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The ORGANIZED SUMMER CAMP

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GIFT OF
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Physical Education Series No. 7
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
BUREAU of EDUCATION
1926

THE ORGANIZED SUMMER CAMP

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Balch established a camp for a group of boys on Lake Asquam, N. H., about 1880. The experiment proved so successful that shortly afterwards other camps were established, and the movement began to grow steadily.

From its very beginning the summer camp proved an excellent means not only for furnishing interesting and wholesome occupation but also for providing educational work for children. The success of this work is largely attributed to the fact that the method of organization or management includes a well-balanced schedule of work and play. Each camper must assume some responsibility and contribute something toward maintaining the camp.

During the early stages of this movement only camps for boys were established. Not only teachers and parents realized the great benefits which were thereby made possible for their sons, but the boys who had these opportunities valued them as great events of their lives. Practically every account of these early camps not only praised the movement but also urged the establishment of many more.

The health, educational, and recreational values of summer camps had become so well recognized by 1900 that a similar movement for girls was launched. Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Cobb established a camp for girls at Bridgeton, Me., and a few years later the movement was fostered by Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Gulick, who opened Camp Aloha at Fairlee, Vt., and Mrs. Charles Farnsworth, who established the Hanoum Camps at Thetford, Vt.

In 1910 the directors of boys' summer camps formed an association for directing their work. This association meets yearly for the purpose of considering all problems of camp direction or camp management. A similar association of the directors of girls' camps was formed in 1916. These associations are working not merely for the purpose of improving the summer camps for the few children of the well-to-do but also for the purpose of giving the camp a permanent place in education.

THE SUMMER CAMP AS A FACTOR IN EDUCATION

The idea of having every child spend several summers at least in an organized summer camp is gaining headway not only in the

United States but also in foreign countries, especially in England and Sweden. An appeal to parents in the United States to send their children to these camps appeared June 21, 1924, in the weekly bulletin published by the Chicago Department of Health and edited by Herman N. Bundesen, Commissioner of Health.

It is essential for parents to investigate and find out for themselves what these camps will do for their children in building better health and better morals, in teaching democracy and better citizenship, and promoting safety. Sending a child to camp during the summer is like taking out an insurance policy on the child's safety for that period.

Mr. William G. Vinal, of the New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse, N. Y., recently declared that "camping is the missing link in education to-day."

Dr. Herbart Trant, of Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore, Md., considers the summer camp as an institution bridging the gap between the school years for the education of mind and body in the outdoors.

Charles H. Smith, assistant principal of the Hyde Park High School in Chicago and director of school work at Camp Roosevelt since its very beginning, maintains "that boys learn their high-school subjects even more readily in the informal environment of the camp school than in the more stilted surroundings of the city schools." He believes that these results are achieved because of the organized but not mechanical methods of supervision. There is decidedly a human touch which permeates the entire course of camp life.

"The Contribution of the Organized Summer Camp to American Education," an article written by Dr. George L. Meylan, was published in the July, 1924, number of Playground Magazine. Doctor Meylan states herein that—

The summer camp deserves a prominent place in education because of the large contribution that it is making toward the development of stalwart, upright, and loyal citizens. No effort should be spared to encourage the extension of camps until all boys and girls in the land shall enjoy the advantages of camping as a part of their education. The thinking citizen of the world to-day realizes as never before that the most important factor for social progress, national stability, and human happiness is individual character.

Ex-president Eliot, of Harvard University, is said to have declared that "the organized summer camp is the most important step in education that America has given to the world."

The following excerpt from the Teachers' World, June 10, 1925, shows what Swedish educators think about camping as a factor in education:

Sweden is determined to make its men and women the healthiest in the world. If you want to be really healthy and strong and good at games, you must begin when you are very young, before your bones have become stiff

and set. So the Gymnastic Association of Skania, the southmost Province of Sweden, invited boys and girls from all the national schools for a week's open-air holiday to be spent entirely in games, dances, and gymnastics. Women teachers went with the girls and men teachers went with the boys, and they all lived together in the glades of a lovely birch forest by the lake of Ringsion. The army chiefs helped the camp by lending military tents sufficient for everybody, and not only the dishes and pots and pans and traveling kitchens, but the many cooks as well. The boys and girls loved every minute of the time * * * toward the end of their stay, the children did their exercises together, and 12,000 people, many of them parents, came to watch. On the last day there was great excitement, for the Crown Prince of Sweden visited the camp and watched the gymnastic display. The week was spent in every kind of gymnastic exercise, together with plenty of games and sports, and even lessons in swimming.

An announcement was also made in this journal that on the 25th of June a still larger camp was to be held. During the first week there would be encamped 3,000 children and 500 teachers. During the second week teachers from all over Sweden were to receive practical training, and during the last week a great gymnastic festival was to take place.

A brief article in the British Medical Journal, March, 1920, gives the following information concerning camping in England:

School camps have been started and are likely to multiply; * * * although so far camps have been established only in connection with elementary schools, in 1911 and 1914 the board of education issued advisory memoranda on the subject to secondary schools; * * * and under the education act of 1918 education authorities have wide powers to promote social and physical training by means of holiday camps.¹

Camp Roosevelt, the first public school camp.—Camp Roosevelt, Chicago's public school camp, was established in 1919. The establishment of this camp was mainly the work of Maj. F. L. Beals. Major Beals not only planned the project but tried in every way to have the camp established and carried on without cost to the boys or to the board of education. The operating expenses of such a tremendous project proved to be so large that this idea had to be abandoned, and the plan finally adopted was that each camper should contribute his share of the bare operating expenses. An interesting account of this camp was published in 1921.²

The fact that a unit of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps was maintained in the Chicago public schools during the regular school year made possible the cooperation of the War Department in this project. Through this source, equipment, including tents, etc., was secured and a personnel of officers and assistants was provided for the camp.

¹ Physical Education in England. British Med. Jour., vol. 1, 1920, March 6, pp. 338-339.

² Camp Roosevelt, Its history and development. Menasha, Wis. George Banta Publishing Co.

The purpose of Camp Roosevelt as stated by Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood and quoted by Major Beals is as follows:

The broad general purpose of Camp Roosevelt is to make better men and better citizens physically and morally, through the proper training and development of American youth, by implanting in them a sense of citizenship, responsibility for service to the Nation in time of need, whether it be in peace or war.

Camp Roosevelt is situated at Lake Harbor, in Michigan, 5 miles from Muskegon, in a strictly rural environment. The healthfulness of this location was previously investigated by the city health departments of Muskegon and Chicago. Special attention was given to the matter of a safe water supply, bathing facilities, drainage, sewerage, freedom from mosquitoes, etc. The problem of food supply was solved by arranging to keep all perishable foods in a re-



SLEEPING QUARTERS, CAMP ROOSEVELT

frigeration plant at Muskegon, from which the camp was supplied daily by motor-truck delivery.

A physical examination is given to each camper at entrance. Great care is taken throughout the season to protect every boy from over-exertion. This is the special work of the physical directors. The First Aid Chapter of the American Red Cross of Chicago maintains three physicians and a nurse not merely to care for emergencies but for teaching the boys first aid and emergency measures. Dr. John Dill Robertson, Chicago Health Commissioner, visits the camp frequently and gives occasional health talks to the boys.

Camp life is made enjoyable and wholesome through the efforts of the K. C. and the Y. M. C. A. secretaries. These organizations are especially interested in boy building and hence gladly furnish trained leaders to assist in the work.

Splendid results are accomplished in school work. Each camper studies two academic subjects during the summer, for which he receives credit on his return to school in September. No special class-

rooms are provided. The classes are held in various places, such as tents or out of doors under trees, and the work is carried on entirely in an informal manner.

Camp Roosevelt has indeed blazed a new trail in the educational field. The establishment of this camp is considered such a success that other educators might do well to imitate it. Camp Roosevelt is unsurpassed as a means of improving the health of boys.

BOYS AND GIRLS' CLUB CAMPS

A very practical way in which camping has been utilized as a factor in education is the movement for organized camps for boys



BATHING BEACH, CAMP ROOSEVELT

and girls carried on by the extension divisions of the agricultural departments of colleges and universities in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. This camp movement originated about 10 years ago, and has grown rapidly since 1922. Camps of this kind are called boys and girls' club camps. Each club is composed of a group of boys and girls working on some special project concerning home economics or agriculture under the direction of an extension or demonstration agent. These clubs usually meet once a month throughout the year, and hold a special camp session in June or July.

The main purpose of these camps is to provide practical demonstration work for the boys and girls. They also include in their program wholesome recreational activities suitable for these rural-

school children. They are called the 4-H camps; and their aim, as stated in the club creed, is to develop head, hands, heart, and health.

Boys and girls' club work, conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the land-grant colleges through their extension departments, is a national movement. The summer camp is an important outgrowth of this movement. The importance of the club camp is attested to by the fact that the following group of colleges and universities promote this kind of work:

University of Arizona, Tucson.

Colorado Agricultural College, Fort Collins.

Connecticut Agricultural College, Storrs.

Florida State College for Women, Tallahassee.

University of Florida, Gainesville.

Georgia State College of Agriculture,

University of Georgia, Athens.

Purdue University, La Fayette, Ind.

University of Idaho, Moscow.

Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan.

University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Baton Rouge.

Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J.

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater.

Ohio State University, Columbus.

Montana State College, Bozeman.

University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

State University of Nevada, Reno.

Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, College Station.

Agricultural College of Utah, Logan.

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg.

University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, Burlington.

State College of Washington, Pullman.

West Virginia University, Morgantown.

University of Wisconsin, Madison.

MUNICIPAL CAMPS

Municipal camps have been established in Michigan, New York, California, and elsewhere. California has 14 municipal camps maintained by the recreation departments of cities with the cooperation of the United States Forestry Service. Oakland maintains two summer camps. One of these is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and provides for supervised groups of boys, alternating with supervised groups of girls, during periods of two weeks. It also provides for family groups during the entire summer.

The Palisades Interstate Park at Bear Mountain, N. Y., provides a site for a great variety of camps. Many mountains are located in this region, and 35 artificial lakes were made by damming the mountain streams. This park has been described as "a wilderness of wooded mountains, touched by human genius, to conserve its wild-wood aspects and to utilize them for well-directed purposes of rational recreation and education."

The first camp established in this park was the work of Miss Ruby M. Joliffe in 1911. Miss Joliffe is now superintendent of the camp department of the park, which provides for the enjoyment of camp

life by 8,000 children every summer under the supervision of various social and religious organizations and educational associations.

CAMPS FOR MALNOURISHED AND TUBERCULAR CHILDREN

Recently there has been a movement for the establishment of special health camps for malnourished or tubercular children. This work, however, is carried on largely by private organizations. The National Tuberculosis Association has been very active in helping in the organization of these camps. In many instances the children cared for in these camps are selected by the school nurses and doctors, and in a few instances there is a direct connection between the public school and the health camp.



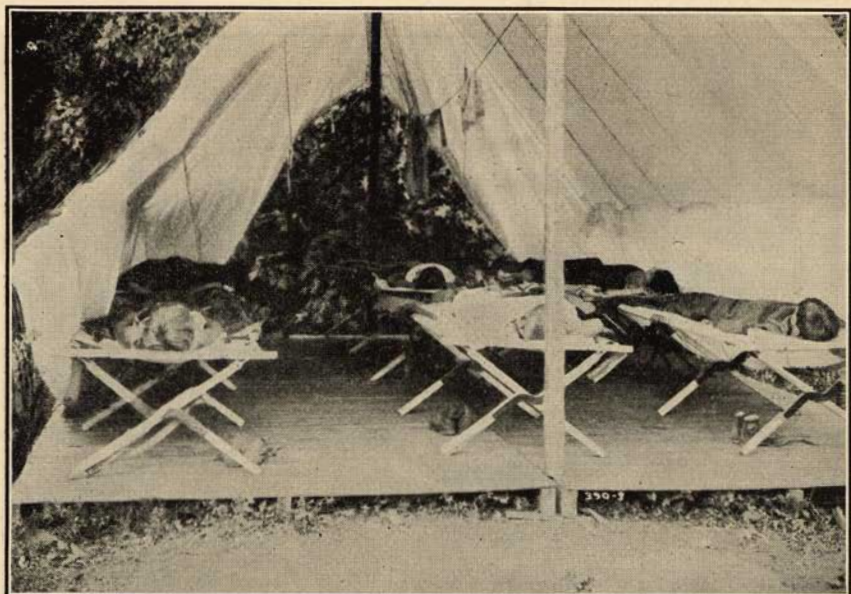
STRUCTURE IN PALISADE INTERSTATE PARK USED AS SLEEPING QUARTERS FOR SMALL CHILDREN

Recent reports show that such camps are being established not only in the United States but also in South America, Germany, Spain, and France. All of these reports point to the fact that many children suffering from incipient tuberculosis show a remarkable improvement after spending 6 to 10 weeks in outdoor life with daily exposure to the sunlight.

Massachusetts has taken the lead in the matter of establishing health camps. The State department of education of this State has fostered this plan with the idea that the cost of providing supervised outdoor life for children would be much less than the cost of maintaining sanitariums for incurable adults.

The Board of Education of Cambridge, Mass., maintains two summer camp schools for malnourished or otherwise sickly children. Two regular school buildings are used in connection with this work. One of these is practically a summer play school. Most of the time is spent out of doors in a neighboring park, although the midday lunch is served inside the school building.

The Board of Education of Dubuque, Iowa, furnishes two teachers for a summer health camp established by the Dubuque Visiting Nurses Association in cooperation with civic health organizations. This camp provides for about 90 boys and girls during a period of six weeks.



SUMMER HEALTH CAMP, PRENDERGAST, MASS.

Camps for malnourished children are located at Malden, Mass., Utica, N. Y., East St. Louis, Ill., Reading, Pa., Williamsport, Pa., and South Casco, Me. These camps are maintained by private organizations, but take care of school children selected by school nurses and doctors.

The following paragraph, entitled "Sol's Curing Smile," quoted from the 1924-25 report of a camp for crippled children maintained by the Rotary Club of Cincinnati, refers to the health work of this camp:

This is the first year that the wonderful sun treatment for tuberculosis has been tried at this camp. The results have proven more than gratifying, and the treatment will be a permanent camp asset.

A unique plan has been tried out in Le Havre, France. A special auto, furnished by a private organization, calls at the home of each child having incipient tuberculosis and takes the group out into the country to a solarium each day. At this place the children are placed on cots and exposed frequently to the sunlight and then brought back to their homes in the evening. This plan is splendid for small children, inasmuch as it allows them to spend the nights at home with their parents and also permits parents to see the gradual improvement of their children.

An account of the British Residential Open-Air School was published in *The Schoolmaster and Woman Teachers' Chronicle*, May 1, 1925:

The camp school is maintained by a local education authority, the inmates being elementary school children who have been certified by their school doctor as weakling or ailing * * * the children are sent from London in parties of 40, each batch of boys or girls from a selected school. * * * This method enables the children to share what they regard as a great adventure with their own schoolmates and greatly adds to their enjoyment. Moreover, it reduces homesickness to a minimum. One other feature is deserving of special notice. The cooperation of the head teacher and the good will of the staff of the school selected make it possible for the children to be accompanied by their teachers. In this way orthodox convalescent treatment can be combined with the ordered life of a boarding school, with its wholesome discipline and fixed hours of study. * * * Camp life can be made an education of the highest value, particularly in the case of children living below the poverty line. It is no secret that in the poorest households such things as toothbrushes and night-gowns are too often lacking. * * * Doubtless the lesson in hygiene will have emphasized the importance of these necessary articles in everyday life. But that unfortunately is not enough. The trouble is that precepts, however admirable in themselves, lose much of their educative force where they can not be put into practice. So it is in this case. But let the child be selected for a camp party; at once a new factor is introduced. It is as if a swimming bath were provided for a child whose knowledge of swimming has been confined to lying flat on a table and making the correct movements with arms and legs. In other words, an outfit is insisted upon, with the result that the more glaring deficiencies in the child's wardrobe will have to be made good by the parents. * * * For children who come mostly from crowded two or three roomed tenements, the home life of the camp is a continuous course of training, notably the weekly hot bath, the white cloth for dinner, inspections for cleanliness, and, not least, the separate bed. Out of doors also the life might well be described as a succession of surprises.

The success of this type of institution is beyond question. Although it is generally admitted that parents should pay for the cost of food, there is always an annual deficit, and it is generally believed that the results justify an annual expenditure of public money when it is remembered that time has to be found each day for four hours' school work and that while regaining health the children are getting an education which can not be obtained in the classroom.

Furthermore, the great value of the camp school lies in the—
personal experience which the camp routine affords of those things which form the basis of a proper life—regular hours of work, play, and sleep, prayers and

public worship, a wholesome diet, cleanliness, and so on. * * * In educational matters we are accustomed to move slowly. A school of this type is still so rare as to be almost a curiosity. It seems a thousand pities that camp life, with its healthy activities, should only be made available for a limited number of children certified as ailing. Surely it should form part of the general education of every boy and girl in the poorer schools of London.

The summer health camp for malnourished children in the United States is beyond the experimental stage. It has demonstrated clearly that child health is improved by hygienic living out of doors, and it is to be hoped that not only the sickly but all children will soon be provided with opportunities for this outdoor life during the



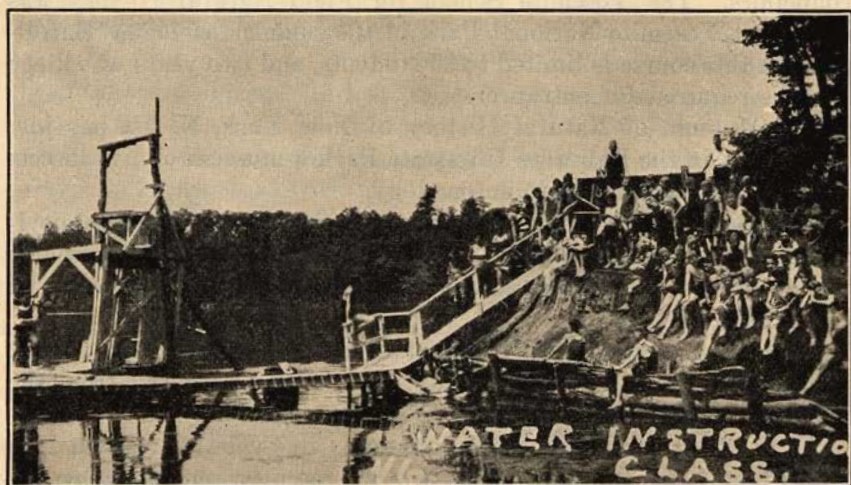
SUMMER HEALTH CAMP, PRENDERGAST, MASS.

summer and that the ordinary elementary and high school curricula will be made to include more outdoor school work throughout the year. The medical inspectors and school nurses may forever continue pointing out physical defects, but unless more attention is given to the health of the child throughout school life their work will have little constructive value for the child.

TRAINING COURSES FOR CAMP DIRECTORS AND COUNCILORS

At the present time the demand for camp councilors is so great that courses of instruction for camping are now given by eight leading colleges and universities and nine special schools of physical education.

The greatest emphasis given to camping by any educational institution has been that of the special schools of physical education. Many of these schools, in addition to providing courses in the theory of camping, also require two or four months of camp life as a part of their professional course in physical education. The following schools require at least several months of camp life as a part of their training courses for teachers: New Haven Normal School of Gymnastics, New Haven, Conn.; Chicago Normal School of Physical Education, Chicago, Ill.; the Boston School of Physical Education, Boston, Mass.; Posse-Nissen School of Physical Education, Boston, Mass.; Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union, Indianapolis, Ind.; Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, Mich.; Central School of Physical Education and School Hygiene, New York, N. Y.;



BOY SCOUT CAMP, HAMMOND, IND.

Sargent School of Physical Education, Cambridge, Mass.; The Bouve School, Boston, Mass.

Colleges and universities giving courses for camp councilors are: Goucher College, Baltimore, Md.; Columbia University, New York, N. Y.; Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.; Connecticut College for Women, New London; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; State University of Washington, Seattle; Howard University, Washington, D. C.; Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.

The Camp Directors Association conducts yearly an intensive training course for camp councilors. This course includes instruction in swimming, canoeing, nature lore, and arts and crafts. The courses are given during a period of 7 to 10 days during the month of June.

Special training courses for camp directors are also given by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts organizations. These organizations are doing real pioneer work in the matter of establishing and carrying on summer camps for boys and girls which involve practically no expense for each child except for food.

Courses in swimming and life-saving are conducted several times each year by the American Red Cross. It is absolutely necessary that all swimming councilors be qualified for life-saving. Inasmuch as swimming and boating are the main activities of camp life, the work of the Red Cross in helping to train responsible people for these positions is invaluable.

A few other courses of training are offered in various sections of the country. These courses are especially helpful for nature-love councilors. The Yosemite School for Field Natural History was opened at Yosemite National Park in the summer of 1925. Enrollment in this course is limited to 20 students, and two years of college work is required for entrance.

The Museum of Natural History of New York, N. Y., has just established in the Palisades Interstate Park a museum of live insects to offer field instruction in entomology.

A course in field biology is conducted by the University of Pennsylvania at Nawakwa Lodge in the Allegheny Mountains. This course was promoted by the Pittsburgh Nature Study Club, composed of city-school teachers.

Leaflets concerning wild flowers, autumn flowers, and fruit trees, which are helpful for nature-study work, may be secured from the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill.

An excellent curriculum on nature study in *Cycles of Garden Life and Plant Life*, Bulletin, 1925, No. 15, recently published by the United States Bureau of Education, contains a series of projects on nature study adaptable to various localities.

Little has been done as yet in the matter of training health councilors. Dr. Herbert Trant believes that much good work could be accomplished through cooperation with the medical colleges.³ Many junior and senior medical students are sufficiently trained to take charge of this work. These students would gladly enter camp life during the summer months and carry out a health program with groups of boys and girls if given the opportunity.

CONCLUSION

The preceding information concerning the status of organized summer camps for boys and girls points to the fact that these camps are now considered a growing factor in education.

³Trant, Dr. Herbert. Safeguarding the health of boys and girls in camp. An essay in Spaulding's Camps and Camping. American Sports Publishing Co., 45 Rose Street, New York, N. Y.

Only one city public-school system as yet conducts a summer camp as a part of its educational work, although thousands of school children throughout the country spend from six to eight weeks of every summer in camps directed by private individuals or organizations.

The movement for summer health camps launched by private organizations for improving the health of malnourished children in public and private schools is receiving splendid cooperation from many public-school systems. This movement is pointing the way toward more outdoor work throughout the entire school term. The establishment of rural club camps for boys and girls, directed by the extension departments of agricultural colleges in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, offers a practical scheme for utilizing camping as a factor in education.

On the whole, the organized summer camp has demonstrated its value for filling the gap of the summer vacation for both city and rural school children. It has pointed out the necessity for more outdoor life as a part of all school work. It has demonstrated to parents and educators the great value of informal teaching of small groups in comparison with the hustle and formal discipline of the crowded classroom.

Within the next decade camping will probably be made a part of the work of many public and private schools.

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