

Eleanor's Vignettes



Juliette "Daisy" Low

Earlier this year, Juliette Low was voted into the Hall of Fame of American Women. Following is a story about her and her contributions.

Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., was a brilliant, impulsive, creative person, endlessly resourceful, and determined to overcome obstacles. Two accidents, one as a child and one on her honeymoon, left her deaf, but more eager than ever to miss none of the joys of life. Her great talent as a painter and sculptor and her love of the out-of-doors found expression throughout her life. She was a warm, outgoing woman with a gift for making friends.

The story of her life reads like a novel. Born in Savannah, Georgia in 1860, her earliest memory was that of watching General Sherman's Yankee troops march by during the siege of the city. When Savannah surrendered, her mother and the children took refuge with her grandfather, John Kinzie, in Chicago. He was the government Indian agent, and Juliette was fasci-



Remember, only you can prevent forest fires. I can't.

nated by the Indians and their ways. At the end of the Civil War the family returned to Savannah.

Summers were spent on an aunt's plantation in north Georgia, with a group of 20 cousins and neighbors. A governess taught them in a one-room school every morning, but they were free the rest of the time to roam the woods, devise new games, and produce plays. Juliette was author, director, and actress, using freely her vivid imagination. After three years at a Virginia boarding school and two more in New York, Juliette returned to Savannah to make her debut. Her beauty, intelligence, and vivacity made her a social success.

In 1886 she married William Low, a wealthy English aristocrat, and intimate of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. She was presented to the Queen, entertained lavishly at the Low's country place in Scotland, and led a busy social life. The couple traveled extensively and she often returned to Savannah for visits. During the Spanish American War she helped her mother manage a convalescent hospital for General Gordon's brigade.

Her marriage was not a happy one and at the age of 51 she was a "lonely widow in a foreign land." A meeting with Lord Baden-Powell and his sister,

Lady Agnes, introduced her to the new Scouting-Girl Guide movement, which soon absorbed her time and attention. She returned to Savannah to start the Girl Scout program in March 1912. For four years she paid all the expenses, even selling heirloom pearls to do so. Two troops were organized the first year, and a five-day camp was held near Savannah. (This first Girl Scout-owned site is still in operation as an accredited camp, Camp Low.)

After spending a winter in England, she returned home, determined to launch a national girls' organization. After opening an office in Washington with an executive secretary, she returned to England again for the winter. Many of her remaining years were spent in furthering the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., and that is well-known Girl Scout history.

She was publicly recognized in Savannah in 1926 for her contribution to girls and to the community. She died the following January. □

Grateful acknowledgements to Jo Hoffman, Mary Ann Beebe, and Dot Davis for material and resources, "Lady from Savannah" by Gladys Denny Shultz and Daisy Gordon Lawrence, 1958, and Girl Scout Hand books.

Foreign camper attendance may increase

Can American camps look for more foreign campers in the immediate future? Will American camps welcome them? The answer to both questions is "yes" according to a recent survey.

The purpose of a study, conducted by Mark Berno, a graduate student at George Washington University, in cooperation with ACA, was to learn more about the number and origins of foreign campers who attend camps in the U.S. each year. It indicated that organized camping provides an excellent situation for the cultural exchange and contact among people of different nationalities that is necessary to promote a better understanding among the youth of the world.

Questionnaires were sent to 250 ACA member camps and the data was based on the responses of the 49.2 percent who returned questionnaires. Other indications of the study included:

- The foreign camper population in the camps that responded came to five percent.
- In 1977 and/or 1978, 44.7 percent of the responding camps had foreign campers. Of these camps, 60 percent were private camps and the remainder were agency/organizational or religiously affiliated camps.

—Some 80 percent of the foreign campers attended private camps and over half came from Latin America; approximately 20 percent came from Europe.

—Foreign campers were fairly evenly divided between male and female; among the males, a larger percentage was under the age of 13, but a large percentage of the girls attending private camps were 13 years or older.

—The campers attending private camps usually came to the U.S. primarily attend camp (80 percent), while in the non-private camp category, only 5 percent came primarily to attend camp.

—Only nine camp directors, or 7.3 percent, said they promoted their camps in foreign countries, and most of these in Latin America.

Berno, who conducted the study, concluded that development in this area could have several advantages such as cultural understanding among the youth, the potential of new camps and new types of camps, such as specialty camps that could accommodate campers from foreign countries who are interested in increasing their skill in certain areas. □