



American Indian Influences on the Classic Robbers Cave Study

Joseph E. Trimble
Center for Cross-Cultural Research
Department of Psychology
Western Washington University

Gayle Skawennio Morse
Psychology Department- CCP
School of Health Sciences
The Sage Colleges

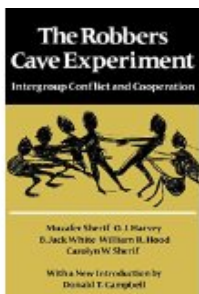


The authors express their gratitude to Gina Perry, University of Melbourne, Australia, for her assistance in the preparation of parts of this presentation. She provided us the source of Muzafer Sherif's comments about the RC Study and the involvement of American Indians in its planning and conduct, a photo of O.J. Harvey, and the reference for O.J. Harvey's leadership and planning of the study.

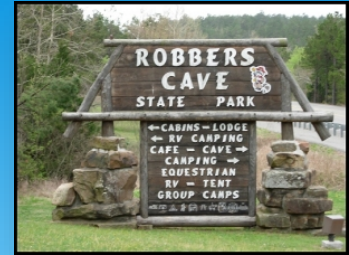
The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation

Muzafer Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. Jack White, William R. Hood, & Carolyn W. Sherif

- * A field study attempting to better understand the causes and consequences of intergroup conflict.
- * *Subjects:*
 - * Normal middle class boys of the same age, ethnicity, income levels, educational level, religiosity, and similar sociocultural backgrounds from Oklahoma City, OK
- * *Group formation:*
 - * Arrived in 2 separate groups (Rattlers and the Eagles). Remained apart for one week.



Robbers Cave Study



* The hypotheses tested were:

(1) When individuals having no established relationships are brought together to interact in group activities with common goals, they produce a group structure with hierarchical statuses and roles within it.

(2) If two in-groups thus formed are brought into functional relationship under conditions of competition and group frustration, attitudes and appropriate hostile actions in relation to the out-group and its members will arise and will be standardized and shared in varying degrees by group members.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PRuxMprSDQ&feature=youtu.be&list=PLs_IM

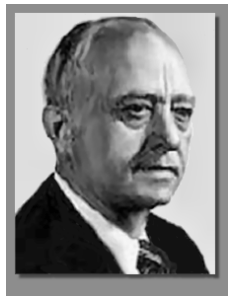
The authors express their gratitude to David B. Baker and his staff at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, the University of Akron, for their assistance in the preparation of parts of this presentation.



Commentary on the Robbers Cave Study

After the 1953 New York state summer camp study failed, O. J. Harvey and B. Jack White sat with Muzafer Sherif at the former campsite and talked about doing another study. All three agreed they wanted to try it one more time but O. J. and B. Jack said they wouldn't be involved unless it ran more smoothly, i. e., if Muzafer was in charge. So O. J. Harvey took charge of the Robbers Cave study.

About his three American Indian graduate students Muzafer Sherif stated in a public lecture in the 1960s about the Robbers Cave experiment *“Like all good things down in Oklahoma it was done by Indians.”**



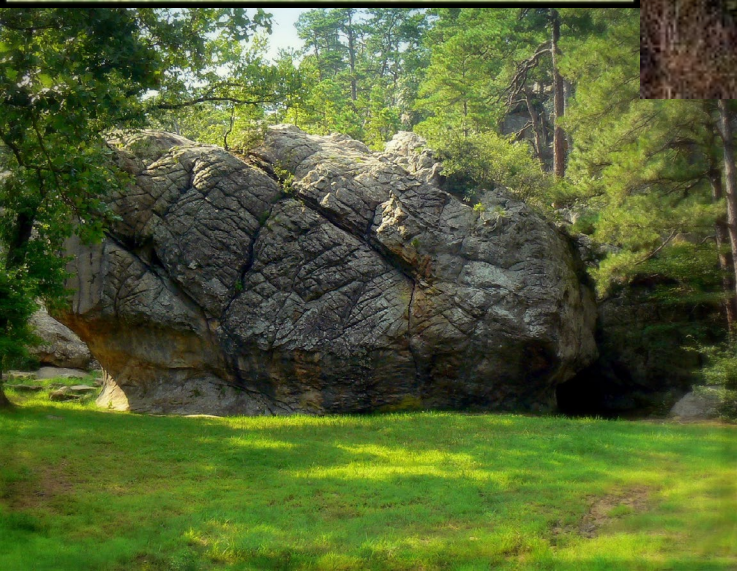
Muzafer Sherif (born Muzaffer Şerif Başoğlu; July 29, 1906 – October 16, 1988) was a Turkish-American social psychologist. He helped develop social judgment theory and realistic conflict theory.

* *Remarks made at an invited lecture at North Dakota State University, 1967.*



Robbers Cave State Park





Choctaw Nation Territory and Robbers Cave State Park



In 1953, O. J. Harvey (Choctaw) and his colleagues requested permission from the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council to use the land in Robbers Cave State Park for the study. Permission was granted and spiritually blessed by the tribal elders.



O.J. Harvey , PhD (1927-2011)
Professor Emeritus
University of Colorado



Choctaw Nation land area

Robbers Cave American Indian Research Coordinators

O. J. Harvey (Choctaw), Bob Hood (Oklahoma Cherokee), and B. Jack White (Kiowa) – Doctoral Students at the University of Oklahoma in social psychology. Their advisor was Muzafer Sherif. The group photo was taken on the steps of the old Institute of Group Relations at OU

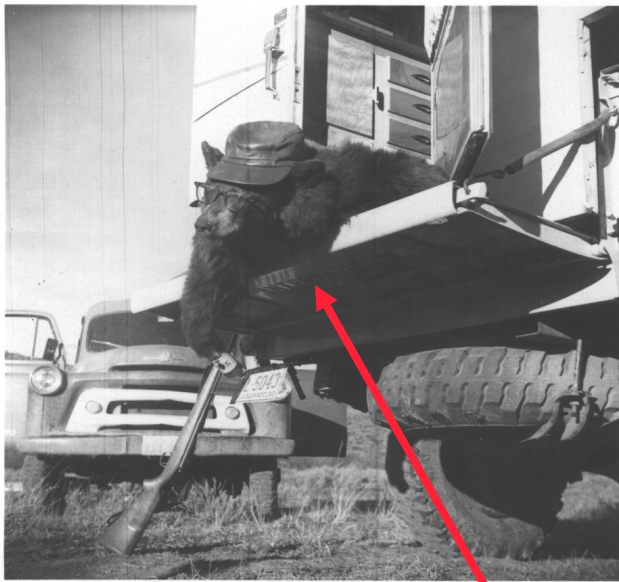


The photo was taken at the *Center for the History of Psychology* at the *University of Akron*.



O. J. Harvey (Choctaw) – Probably the first American Indian male to receive a doctorate in psychology (University of Oklahoma, 1954). Carolyn Attneave (Lenni Lenape/Delaware) earned her PhD from Stanford in 1952.

American Indian Influences on the Classic Robbers Cave Study



William R. Hood (Cherokee) (above)



B. Jack White (Kiowa) (left)

**Camp Counselors in
The Robbers Cave
Experiment (Sherif et. al, 1956)**



GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE CAMPSITE
AND RESPECTIVE AREAS OF THE TWO GROUPS

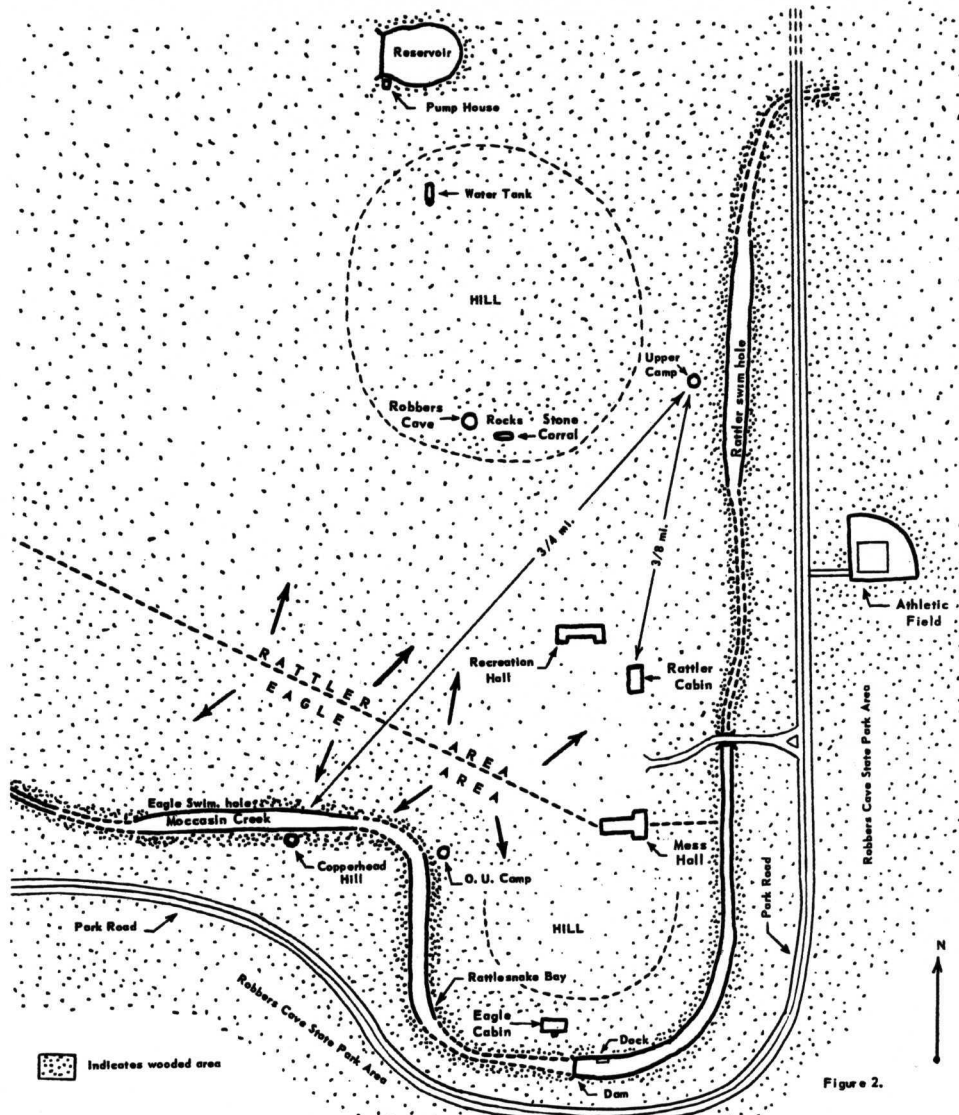


Figure 2.

Robbers Cave Study



Handwritten Description of the Stages and Dates (Muzafer Sherif's Handwriting)

Printing "Handwritten Schedule"...

<http://search.alexanderstreet.com/pexp/view/work/27459...>

Schedule

1. Preparation and planning on the spot July 12, 13, 14, 15. a) meetings of research team!
b) Preparation of camp arrangements aspect in line with (a).
2. Stage I Spontaneous formations July 16, 17
3. Stage II Experimental in-group July 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
(intra-group relations)
4. Stage III Intergroup relations: July 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28*
A. Friction phase
* July 28 may not be necessary for this phase of Stage III. In this case, B. Integration Phase will start on July 28 instead of July 29 as indicated under (b) in literature below.
5. Stage IV Intergroup Relations:
B. Integration phase: July 29, 30, 31
August 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
b) July 28, 29, 30, 31
August 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
6. Camp experiment director, participant observers, experimenter will work together two more days with the project director for putting together and classification of data obtained in their appropriate files.





Robbers Cave Study

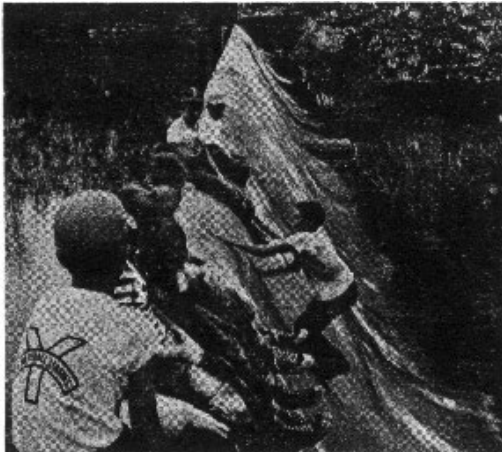
Stage 1: In-group formation



Eagles painting sign for their campfire labelled: "O.U. Camp".



Down the trail with packs and equipment for an overnight hike.



Playing a spontaneously organized dam-climbing game on campout.



Rattler skits at the Stone Corral during one of their evening campfires.

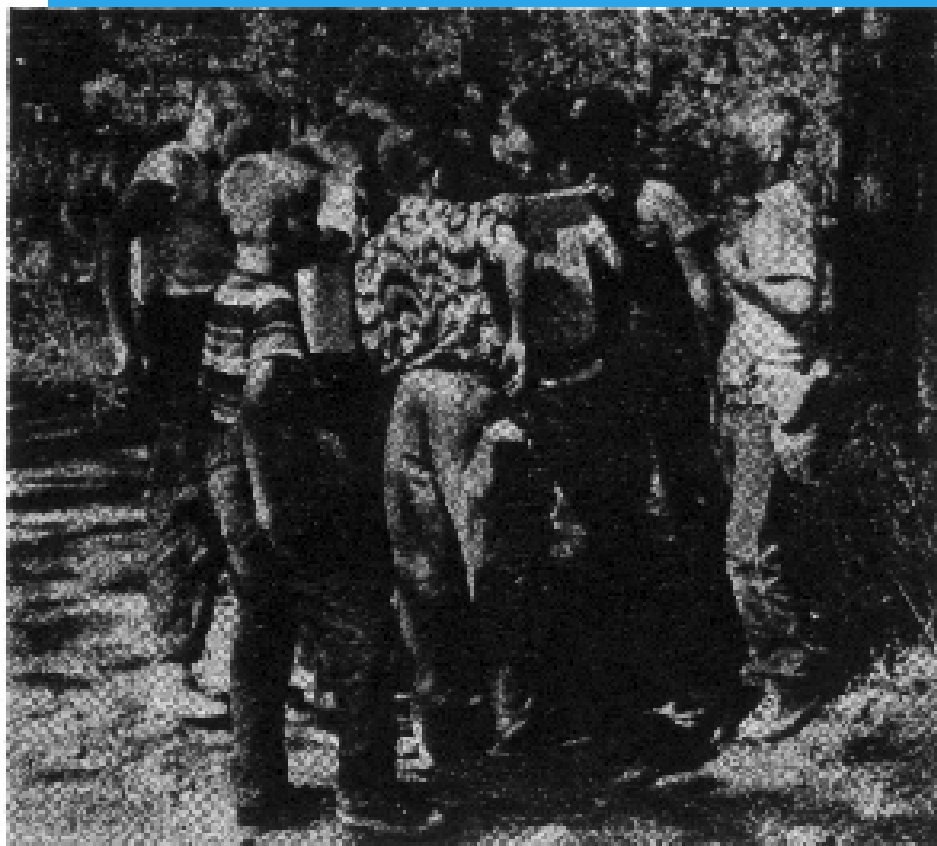
**Lived separately,
developed their own
rules and leadership
At end of Stage 1,
began to become
aware of the other
group**



Selecting tent poles to take on their overnight hike.



Rattlers practice tent pitching.



**Rattlers reading a clue on the group
Treasure Hunt.**



Preparing and serving a meal.

Robbers Cave Study

Stage 2: Intergroup Conflict/Competition

- * Intense rivalry developed between the two groups
- * Researchers kept the scores close
- * Competed for prizes



Robbers Cave Study

Stage 2: Intergroup Conflict/Competition

Leaders proposed series of competitive interactions that led to **3** changes between groups and within groups:

- * within-group solidarity
- * negative stereotyping of other group
- * hostile between-group interactions



Competed in a variety of contests...





One incident the morning after the flag-burning episode: Eagles seizing Rattlers' other flag.



Rattlers displaying blue jeans captured in raid on Eagles and inscribed "The Last of the Eagles".

TWO EXPERIMENTAL IN-GROUPS (RATTLERS AND EAGLES) INTERACT IN COMPETITIVE AND FRUSTRATING SITUATIONS

(STAGE 2)



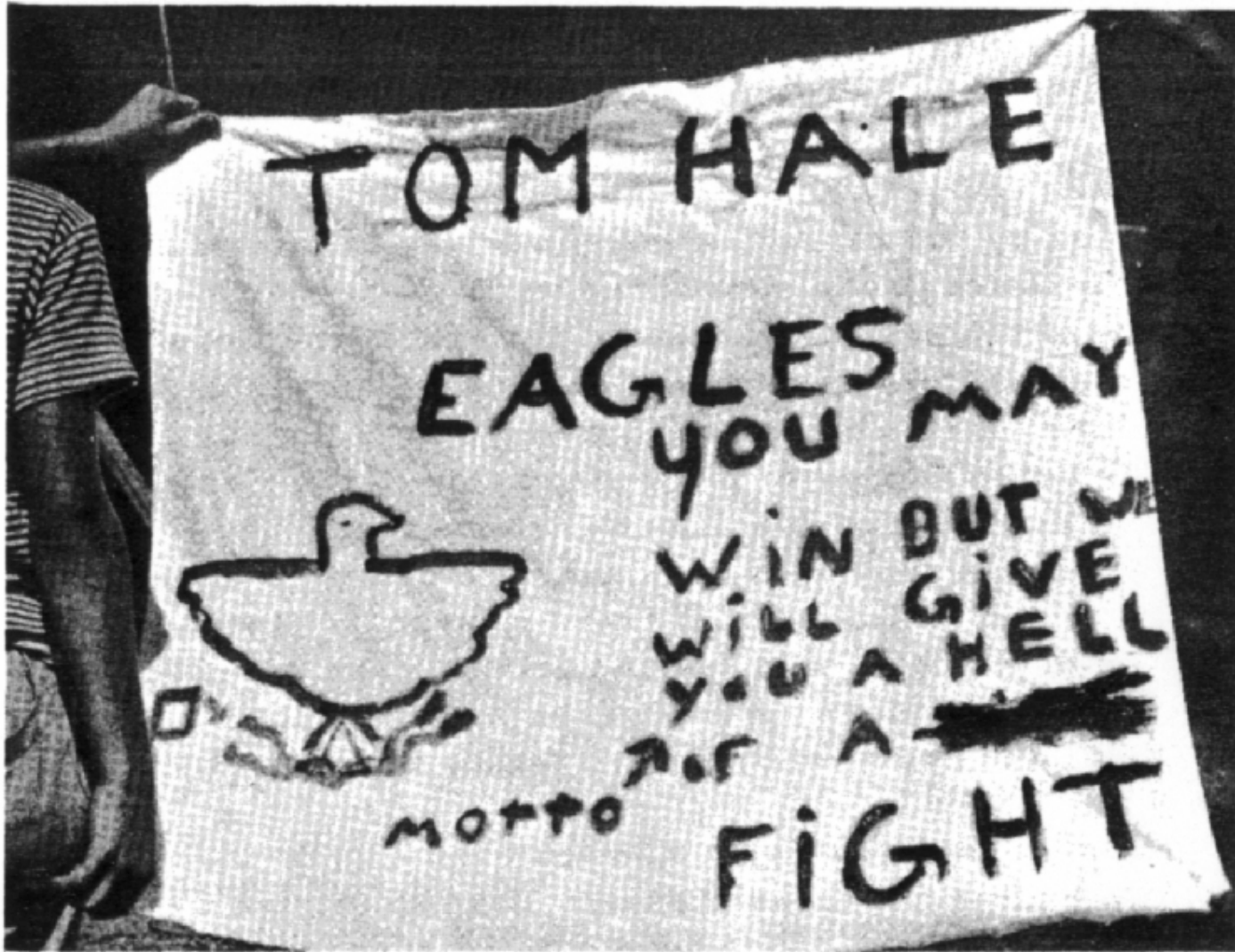
Rattlers put their flag on backstop of ball diamond, which they appropriated after improving it.



Initial encounter between groups: Rattlers ("home team") watch intently as Eagles approach.

RATTLERS AND EAGLES: INTERGROUP RELATIONS

(STAGE 2)



One of the Eagle banners during the tournament.



Soon the rivalry became violent...

- * Raided one another's cabins
- * Stole and burned one another's flags
- * Came to view one another as “stinkers”
“smart-alecks” and “sneaks”
- * Verbal prejudice became apparent, spiraling downward towards aggressive territorial violence
- * The groups eventually had to be separated



So how did the experimenters try to reduce the prejudice they had created???



* ***Propaganda: No***

- * Positive propaganda about one group directed to the other by the experimenters did not help

* ***Contact: No***

- * Doing non-competitive activities together (e.g., watching movies) did not help

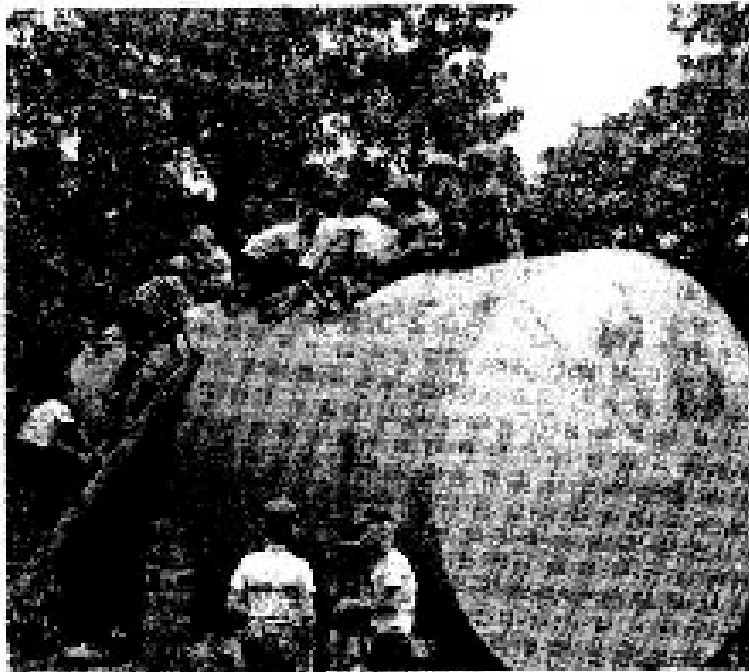
* ***Cooperative action: Yes***

- * Experimenters arranged for camp truck to break down
- * Both groups needed to pull it uphill
- * Intergroup friendships began to develop

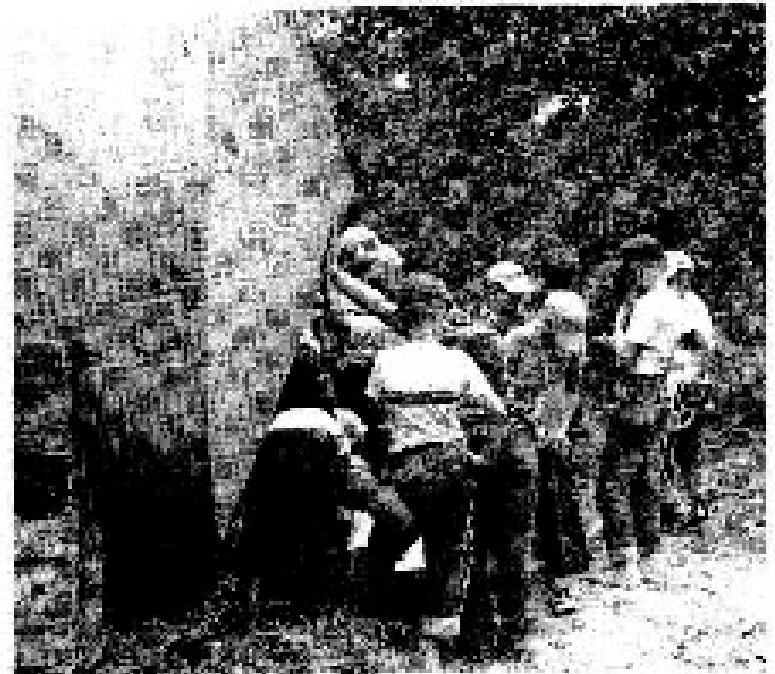


Superordinate Goals

(Below) Intergroup interaction after the introduction of superordinate goals.



Members of both groups climb up to see if the water tank is empty.



Members of both groups cluster around and take turns trying to clear the faucet.

Robbers Cave Experiment - Intergroup Cooperation -



Two groups shooting fireworks. Rattlers in foreground; Eagles in background.



Mess Hall after one of the "garbage fights" between groups eating together.

(Above) Two pictures of effects of intergroup contact without superordinate goals.

Happy Ending!



Getting ready to return home: All together.

