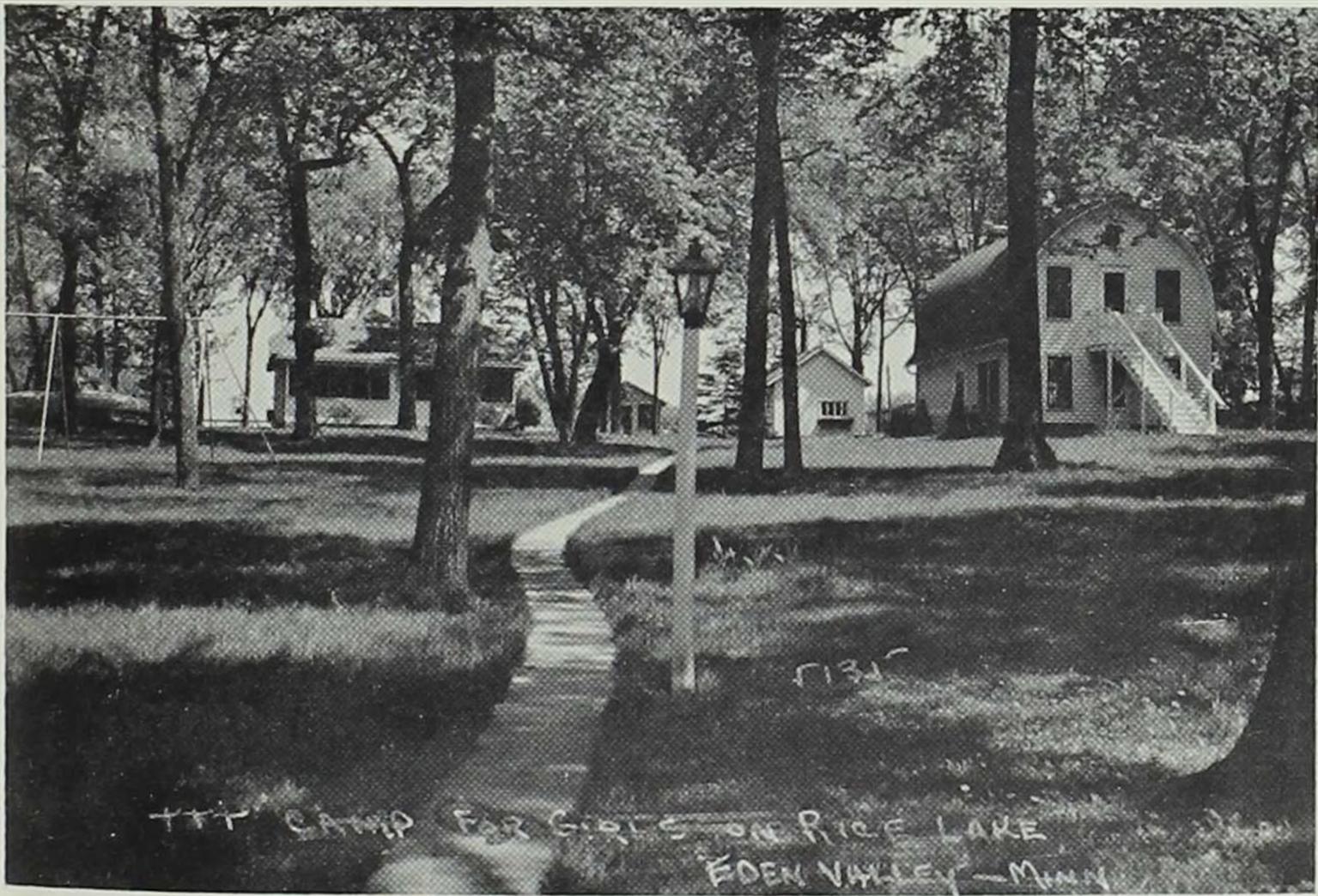
Four living founders of T.T.T.
L. to R.: Gladys Stewart Walters, Bess Cook Budde, Mabel Stewart Bales,
Mary Firebaugh Swaney.



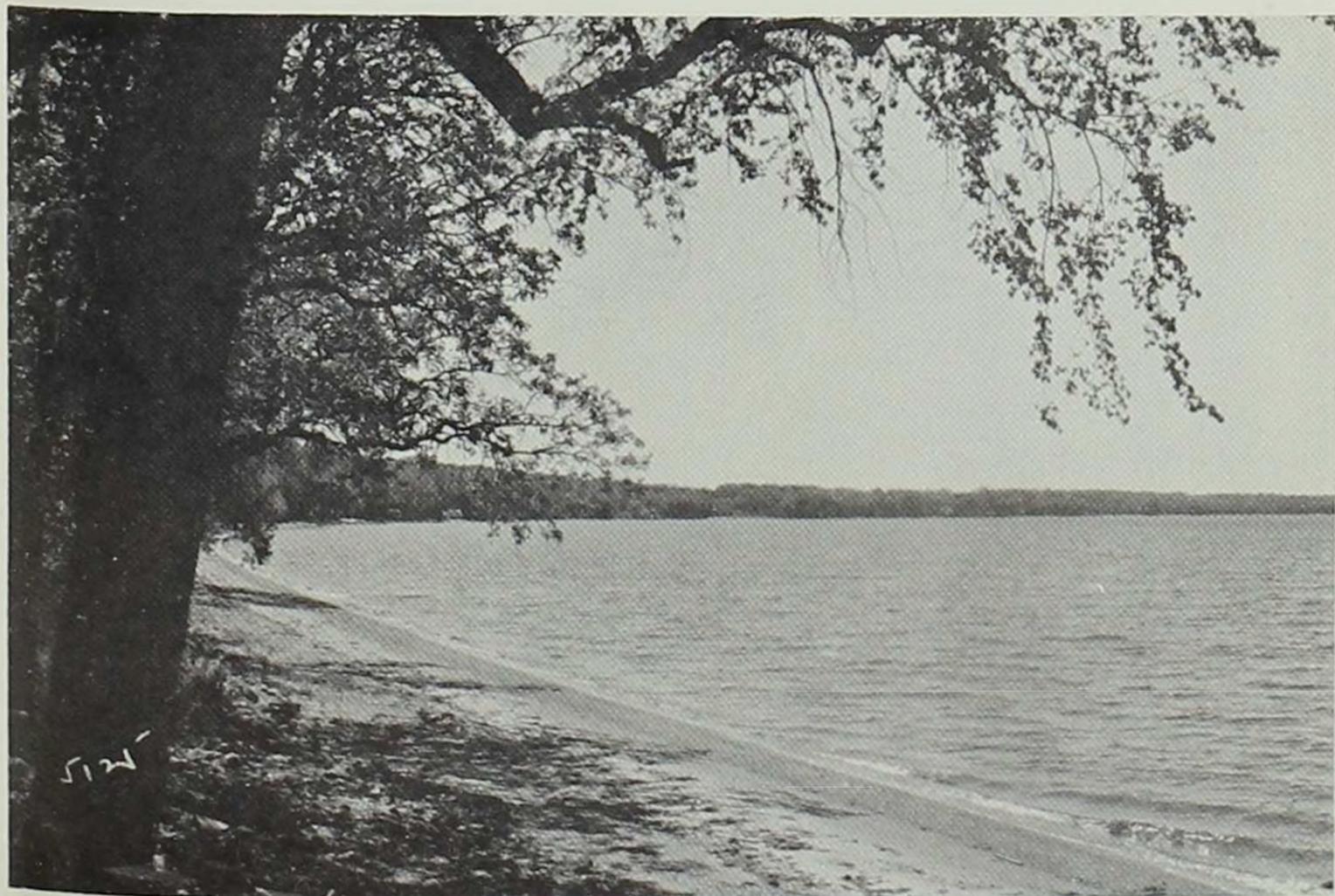
An early T.T.T. Camp picture in Mt. Pleasant.



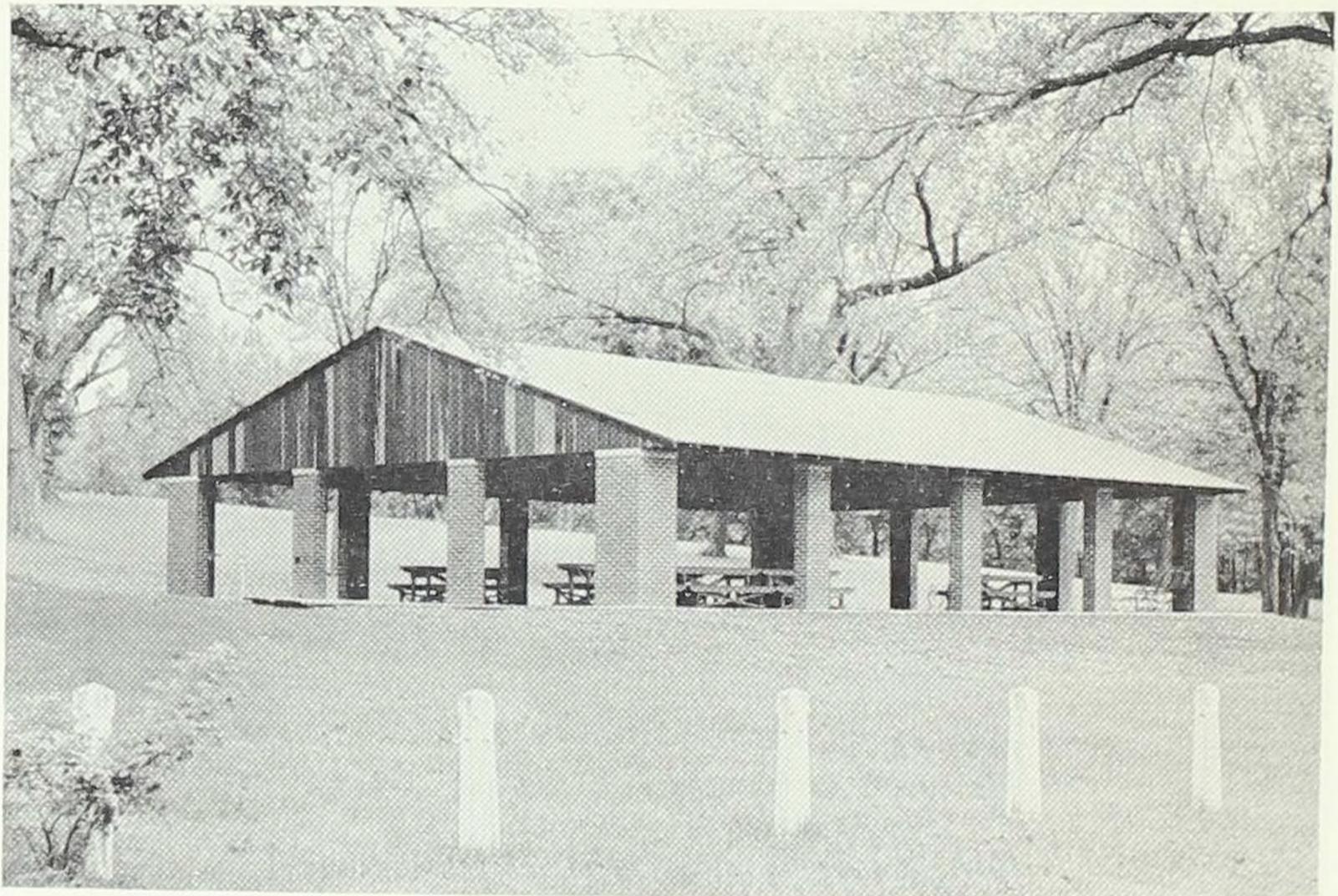
Little girls enjoying sunshine and fun at T.T.T. Camp.



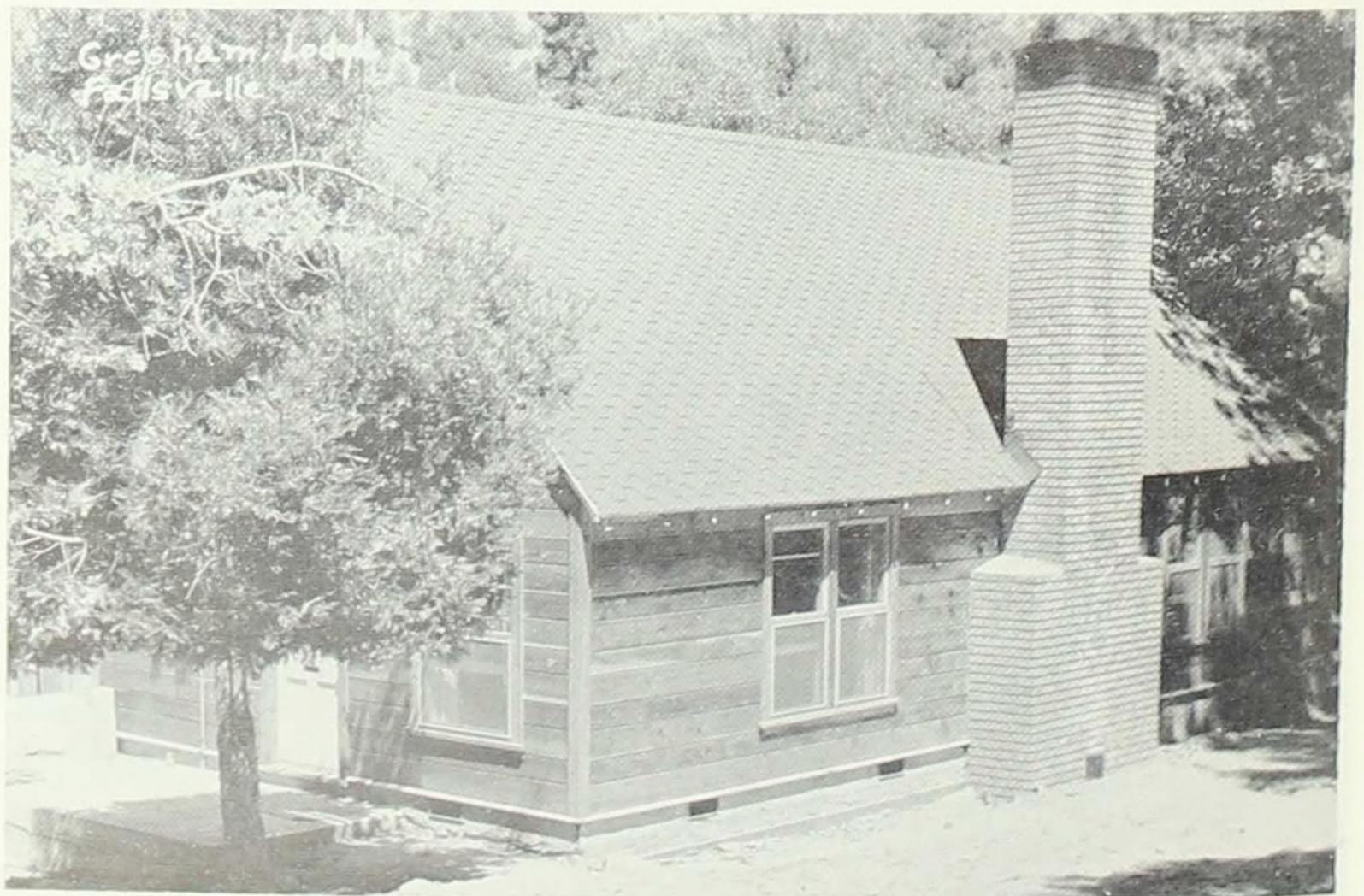
View of Eden Valley Camp for Girls.



T.T.T. Campers enjoy Swimming in Rice Lake.



Shelter House in Saunders Park, Mt. Pleasant. Gift of T.T.T. Society, honoring Founders.



T.T.T. Western Area Girls' Camp in California.

simple and attractive. Some of us have no children and welcome this opportunity to do something special for deserving little girls."

Shyness is dispelled in a hurry when the girls arrive at camp. Most of them have become fast friends on the bus. Each one first receives a stamped postcard to send home. Then all are taken on a tour of the camp grounds. Rules are explained at an assembly where the girls are introduced to camp songs before dinner and a get-acquainted party with gifts for everyone. One dormitory group may be designated as "Barn Swallows," and another "Sea Gulls." The evening program usually includes a show or other entertainment, story time and devotions, with "lights out" at 9:15 P.M.

In the morning, the campers make their beds and set their cabins in order. They observe flag-raising, have breakfast and take part in "Camp Capers," cleanup duties about the grounds. Calisthenics, crafts, swimming and free time occupy them until lunchtime, after which the grownup "K. P.'s" (T.T.T. volunteer helpers) inspect the cabins and award a special plaque to the honor group. Afternoon hours are spent in swimming, singing and games. Gifts for everyone feature the dinner hours. There are birthday celebrations, and costume parties, with colorful outfits provided by Chapters around the nation.

Gaiety reigns on "Cook's Day Off," when

campers start the day with a "Jungle Breakfast," finding their food and milk hidden about the camp grounds. On this special day there are often cook-outs and picnics.

And how about "Christmas in Summer?"

The Christmas party is a highlight at each camp session. There's a decorated tree. Stockings are hung by the fireplace, and Santa Claus arrives with generous gifts. Fresh young voices sing Christmas songs, and a counselor reads Dickens' *Christmas Carol*.

Sunday church services, planned by camp leaders, are held at an outdoor altar, in a circle of trees. To be used for the first time during the summer of 1963 will be new hymn books, the gift of Mrs. Milo Sorden, a former National T.T.T. President from Washington, Iowa. Catholic girls are taken to church in Eden Valley.

Since its dedication, a number of buildings have been added to the T.T.T. Camp. "Silver Cottage" was the gift of Illinois Chapter G, with Jodave Silver, her daughter, Jean, and other donors contributing. "Kitty Clifton Cabin" was given to the camp by Mrs. Clifton in memory of her son, who lost his life in service. "Maasdam Recreation Hall" is a Memorial to Past President Elizabeth Maasdam, the gift of Chapter E and other friends in Fairfield. The Warner and Iowa cabins were added in July, 1957. The former honors Mr. and Mrs. Warner, who have given great service to the

camp project. Kathryn Pullman, a past Iowa State President of T.T.T., gave the keynote talk at the dedication of the Iowa cabin.

"Dollars from Dads" piled up a fund for the purchase of "Scout," a jeep for the Eden Valley Camp. Adding to the beauty of the camp setting is the lovely rose garden, the gift of Mabel Stewart Bales.

Chapters in the Western Area of T.T.T. have rented lodges for summer campers, and in 1962 ten girls attended each of two sessions at Half Moon Lodge near Crestline, California. Adeline Woodworth, who has been in charge of the Western Area camp project, has been succeeded by Lois Johnson, who will supervise the 1963 sessions in Show Low, Arizona. This camp, which will accommodate 50 to 55 girls, is a well-equipped property, 189 miles northeast of Phoenix.

During the summer of 1962, 144 girls were sent to the Eden Valley camp by 141 Chapters and fifty-eight co-sponsors. Those in charge anticipate 200 campers during the 1963 summer session, which will be divided into five periods.

From June 16-29, Southeastern Iowa girls will attend camp. Waterloo and Northern Iowa campers are expected from June 30-July 13; Des Moines area and Nebraska girls, July 14-27; Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Ohio campers, July 28-August 10, and Minnesota, Wisconsin and South Dakota girls, August 11-24.

During the summer camp period of 1962, Eden Valley proved a pleasant cosmopolitan meeting place for a Negro girl, two Mexican, one Puerto Rican, one Jewish and two Italian girls. During the summer, 150 visitors stopped at the Eden Valley Camp and noted the remodeling projects, new sidewalks, the planting of fifty poplar trees and other improvements.

Displayed in the dining room this summer will be a new bronze plaque, with the camp grace, written by Milo Sorden:

Lord for food and friends and love,
Our heartfelt thanks we give.
But most, we thank Thee for Thy Son
Who taught us how to live.

True meaning of the T.T.T. camp is expressed by Bess Dickey, a member of Ohio A chapter:

It means the moulding of children's lives; health to the ailing; smiles to the lonely; advice to the headstrong; encouragement to the weak and character building for all. Americanism is in the making — children of a free country, where leaders are trained from such as these.

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL