

Julian Belmont

The
Essence
of
Camping

1928

The editorials reprinted herein are scheduled for publication in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE during the spring of 1928. The aim of these editorials is the promotion of a wider appreciation of the essential educational values of the qualified summer camp.

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Ten Tests for a Camp

By ELBERT K. FRETWELL

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A CAMP for boys, or for girls, has definite and peculiarly favorable opportunities for education. In part these opportunities lie in camp environment, in the program, and in the attitude of the campers.

When our son is ready for camp, I shall propose certain specific tests for the camp I am considering. Among these tests, I have chosen ten—not necessarily in order of importance—to set down here.

First: Is he safe? Will my son return to me? What are the health requirements for campers, counselors, cooks, and the whole personnel of the camp? What is the physical environment and equipment? What are the provisions to prevent, or care for, possible illness or accident?

Second: Does the camp maintain a high level of physical vitality? Does it aid in developing hygienic habits of living? Does it enable campers to keep well, to have the power, speed, endurance, and nerve control necessary for working consistently on a high level of accuracy and efficiency?

Third: Does the camp furnish a favorable opportunity for developing through satisfying practice, the qualities of a good citizen? Is there provision for initiative, leadership, co-operation, and intelligent obedience to authority? Is courteous consideration of the rights and obligations of others a part of everyday living?

Fourth: What are the opportunities for having vital contact with real people? Are the leaders genuine—what they pretend to be? Is there a kind of high, joyous seriousness in the spirit of the camp? What kind of talk goes on in camp when the campers or counselors are just talking?

Fifth: Is the program of activities well planned? Does it provide for individual differences? Is there well regulated freedom, attractive activity, free from hurry, strain, worry and envy? Can the camper get his satisfaction out of worthwhile activity well done, rather than by surpassing somebody?

Sixth: Does the camp provide new, or supplementary outdoor experiences? Does he have new experiences with flowers, birds and bugs, wind, rivers, and trees, with mountains, plains, and the open sky? Are these experiences guided enough but not too much?

Seventh: Does the camper develop a larger repertory of sports in which he can participate with increasing skill and satisfaction? Are some of these sports those which he can carry on in later life? Does the camp help him to get out of the "dub" class in some activity?

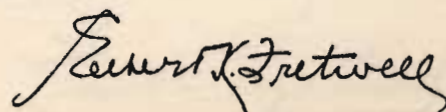
Eighth: Does the camp foster the mental and emotional attitude of seeking, knowing, and understanding the beautiful? This beauty may be in generous, courteous, helpful acts, in music, in dramatics, in the rising sun or the starry heavens. Is the camp free from the hard-boiled attitude that considers a lover of the beautiful, a "sissy"?

Ninth: What is the spiritual attitude of the camp? Is it free from cynicism, and superficial, smart sophistication? Is there a spirit of reverence for the true, the beautiful and the good? Is there able, serious guidance in helping him think through the problems that confront him?

Tenth: Is the camp a happy place? Is there wholesome, manly comradeship free from sentimentality? Is there in everything the joy of being alive? Is there adventure and high daring in the fine art of living?

The one who takes from me my boy, or my girl, if I had one, must answer some such questions as I have set down.

Finally, is there some one specific person in the camp who is personally responsible for my boy day and night, asleep or awake? Who is he?



CAMP EDUCATION

By FREDERICK L. GUGGENHEIMER,

President, New York Section, Camp Directors Association

SOME years before his death, President Eliot of Harvard University made the statement that the greatest individual contribution which has been made to the education of American youth is the summer camp. As the summer camp has become more highly organized, it has been recognized that it is no longer a purely recreational place for our boys and girls to spend their vacations from school but that it also has a definite educational value.

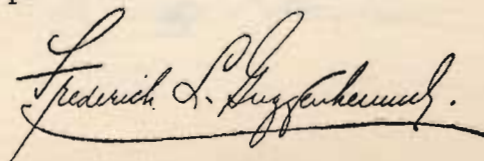
Our civilization is constantly becoming more influenced by urban environment, more complex and more completely permeated and saturated with "things"—that is to say, with the modern luxuries and automatic equipments of life. This condition has led educators and wise parents to see the essential place of the summer camp in the modern educational scheme. The school and the camp are complementary to each other—the one begins where the other leaves off. To summarize what I consider the essential function of each in the education of the child—the school emphasizes intellectual or mental training, while the camp stresses not only physical, but perhaps even more emphatically moral, social, aesthetic and spiritual training. Can anyone say which is the more important?

Our city youth is saturated with the cold, austere practicability and luxuriousness of our modern life. Their aesthetic and cultural experience is found largely in the up-to-date movie or in their father's automobile, with a chauffeur at the wheel. But the camp brings them back to fundamentals. There they live a community life with their peers. This community life is sadly lacking in our modern city homes, where families usually consist of one or two children, as contrasted with seven or eight in past generations.

In camp, boys and girls find an opportunity to use their hands, both in helping to care for themselves and for others and in learning the art and joy of handling tools of all kinds. But, above all, for two months they live in intimate contact with Nature. As Nature permeates their subconscious selves, there is developed in the sensitive souls of these freedom-loving boys and girls a knowledge, a consciousness and an understanding of the true God—of Him who has no name and no dogma—of Him who demands no creed and no form in His worship—but is there to be found in the woods and the mountains and the lakes—in the sun and the moon and the stars. The places of formal worship may be temporarily losing our modern boys and girls, but through the summer camp and the intimate contact with the great universe around them which it makes possible, these boys and girls are finding God.

These are the educational aims, purposes and ideals of the properly directed and organized summer camps and of the high-minded, seriously purposed camp directors.

Through the organization and development of a virile Camp Directors' Association, an effort is being made to emphasize these educational aspirations, so that camps and camping shall be better understood as playing a very definite part in the modern educational movement. The Camp Directors' Association of America and its several sections throughout the country are, in the highest sense of the word, standardizing and making effective the educational possibilities of the Modern Camp.



Partners in Education

By FRANK S. HACKETT

Former President of the Country Day Schools Association

ALL boys and girls—rich and poor, strong and weak, social and aloof, keen and slow, young and youthful, with the stages in between—need summer camps.

In the worthy summer camp are just the elements of education which supplement those of the school and the home at their best:

Upbuilding of health and strength through regular, simple, hardy living, with much of the body exposed to the beneficent rays of the sun, and almost always to the fragrant air of the Open

Training of head and hand, eye and ear, not just through books, but through first-hand study of Nature and her ways

Learning how to preserve life, one's own, and that of others, through expert instruction in swimming, boating, and "First Aid"

Quickening of the sense of what is noble, fine, and beautiful through quiet hours by the camp-fire under the stars, upon the mountain tops, or beside the rushing waters

Coming into intimate contact with men and women refined by this kind of life, to whom it is meat and drink to influence boys and girls under conditions which foster friendship

And, perhaps supremely, living with a group considerately, cheerfully, and successfully, through ease and through difficulty, at camp, and on trips where everyone shares the tasks that make for mutual happiness or failure.

These are fundamentals of good camp training, all of which few homes or schools can in any appreciable degree secure. As such camps are fostered, our citizenship will be enhanced.

Especially valuable are the camps under individual proprietorship to boys and girls who make up the clientele of the Private or "Independent" Schools.

Due to the fact of longer vacations, these young people may have the advantage of being at home from a third to a half of their summer, and yet of spending seven or eight weeks in the right type of camp. This may be described as one which costs enough to remain, even under the pressure of popularity, small, intimate, and yet sufficiently equipped in personnel, in site, and in material to meet this opportunity for training at its best. A limit in numbers is hard to set, but certainly a camp ceases to be small when to any one counselor is entrusted the responsibility for the development of more than eight or ten, or when the director has little or no personal contact with the campers themselves. The influence of the leading spirit is even more important in camp than in any other form of education.

Then, too, in such camps, there is carried over into the summer the atmosphere of "Independent Schools"—their interest in the individual, their refinement, and their efforts for thoroughness. The vital objects above enumerated, which no school can wholly accomplish, find, moreover, in camp their proper expression.

Fortunate indeed are the boys and girls preparing for life in homes, in schools, and in camps where there is a care for the best influences. The future will be not only safe with them, but vastly more abundant.

Frank S. Hackett

Psychologically Considered

By GEORGE E. JOHNSON,

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University
Author of "Education Through Recreation"

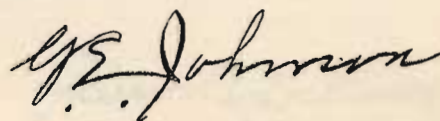
THE summer camp restores to children much of the naturalness of living that the modern community in so many ways tends to take away. The full significance of this is not disclosed in the bare statement. Biologists and sociologists have long emphasized what they regard as an antagonism between human nature and the demands of complex modern society. The burden of adjustment is too great for many.

If this be true with respect to adults, it is still more so with respect to children and youth. Educators are recognizing today the need of wholesome yet free expression of the child's inborn tendencies and of the many resulting tendencies so naturally and generally acquired by children on the basis of the inborn. The camp environment, closer to nature and socially simpler, is ideal for the expression of these tendencies freely yet wholesomely. It gives zest and joyousness in the experiences that naturally occur in the child's life. Thus the weeks in camp insure against the suppression or cramping of the inborn tendencies or their diversion into unwholesome forms.

The chief value of the summer camp, however, is not in this negative aspect or in the prophylactics of camp life. The positive influences are of even greater importance. An observer of the activities of children in a good camp can readily understand and appreciate how so much of human nature finds natural and wholesome expression in ways to develop such traits as: energy; liking for effort; industry; initiative; love of achievement in certain

lines, hence ambition; courage; persistence; self-control; confidence; sociability; sympathy; cooperation; and many others. He also knows how these activities, which have become associated with deep enjoyment, tend to establish youthful standards of right behavior in harmony with desires in such a way as to result in mental integration. In this way, certain moral traits develop in harmony with and not contrary to existing predispositions and attitudes. This is of fundamental importance in early moral training, for it makes possible the identification of the child's self, his desires and his interests, with right behavior.

It is this point of view of right behavior and its relation to moral conduct that is deepening the conviction that in camp life one holds the vantage ground in moral education. The great moral philosopher, Paulson, said: "The goal at which the will aims does not consist in a maximum of pleasurable feelings, but in the normal exercise of the vital functions for which the species is predisposed. . . . The problem of ethics, therefore, is to set forth in general outlines the form of life for which *human nature* is predisposed." For a portion of the year, at least, may it not be said truthfully that the summer camp provides the environment which most completely meets the needs of the developing character of children?



The Essence of Camping

By JOHN P. SPRAGUE, M. D.

Ex-President, Mid-West Section, Camp Directors Association

TEN years ago, little was said of the aims and objectives of camping. Swimming, baseball, tennis, hiking, canoeing, sailing, the events which usually make up the day's program, were things most stressed by directors. These are the outward means for entertaining campers, keeping them busy and providing for them the robust activities which tend to sturdy physical development.

The real objectives are being stressed today. They are to develop the boy or girl in his or her social relations, standards of morality, and spiritual growth. The personnel of the camp staff is the greatest factor in their accomplishment. The director has a plan of child development based on definite principles of child training. He surrounds himself with a staff of counselors whose daily lives are examples of the results desired.

Both boys and girls of camp age are hero worshippers. They are quick to copy and adopt the standards of their counselors. Through intimate association with them they learn how their fellow campers should be treated, that honesty in all their dealings is essential to their own happiness as well as that of the other campers. Above all they learn that there is real joy in doing a service for another. The members of the camp staff have at their disposal ways and means of influencing and directing boys and girls that it is impossible for parents to duplicate either at home or when on vacations with their children.

While boys and girls seek the companionship of their counselors, they wish the freedom that naturally comes in the great out of doors. They crave an opportunity to take the initiative, to

experience the joys of discovery. They, like men and women, seek the freedom of individual action in company with others of their own age with whom they can compare their abilities.

Camp directors know that it is easy to arrange too much program for their campers. They constantly seek to provide opportunities for boys and girls to use their own initiative and to carry out their own plans, with help and advice at hand whenever needed. The camp affords more of these opportunities than can be provided by the home, in surroundings which stimulate boys and girls to their best accomplishment. In camp, where they value the praise of their fellow campers and the approval of their counselors, they feel the urge to complete successfully any work they undertake.

Parents know that they can care for their children perfectly when life is uneventful, but when some special need arises trained workers must be found to direct them. This has long applied to school work, medical attention, musical, dancing and other instruction. Only recently have parents realized that their children need trained instructors to help them establish the right relationship and attitude toward other children, to teach them high standards of honesty and to develop in them the spirit of co-operation with others.

To strengthen character, to give added value to life, is the essence of camping, which builds boys and girls into the right kind of men and women.

