

# 92Y Archives

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## CAMP LEHMAN

Records, 1921-1946  
4.75 cubic feet (in 6 boxes)



Boys pose for a group photo at Camp Lehman, undated

Processed by Christen Tarantino  
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## History

Camp Lehman was established by the YMHA in 1916 at the estate of 92Y president Judge Irving Lehman<sup>1</sup> in Port Chester, Westchester County, New York. Operating under the Social Work Department of 92Y, Camp Lehman was supervised by the Committee on Social Work from 1916 until the middle of 1922, and by the Camp Lehman Committee from late 1922 until 1942.<sup>2</sup> The camp accepted Jewish boys between the ages of 11 and 16 during the months of June, July, and August from 1916 to 1941, and occasionally allowed external organizations to use its space for day-trips or weekends. For the first ten years of Camp Lehman's operation, camping periods fluctuated between two and three weeks each summer, constituting either four or three camping sessions, respectively. The fee per camper also varied, increasing from \$8 to \$9 between 1921 and 1925 and then disappearing altogether when the camp ceased to charge for admittance in 1937. In general, boys were limited to one session of camping per summer, although exceptions were made in some cases.<sup>3</sup>

Originally founded for use as a scout camp<sup>4</sup>, Camp Lehman was based upon scouting principles and concentrated on imparting the values of the Boy Scouts to all of its campers, including "scout routine, instruction in scouting and outdoor life."<sup>5</sup> In its earliest years, the camp focused exclusively on activities that gelled with the principles and procedures of scout life. As noted in a 1916 description of the camp in the *Y.M.H.A. Bulletin*: "Hikes will be taken and scout contests will be held. There will probably be little baseball, tennis, etc., as the boys get plenty of this sort of sport in the city and there are so many more interesting things to do in camp."<sup>6</sup> As Camp Lehman evolved, organized sports and other non-scout activities were incorporated, although elements of scout routine, such as the playing of Taps and Reveille, day-long hiking trips, and nature instruction, remained part of the camp for its entire life span. Weekly observance of the Sabbath was also a part of camp life from Camp Lehman's inception until its cessation.

In 1922, the camp began to accept non-scout junior members of 92Y. Later years saw the camp accepting increasingly more boys directly through Jewish social service organizations with a concomitant decrease in Boy Scout member attendance, although all campers were required to be or to become members of 92Y before they were allowed to attend the camp.<sup>7</sup> Late in 1936, at the suggestion of Judge and Mrs. Lehman, it was decided that Camp Lehman would be converted into an entirely free camp for the start of the 1937 camping season, "thus giving a larger group of poor boys an opportunity to spend three weeks away from the hot city."<sup>8</sup> Beginning in 1938, only boys referred through social service organizations, in particular the Jewish Vacation Association, were allowed to attend the camp. A limited number of German Jewish refugees were also accepted during summers in the later years of the camp, concurrent with the escalation of World War II.

Throughout the twenty-six years of Camp Lehman's operation, there was a relatively high turnover in Camp Directors. Samuel Blaut, Deputy Scout Commissioner for 92Y's Boy Scout

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<sup>1</sup> Judge Lehman served as YMHA president from 1916 to 1924.

<sup>2</sup> The Camp Lehman Committee overlapped with the Vacation Camp Committee in 1929 (Board Minutes, 5/21/1929)

<sup>3</sup> Primarily, boys who were believed to be in medical need of fresh air and exercise were allowed, at times, to remain for another session.

<sup>4</sup> Scouting was first offered by the Y on a limited basis in 1911, achieving full status in 1913.

<sup>5</sup> *Y.M.H.A. Bulletin*, August 1916, p.15.

<sup>6</sup> *Y.M.H.A. Bulletin*, August 1916, pp. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1937, Y membership was paid by the campers. After 1937, the cost of membership was waived.

<sup>8</sup> Report on Camp Lehman, 1936 (Box 1).

Troop, served as its first director from 1916 through 1920. Milton Lowenstein, assistant director under Blaut, held the post of director until 1923, at which time Matthew Goldstein was hired to replace him. Matthew Goldstein remained with Camp Lehman through the summer of 1924, and was then replaced by his brother, Benjamin Goldstein, for the summer of 1925. During his year with the camp, Benjamin Goldstein helped establish the Camp Lehman Association (1925), a social organization for campers that existed throughout the year at 92Y, while the camp itself was closed.

In 1926, Herbert A. Block replaced Goldstein as director, remaining with the camp for one summer and organizing the first Camp Lehman Reunion for junior members. Jerome I. Hyman then led the camp for two years, 1927 and 1928, followed by Mortimer Riemer, who stayed on for the years 1929 and 1930. His successor, Charles Miller, directed the camp for four years, between 1931 and 1934, followed by Edward Wolf (1935). Wolf was dismissed at the end of the 1935 summer season, and Irving Platnik was hired in his stead. Platnik, a former arts and crafts director at 92Y, served for the 1936 season only. Mordecai Kessler (1937) likewise served for only one season, helping to oversee the installation of electricity in the camp as well as the transition of Camp Lehman from a for-fee to feeless, social service camp during his brief tenure. Abraham "Dutch" Kastenbaum, Camp Lehman's final director, remained with the camp from 1938 through its last functioning summer in 1941.

In 1942, Camp Lehman closed due to the war effort. Although the change was at first considered temporary, the camp did not resume activity again.

### **Camp Directors**

Samuel Blaut	1916-1920
Milton Lowenstein	1921-1922
Matthew Goldstein	1923-1924
Benjamin Goldstein	1925
Herbert A. Block	1926
Jerome I. Hyman	1927-1928
Mortimer Riemer	1929-1930
Charles Miller	1931-1934
Edward Wolf	1935
Irving Platnik	1936
Mordecai Kessler	1937
Abraham Kastenbaum	1938-1941

## Research Notes

Information on the earliest years of Camp Lehman, as well as additional information on years found in these records, is available in the Y *Bulletin*.

For records concerning 92Y's Boy Scout Troop, as well as general information about scouting at 92Y, please consult the *Scouting Programs* collection.

Records regarding other camps hosted by 92Y or that included 92Y's participation may be found in the *Surprise Lake Camp* record group, the *Group Service Department* record group, and the *Goldman Center* record group.

## Scope and Content

The Camp Lehman record group documents the development, growth, and dissolution of the camp, spanning the years 1921-1946. The record group consists of 8 series: **Correspondence, Reports, Administrative Material, Financial Information, Camper Records, Staff Information, Printed Material, and Visual Material**. Prior to 1938, the majority of the records in the record group originate from the files of the executive director. From 1938 to 1946, records originate from the executive director's files as well as the files of camp staff. **Photographs** are held separately, but are listed at the end of this finding aid to facilitate research.

The **Correspondence** series (1921-1946, 0.75 cubic feet) consists primarily of correspondence to or from 92Y executive director Jack Nadel. The series also contains correspondence to and from the camp directors, Judge and Mrs. Lehman, and various social service organizations with which the camp was involved. Topics include the opening and closing of the camp, major repairs and renovations performed at the camp, the acceptance and rejection of staff and campers, the Lehmans, Camp Lehman's transition from a for-fee to for-free camp, and various unique occurrences and incidents for each year. The years 1938 through 1941 are more correspondence-heavy than previous years, and include more correspondence compiled by the staff of the camp. Additionally, there is a limited amount of correspondence for the years 1942 to 1943, and 1945 to 1946, after the camp ceased operation.

The **Reports** series (1923-1941, 0.25 cubic feet) contains two subseries: Camp Director's Reports and Miscellaneous Camp Reports. The Camp Director's Reports subseries consists of the annual reports on Camp Lehman drawn up by each year's director and submitted to the Board. The Miscellaneous Camp Reports subseries contains Camp Lehman Committee reports and meeting minutes, medical reports, swimming reports, reports on the dismissal of camp director Edward Wolf in 1935, reports on Camp Lehman's transition to a free camp, and any other general reports on the camp that are not directly attributed to the camp director.

The **Administrative Material** series (1923-1941, 0.50 cubic feet) contains information on the organizational structures and practices of Camp Lehman. This series is comprised of five subseries: Camp Permits, Inventories, Schedules and Programs, Taps Patrol Cards, and Water Evaluation.

Camp Permits are from the Westchester County Department of Health. They cover the years 1934 through 1941, and include the permit renewal applications for the years 1938 and 1940 to 1942. The Inventories subseries contains annual closing inventories for the camp, divided by subject (Kitchen, Arts and Crafts, Nature, etc.) and listed item-by-item. The Schedules and Programs subseries contains daily work schedules for counselors as well as trip schedules, special programs, daily programs of events, swimming schedules, meal schedules,

and some sample menus. The Taps Patrol Card subseries consists of the cards themselves. Taps Patrol Cards were used by counselors during night-time patrols of the camp (generally, between "lights out" and midnight). They were integrated into camp practice because of their association with Boy Scout routine. The Water Evaluation files hold basic assessments of the quality of the lake and tap water at the camp for two seasons.

The **Financial Information** series (1924-1941, 0.50 cubic feet) contains sample financial statements for the years 1924-1937, as well as ledgers, which are divided into general financial ledgers and petty cash ledgers. There are two types of general financial ledgers: some are accounts of expenses paid to specific companies and persons throughout the summer season, and some, labeled "Kitchen Purchases and Camp Purchases," list individual items purchased for the kitchen (food, etc.) and for the camp at large. The petty cash ledgers provide simple statements on the existing amount of petty cash available each day, with lists of withdrawals and an explanation of the purpose of each withdrawal. The general financial ledgers are more structured and detailed than the petty cash ledgers. Two of the petty cash ledgers are spiral-bound notebooks.

The **Camper Records** series (1923-1941, 2 cubic feet) contains lists of campers for each camping period, lists demarcating which campers were in which tents, and counselors' reports on individual campers. In addition to paper files, this series includes registration books and reservation cards, as well as individual folders for Expense Cards (1940) and Medical Cards (1940), and one Medical Log Book (1938).

The registration books cover various years between 1923 and 1939. Campers are listed alphabetically by last name, with corresponding information regarding the period at which they were in camp as well as expenses paid and owed. Registration books for 1937 through 1939, when Camp Lehman became a free camp for underprivileged boys, list each camper's name, his camping period, his address, and the organization through which he was referred. The reservation cards are stored in a separate card file box and consist of 3 x 5 inch cards that were filled out by a potential camper's parents when they desired to send their son to Camp Lehman. Information contained on each reservation card includes the camper's name and address, brief medical history, parents' signatures and references.

Expense cards (1940) are also stored in a card file box and contain the camper's name, along with a brief notation of money spent on that camper during his stay at Camp Lehman. The Medical Cards (1940) and Medical Log (1938) are stored with the majority of the Camper Records and contain information on an individual camper's illnesses and injuries throughout a specific season. The Medical Cards are slightly larger than 3 x 5 inches, with the camper's name as a heading, and the date and type of illness or injury listed beneath. The Medical Log, a standard composition notebook, is arranged by date with campers' names listed under each date along with their illness or injury.

The **Staff Information** series (1926-1942, 0.25 cubic feet) contains staff lists for each season, as well as applications for employment. Applications for both accepted and rejected candidates are included. Many of the applications are annotated by either the interviewer or preliminary reviewer, and include statements as to whether the candidate was accepted or not.

The **Printed Material** series (1923-1941, 0.25 cubic feet) consists of brochures, a Sabbath Songbook, and newsletters. The brochures span the years 1923 through 1935 (missing years 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931, and 1934). The Sabbath Songbook dates from 1931, and was printed and bound in construction paper by the Camp Lehman staff.

Newsletter folders contain individual issues of the various newsletters put out by Camp Lehman over the years of its operation. A list of these newsletters is as follows:

<i>Tatler</i>	1923-1925; 1926 (later session)-1936
<i>Judge</i>	1926 (early session)
<i>Camper</i>	1937
<i>Lehman Log</i>	1938-1941

The **Visual Material** series (1930-1938, 5 folders) contains five individual items of pictorial information: a sketch of the tent layout for 1938; a blueprint of the new kitchen building from 1934; a map of the camp (1935), drawn up in order to illustrate where to install electricity at Camp Lehman but also useful for providing a general illustration of the camp's design; a diagram of the refuse burner installed at the camp in 1930; and Camp Director Mortimer Riemer's train ticket book from 1930.

**Photographs** (ca. mid-1920s-1940, 5 folders) are held separately and consist of a photograph album and four folders of loose photographs and negatives. The photograph album was created by the Camera Club of 92Y and presented to executive director Jack Nadel in 1938. The album includes Abraham Kastenbaum's signature.

The loose photographs and negatives are divided into four categories: Activities, Buildings and Grounds, People, and Negatives. All photographs are black and white and vary in size. When possible, photographs have been dated on the verso side. The Activities category portrays the activities of Camp Lehman during the summer, and includes images of sports, arts and crafts, swimming, and dining. Additionally, there is one photograph of either the set-up or dismantling of tents. The Activities series also includes a number of photographs of a circus held by Camp Lehman during the 1920s or 1930s (negatives are held in the Negatives folder). The Buildings and Grounds category depicts images of the land and buildings on Camp Lehman's property, including the tents, dining hall, basketball area, lake, water pump, and worship building.

The People category contains images of campers and staff, individually or, more commonly, in groups of two or more. Most are candid photographs although there are some posed group photographs that usually include all the campers, counselors, and the camp director for a particular camping period. There is one oversize photograph that depicts the face of the camper printed on the cover of the brochures from the 1928, 1929, and 1932 seasons.

Negatives are housed together in one folder, and are primarily of images from the Camp Lehman circus. Two additional negatives are representations of people.

**Contents List**

**Box**

- 1**            **Correspondence**  
                 1921  
                 1923  
                 1924  
                 1925  
                 1926  
                 1928  
                 1929  
                 1930  
                 1931  
                 1932  
                 1933  
                 1934  
                 1935  
                 1936  
                 1937 (2 folders)  
                 1938 (3 folders)  
                 1939 (3 folders)  
                 1940 (3 folders)  
                 1941 (2 folders)  
                 1942  
                 1943, 1945-1946

**Reports**

- Camp Director's Report  
        1923  
        1924  
        1926  
        1927  
        1928  
        1929  
        1930  
        1931  
        1932  
        1933  
        1934  
        1935  
        1936  
        1937  
        1938  
        1939  
        1940  
        1941  
    Miscellaneous Camp Reports  
        Undated  
        1922

**Contents List**

**Box**

**1 (cont.) Reports – Miscellaneous Camp Reports (cont.)**

1923  
1925  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1934  
1936  
1937  
1939  
1941

**2 Administrative Material**

Camp Permits, 1934-1942

Inventories

1923  
1924  
1928  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933  
1935  
1937  
1938  
1939  
1940  
1941

Schedules and Programs

1925  
1935  
1937  
1938  
1939  
1940  
1941

Taps Patrol Cards

1938  
1939  
1940  
1941 (2 folders)

Water Evaluation

1934  
1935

## Contents List

### Box

#### 2 (cont.) Financial Information

- 1924
- 1926
- 1927-1928
- 1928
- 1929
- 1930
- 1931
- 1932
- 1933
- 1934
- 1935
- 1936
- 1937
- Ledgers
  - 1933-1941
  - 1933-1939
  - 1936
  - 1937
  - 1938 (**oversize; see Box 5**)
- Petty Cash
  - 1936
  - 1937-1939
  - 1940
  - 1941

#### 3 Camper Records

- 1925
- 1929
- 1930
- 1931
- 1932
- 1933
- 1934
- 1935
- 1936
- 1937
- 1938
- 1939 (2 folders)
- 1940 (2 folders)
- 1941 (2 folders)
- Expense Cards, 1940 (**see Box 6**)
- Medical Cards, 1940
- Medical Log, 1938
- Registration Books
  - 1923

**Contents List****Box****3 (cont.) Camper Records – Registration Books (cont.)**

1924  
1925  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933

**4**

1937  
1938  
1939

Reservation Cards (**see Box 6**)

**Staff Information**

1926  
1928  
1929  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933  
1934  
1935 (2 folders)  
1936  
1937  
1938  
1939  
1940  
1941  
1942

**Printed Material**

Brochures, 1923-1935

Newsletters

*Tatler*

1923  
1925  
1926 (includes *Judge* and *Tatler*; newsletter changed names partway through summer)  
1929  
1930  
1931  
1932  
1933  
1934  
1935

**Contents List**

**Box**

**4 (cont.) Printed Material (cont.)**

*Camper*, 1937

*Lehman Log*

1938

1939

1940

1941

Sabbath Songbook, 1931

**Visual Material**

Ticket Book, 1930

**5** Blueprint of Kitchen, 1935

Diagram, 1930

Map, 1935

Tent Layout, 1938

**Oversize Financial Information**

Ledger, 1938

**6 Camper Records (from Boxes 3 and 4)**

Expense Cards, 1940

Reservation Cards

Undated

1925

1935

1941

**Contents List**

**Box**

**consult**      **Photographs (held separately)**  
**archivist**

Album, 1938

Loose Photographs

Activities, ca. 1920s-1940

Buildings and Grounds, ca. 1920s-1930s

Negatives, ca. 1920s

People, ca. 1920s-1930s