

M: Tell me about yourself and coming to the camp and anything that comes to your mind.

William: I first came to the camp in 1946 from 16 years of age, from Minnieola, Long Island. My high school coach brought me up, a fellow named Dutch Hafner. And for me, as well as many other people at Dudley, was the most important, significant thing that ever happened to me in my life. 'Cause it took me out of the island and enable me to come up here and look at people--people who were making something themselves. And I was so impressed with what went on with the camp. It was such good fellowship at this "Y" camp, and I came up and worked in the kitchen crew for 2-1/2 years and was just thrilled about it and it really directed my life. Not that a bad kid, or not that I wasn't going to go anyplace, but I wasn't doing well in school and this and that--and just woke me up. And here, as it is today, I mean out of the five hundred people that are here each summer, everyone is really very bright and has high aims and they all go to college and so it woke me up and such--get goin' and I did. And I stayed here for, on and off for ten straight summers, after the kitchen crew and the dollar a day that I made. I went on to become a leader and then run a division and then in 1956, I guess it was, went away in 56, I left here. And in the meantime I had from Minnieola, Long Island, I started off slowly with Physical Education at

East _____ Teachers College. Didn't want to do that. Got out of that. _____ one of the phys. ed. teachers, and I figured I wanted to be a physical therapists so I went to the Medical College of Virginia, became a physical therapist. And then I got out of that, I didn't want to do that. And I wanted to be an historian, so then I took extension courses from Virginia to get into the University of Penn and so in the early 50s my wife and I, Lois, who's also a physical therapist and I went to Pennsylvania. Worked at--during the day as physical therapist where I was chief therapist at University of Pennsylvania Hospital. And then in 1956 decided then to go on, got my Master's at Penn and then decided to go up my Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina. But I used my therapy and I went down the University of Carolina for--from 56 to 1963 was a trainer, with using my physical therapy, I was a trainer for seven years under Frank McGuire and Dean Smith and Jim Tatum and all these basketball and football heroes and coach. And in the mean time I worked on my Ph.D. In 63 I got the Ph.D. and then I went into prep school teaching, Chairman of the History Department at Tilton Prep School, stayed there until 1970 and then 1970 became assistant head master and dean of students and chairman of the history department Wayland Academy at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. And 1974 they offered me the job, after four years being in Wisconsin. And I turned

it down three times.

M: The job here?

William: Yeah, the job here at Dudley. Turned it down three times, and then I said, let's go. And I came. And I've been very happy. I've been here for 13 years. Just finished the 103th season and I really love what I'm doin'. I really love what I'm doin'.

M: You have a real for good kids when you go around America to--

William: I feel, you know, with all of us we have strengths and weaknesses, I know my weaknesses. But I don't live on the weaknesses, but I know them. I also know my strengths. And I'm sensitive to other people's feelings. And I can--I'm not usually wrong. A few times, a few times I have been, but I can handle a kid pretty well. I know what the kids can do pretty well. The kid that fools you--the kid that fools you is when he comes and you meet him, if he comes from the sophisticated area. If he come from--in other words if he comes from Short Hills, the Connecticut's Darrien, or New Haven or if he comes from Rodsville. See, they've met people and they've been around and so they can fool you. But the kid from the inner city and kid--they don't fool ya, they don't--no facade at all, they straight so you know what you're gettin'. So actually my best kids, that I bring in here at camp, the kids that I bring probably

the best kids that I bring in are scholarship kids. There are ninety of 'em. And I basically--I'm very happy about the kids that we have here. Camp Dudley is a great place because of the type of people we have here. I interview, basically, every kid that comes in here. And that means this year, kids from 35 states.

M: Can you tell directly from the kid how he's going to be, or can you get an idea from the parents?

William: No you can tell from the kids. You get a pretty good feeling. No, you go down to inner city you don't meet the parents. In fact that's one of your questions, who do I write to, what parent should I write this to? Who are your parents? Because for the most part you are writing only to the mother. And then to make sure they come, after you do this, then you got to meet with the mother. I mean a kid may go home, you say you got the kid in a camp, and we've lost so many scholarship kids that just never show up. So you've got to really bring the mother in. I mean you got to bring the whole family in.

M: You mentioned that this camp was the greatest experience in your formative years. Is that what you feel has happened to a lot--

William: I think so, very much so. I think our letters show it. See a camp is more than just fun and games, a camp is really a way of life. I mean a kid

can--our, our, our whole--there's a spiritual adventure and a spiritual manner here that--it's not even angelical, but nevertheless we're teaching values from our--I mean for instance on a Sunday--Sunday we bring in a--the best people we know. I mean we--and we pay for 'em. We brought up Jim Ford last week, the last talk at camp. He's the chaplain at the United States House of Representatives. So we flew him up. And then we fly these people up from New York, former assistant to President Ford, Eugene O'Brien, who's a Jesuit priest. And these guys speak here on Sunday. I mean they're as good as what we used to hear at the Riverside Church. I mean these people are really terrific. So we do that, then got a Sunday hymn sing, and then each morning they go to the chapel talk, someone talks for 10 minutes about their experiences wherever they were. Each--our counselors here, our leaders on our staff, they're all bright educated people come from all over the country. And the world. And then vespers at night. So that's really the backbone I was talkin' about of our kids. Of the program.

M: Taking kids who will become leadership material themselves.

William: We hope so. Well we do and it's interesting because the kid runs through here, ninety percent of our kids, if they start out as a cub--that's our first year--ninety percent will come--will go for four years. And then

there's a selection process, who becomes an aide. It's not so much the fact that the kids are good or bad. It's the fact of who's ready. Fifteen year old kid--some kids just aren't. I wouldn't have been ready, myself, to come up as an aide. Otherwise I wasn't mature enough, you know, I hadn't blossomed enough. So those, the kids that are ready we take as an aide and then as junior leaders. And then they become assistant leaders and then they become counselors, leaders themselves. And our leaders run from--well one of our leaders right now is Ormasley Clark, the director of admissions at Yale, head master at--not the head master, but the president of the Horace Mann School in New York City. He's the president of one of the finest prep schools in New York. He hasn't missed a summer for 40 summers. He's up here--and after this year he's 51, 52 years old, he had a cabin. Now we figure take him out of the cabin. But they came back, he just wants to be so--got really, really very strong, strong people. These people, all the loyalty, you know, I find this. I'll go around the country now to fifty reunions. That means California, all those areas out there. I mean I'll start off with Syracuse, go to Buffalo, go to Cleveland, down to Philadelphia, up to Boston, to New York City to Richmond to Charleston, to Atlanta, to Vero, to Vero Beach, to New Orleans, to Montreal and--fifty of 'em. And I will put a reunion on there of

slides and show--usually a private house. People that have been to Dudley or their kid's been to Dudley. And we'll draw from 250 in Short Hills and 200 in Connecticut, 200 in Bronxville, and 250 in Boston to 15 in New Orleans; see, but the idea is to get kids from all over. So this year we got three kids from New Orleans. This year we got three kids from Montreal. And that's what we want. And even now we've gotten kids from thirty-five states and this year we had about 15 foreign countries too. And I went down--the great thing about it, what I like, the great thing is that I feel when I leave here that--what'll I do--well I got good kids, the new kids. And to me that's the key. You see I can take--my job is easy. When you--someone said, gee you're almost like a college. Some kids--you can't get all the kids in there. Yeah we are, but we--colleges you ask a lot of these people compare Dudley to your college. Well, you know, college is--my own kid said, look 20 percent are jerks, it's like the real world. Couple of 'em are hockey players, couple of 'em are eggheads--I mean they're trying to get in the real world in their college. Whereas Dudley we just take--the only characteristic here is is he a good kid? Does he think about _____ and the other fellow first? And they really mean it, they really mean it and so they--we really push that they should think of other people and that is the whole religion of the camp. And that's why

they love it. And they love it more, I've learned one thing, you can't bring in a bad apple because that he hurts the good ones. And if anything, you know

M: How about the chance of converting the bad apple?

William: Well if he's really bad you can't. We too-- for a short period you can't do it, not if he's gonna hurt the good kid who's here. We can't--you can't--we're just not--some people have said well you're just, you know, you're just--you're Philips said you're an elite camp. Well my answer to that is we're elite only in the sense that we're taking good kids. Now--and no problems. Now I'm not saying no problem--now growing pains are different than a serious problem. We just can't take the kid who's 14 years old who's a bad apple. I can give you an example of the type of kid we took this year. I got a call from a friend of mine, Charlie Updike, in Long Island. He said, we just had a kid in Phila--friend of mine called me, he write for the Wall Street Journal and he also wrote for Philadelphia Inquirer or is it the Inquirer--whatever it is down there, and he said that there's a kid down here who's really having a tough time. He's 14 years old, the people across from him, a black couple, had their house graffitied, and the Klu Klux Klan visited them in Philadelphia. This 14 year old saw them, they were neighbors down the block, he reported 'em. He has really had a hard time because he turned in the

people in the area. But he felt, as his mother said, it was the right thing to do. And the guy New York said to me, Willy what can you do? he said. I said, Well I'm really out of scholarship money, but we'll take him. So I brought the kid up on scholarship. And he had a great time and next year we'll bring him back as an aide, which is--but that's the kind of kids, really, we're lookin' for. And we bring in, you know, bring 'em in like that. And those that we don't--do not do the job--we don't bring 'em back.

M: By the time you retire you'll look back at a lot of years of having, what, put--

William: A lot of kids that I've worked with--

M: Yeah.

William: Yeah, I feel good about that. But I'm also make up the other way too. I'm--you know, I have--I love the camp, but I think I love the people more and so if something happened today--I've said this to someone too--I mean many people--many more people would be crushed if this place turned to me--I'm, you know, I feel look there are people out there and the camp is a wonderful institution but something did happen I'd go on into something like--I'd probably go back into therapy or teaching or something like that. But it wouldn't destroy me. I wouldn't bother that much. You want to know a little about the camp? Very quickly?

M: Yeah, sure, yeah.

William: All right, the camp starts, a fellow named Dudley took 'em out. No camping in the United States up until 1885, none at all, it didn't exist back in the tough days, in the 1880s. Lot of kids hangin' around the corner in New York and all that area and Mr. Sumtner Dudley, a businessman in New York City said, we're gonna take these kids out. And he did it. Took them out to Newburg in an area near Warwick, New York in 1885, in 1886 took 'em out again up near Warwick, New York and in 1887--is that right?--or about the 18--no the 1890s brought 'em up here. And then he died and the camp was named after him, and so ever since 18--we've been on this site since 1907 and named after him--so it's now a hundred and three years old. And it's the first one, the oldest. And back then too, I mean his aim. His aim was hey, let's get the kids out of the city, they want to have fun but, he said, we also want to give them a feeling of the presence of God. Now, you know, in--listen, in those days too, boy they had to pass a Bible test to come up here. We're not that way, I mean we have, we're teaching values. We're still a Christian camp but we have a number of Jews, we have a Muslim this year, a Hindu last year. That doesn't make any difference. I don't think an Orthodox Jew could send his kid to camp or a very hard, true believing Muslim or Hindu, but if you're a little

liberal you could because you know-- In fact we had the kid from--the kid from Baltimore this year, he asked me he said, could I--the parents said could he come--would that bother-- I said, no we're just going to teach values. Bring the kid up. So the kid, well he did very well. But the kid did ask, he said, do you mind if I do not sing the Christian songs, which we have at hymn sing. He said, I don't mind but my parents do. I said, Yeah, you do what you want, I said, do what you want. But I've never had a kid since I've been here in 13 years, ever say that he didn't want to go to hymn sing or he didn't want to go to chapel. I've never had a kid say that. They love that more than anything. Quite inspiring place, it really is. Yeah, it's quite a place. And that's where O'Farrell went, and Savage went, they all went here. Yeah they all--it's quite a place.