

# Camp Rotary

## ... The Long Good-Bye

For more than half a century, Camp Rotary was the crown jewel in Rockford Rotary's outstanding record of public service.

The camp was launched in 1921, under the guidance of Seth B. Atwood. The first campers used borrowed Army tents as sleeping quarters and the muddy Kishwaukee River as a swimming hole.

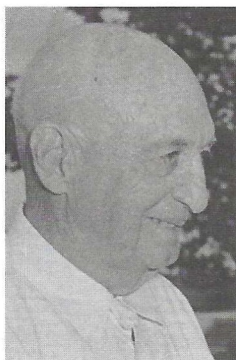
Over the years it grew to a self-contained camp, with barracks, pool, playgrounds, mess hall, kitchen, and all the support services needed to serve generations of boys and girls.

### Thousands enjoy

Thousands of youngsters escaped from the sweltering city summers to the joys of nature over those years.

Hundreds of Rockford men and women from all walks of life still recall their weeks at Camp Rotary among the highlights of their lives.

All of this was thanks to the generosity and commitment of Rockford Rotary Club members. They donated their time, their supplies, and their dol-



Seth B. Atwood

June 1961



*When Camp Rotary opened, campers swam in the Kishwaukee River. A modern pool was constructed, but the costs of maintaining and modernizing the pool, and meeting health code requirements, created financial problems for Rockford Rotary.*

lars. They enlisted others in the cause. They built the camp, expanded it, modernized it.

### Camping fees

They financed it. Their dollars paid camping fees (camperships) for the more underprivileged local youngsters. Between 1956 and 1962 alone, Rockford Rotary spent almost \$60,000 upgrading the camp.

Another \$68,000 was spent between 1968 and 1973. All this was in addition to individual contributions for camperships.

Over the years, hundreds of thousands of dollars were invested in the camp and its campers by Rotarians.

### No record

There is no record of the total investment, but it was a massive undertaking and a major success.

Even Rotary International was skeptical at the beginning and opposed the Camp Rotary plan, but Rockford Rotarians made it work for more than five decades.

Camp Rotary was never a fail-