

... a History

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the camp there is a gentle spirit of prayerfulness. No wonder a good many former campers of CSM have moved on into the priesthood or the religious life.

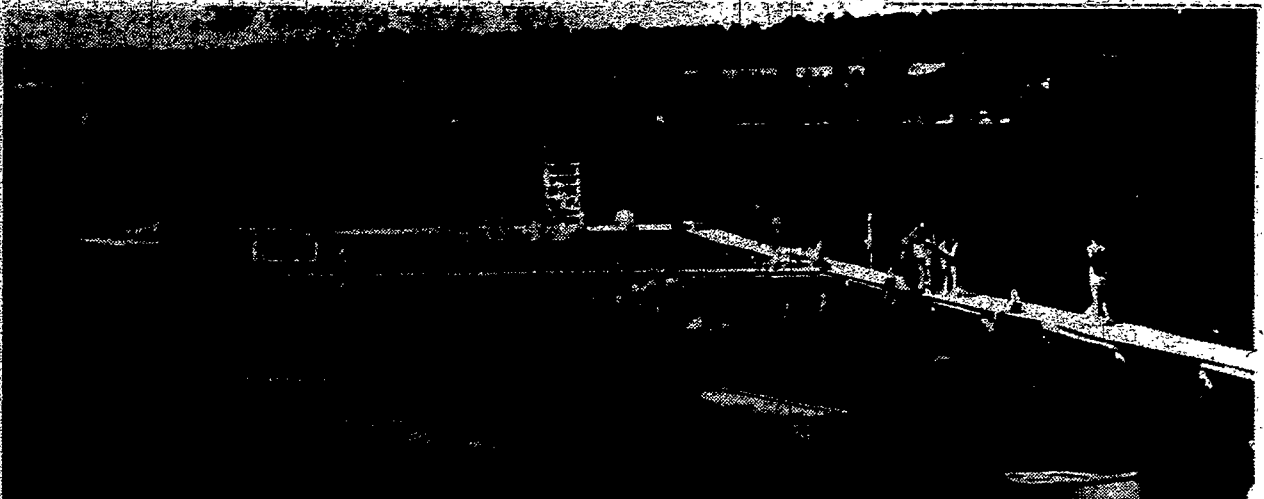
Camp Stella Maris has always been a venture in character building rather than a business venture. It therefore owes a heavy debt of gratitude to the well-wishers who have supplied funds not only for its maintenance but for its very operation. Deserving special credit are the ladies of its informal "auxiliary," especially Mrs. Eleanor Russer, who for a couple of decades promoted a post-seasonal benefit supper, and Mrs. Ronald McDonald and Mrs. Bernard Fischer, who for years conducted spring care parties on behalf of the camp. In recent years Rochester Catholic Charities has turned in other directions for funds: not only raffle parties but appeals to local foundations.

Several of the cabins at the camp honor particular benefactors of past and present. "Russer" of course commemorates the wonderful Russer family. "Hudson" recalls the co-founder, Father Eugene Hudson, who died in 1935 after less than three years in the priesthood. "Fischer" pays tribute to the former

director, Father Walter Fischer, who also met an untimely death. "Mercy" was so named as a thank-you to the Sisters of Mercy who staffed the domestic department from 1947 to 1967. "Schaeffer" memorializes Fred Schaeffer, the camp custodian in the 1930s, and his wife, the camp cook. "Foster" honors John Foster, the East Avon caterer, who for the past several years has been happy to share his talents with Stella Maris. And "Morsch" is named after Joseph Morsch Jr., today's popular year-round caretaker of the camp property.

A Mr. Robert J. Davern of the State Conservation Department, visiting Camp Stella Maris in 1960, praised it as the "best in the state." Whether or not the camp really rates that high in any official listing, it has certainly won top rating among its thousands of young campers over the past 50 years. They have cherished among their dearest memories what they have done and what they have learned at Our Lady's Camp beside the blue waters of Conesus Lake.

In this, the bicentennial year of our nation, it is good to recall the contribution that summer camps like Stella Maris have made to the education of generations of young Americans.



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