

Extending Education

PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL CAMP, LIFE CAMPS, INC.

VOLUME I

JANUARY, 1944

NUMBER 1

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

American education has done much in recent years to bring real experience into the lives of our youth. The stiff, formal classroom has blossomed forth into a living, breathing place. Text-books have improved in content and appearance. An increasing number of schools are utilizing the community as a resource to improve instruction. But all of this, though commendable, is not enough. Those who have studied the learning processes of children in terms of our educational objectives point to the need for even more first-hand experience in the lives of our children. Camping education is one answer to this need. It is the thesis of this new outdoor education movement that *those things which should be learned and can best be learned through direct experience in life situations outside the classroom should there be learned*. It projects camping as an integral part of the curriculum where schools operate their own camps on a year 'round basis, offer a wide range of work experience projects in camp and in the community, and carry on a program of trips and explorations to implement classroom study.

Throughout the country many schools, both public and private, are carrying on interesting and significant programs in this new field of education. Teachers colleges are now including camping education as a part of teacher training. It is the purpose of

this publication to describe significant new developments in this field. **EXTENDING EDUCATION** is not a news-bulletin, but will rather take the form of a series of monographs, each one devoted primarily to a treatment of some significant demonstration of camping education in action.

Perhaps it is a little presumptuous for the first issue of this publication to be devoted to one of the enterprises of National Camp. However, the number of inquiries coming into our office about the undergraduate institutes indicates a wide-spread interest and a need for a comprehensive statement about these courses. Since it is the purpose of this publication to spread word about specific projects by which education is extended into the outdoors, the institutes form a logical part of the series.

It is our purpose to discover and describe outstanding examples of outdoor education wherever they may be, and to do everything possible to extend what we believe to be the education of the future.

No promise is made of regular publication, but an attempt will be made to release several issues a year. Those who are interested in outdoor education are invited to aid us by sending us information about significant demonstrations of this vital new movement.

L. B. SHARP

Teacher Education Outdoors

MODERN TRENDS in education emphasize learning by doing. Psychologists who have studied the way in which pupils learn stress the need for real experience in the educational process. Those who are studying to be teachers read in their methods course text-books that the artificial classifications of subject-matter should be broken down and that education should be a rounded, meaningful experience rather than a series of unrelated subject-matter periods. Such would seem to be the modern trend in education. But are the teachers who are being trained in the teacher-training institutions adequately prepared to teach in this way? The evidence would seem to indicate that many are not. Actual studies show that most undergraduates of

teachers colleges are lacking in the basic experiences that will furnish meaning to the words they use in class.

How can teachers and teachers-in-training get a background of actual experience upon which to base their book concepts? Is there any practical procedure whereby teachers and reality can be brought together? The Camping Education Institutes conducted at Life Camps' National Camp are a partial answer to these questions. Two such institutes of ten days duration have been held and have indicated such a degree of success as to warrant consideration by those interested in teacher education throughout the country.

On June 17, 1943 thirty-seven undergraduates

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from the teacher-training institutions of New Jersey assembled at National Camp for the second Camping Education Institute. Along with them came nine faculty members from these same colleges to supplement the regular staff of National Camp. The students represented all college levels from freshmen to seniors and they had been selected from a wide field of subject-matter specialization.

How they live

National Camp is laid out on a decentralized plan. That is to say, it consists of several small camps out in the woods away from the central camp area. Each of these small camps has a distinctive name—Oak Crest, Bird Haven, Buck Hill, etc. . . . and consists of several shelters and a kitchen area. The shelters, beds and other equipment are substantial, but not elaborate—which means that the campers get a feeling of being on their own without someone to take care of their quarters for them and provide for all the comforts of life. Campers are divided into small groups of eight or ten and live together in these small camps where they cooperate in solving the problems of food, shelter, self-occupation and daily living.

During the ten day institute a deliberate attempt is made to divide the students into the small camp groups in such a way as to scatter the representatives from each college and give them a chance to meet students from other institutions. At least one faculty member lives in each small camp. The faculty member acts as an advisor from the sidelines rather than as an adult supervisor. The students choose their own representative who meets

with the director of the camp to discuss mutual problems. As much as the crowded camp program will permit these small camp groups participate in a variety of activities together. They go on overnight camping trips, cook out together, have their own campfires and contribute as a group to evening programs of the whole camp. The adjustment of individuals to the life in a primary (even though temporary) group is a valuable part of the ten day experience.

What they do

The program for the ten days is intensive and yet informal. Everything about the experience is designed to have meaning for the students. The living quarters, the meals, the plan of organization, the evening programs, the outdoor expeditions, the discussions are all a part of the rounded experience that gives the student an understanding of education in the outdoors.

The first day in camp the students are placed on their own. They are told what the program has to offer and that it will be entirely up to them how much they gain from it. This informal approach comes as a surprise to some but they soon find themselves engulfed in a series of events so interesting and satisfying that they fear lest they should miss a single event.

While the program is for the most part informal it is vigorous and challenging. A typical day would see the group streaming down to an early breakfast (unless they were cooking out that day) after which there is time to clean their camp area, make their beds and put their shelters in order before setting forth on an exploration in the outdoors. After a morning of searching, discussing and learning the group gets back to camp by noon in time for a shower before lunch. After lunch there is usually a lively discussion covering the experience of the morning or something of educational significance that has happened in camp. The afternoon is devoted to crafts, construction, study, discussions and water-front activities depending upon student choice. Evening programs consist of campfires, star study, boating, evening cook-outs, folk dances, camp games.

The outdoor experiences during the ten days include a graduated series of explorations under the

leadership of Dr. W. G. (Cap'n Bill) Vinal. The experiences begin within the immediate camp area and extend over a wider and wider range as the physical condition and training of the students permit. In this series of explorations the student learns how to interpret and appreciate his immediate surroundings and also how to organize experiences for pupils using this environment. The method used in these projects is such as to stimulate initiative and reasoning. The object is not to tell the students the answers but to help them think through problems themselves and come to conclusions based on accurate observation.

The Wood Alphabet: Starting within the camp area the students are divided into small groups to collect and make miniature boards from chestnut and white oak by use of saw and axe. They search through camp buildings to find examples of wormy chestnut, quartered oak, hard pine floor, veneering, and plywood. With these fundamental facts they are then ready to discuss and understand construction of buildings and furniture.

Stump Scouting: Cooperating in small groups again the students interpret the life history of a tree, number of forest fires, how and why the tree was cut, etc. from evidence presented by the stump. This is a real adventure in scientific reasoning. Members of each group select a spokesman to present the story of the stump they have studied.

Exploring a Wooded Area: Carrying the idea of problem-solving a little further the students are turned loose again in small groups in a specified area to try to solve the following problems: a bee tree cut for honey, chestnut trees reproduced by coppice and cut for railroad ties in the first world war, a raccoon den in a hollow chestnut, a woodchuck observation post on top of a hurricane oak, evidences of prospecting for clay and gravel. Each group again presents their findings before all the students to show evidences of logical thinking.

Trip to a Deserted Village: Students pronounce this one of the most exciting of all explorations. After a three-mile hike through the woods they probe in old cellar holes, study abandoned orchards, note escapes from the herb garden, inspect stone walls, figure where the barn, mill, woodshed, house garden, pasture and cornfield were. Terms such as submarginal, resettlement, state forests, recreation, take on new meaning in light of actual observation.

Bog Trot: Located on camp property is a huge quaking bog left by the last ice age. To this bog the students go to spend a day of exploring, seeing, learning. Probable new experiences for most students on this trip are: sight of poison sumac, sphagnum moss, zoning of plants from water's edge to forest, pitcher and sun-dew plants, several varieties of wild orchids.

The Appalachian Mountains: Various types of rocks of the vicinity are presented to help the students understand the "roof of New Jersey." The students then go afield to collect type specimens. The geology and physiography are emphasized so that the students might get more from some of the subsequent trips that are planned. They then observe the way the various rocks have been used to build fireplaces and roads in and about camp.

Map Following and Exploration: With the experiences and physical conditioning of the previous days behind them, the students are ready to explore a wider area, follow maps and compass directions. Arising before sun-up they hike to the Sussex Overlook to witness the sun rise, cook their own breakfast and then follow map and compass for a nine mile hike through the woods back to camp. Divided into small groups the students need to identify trees, rocks, streams and land marks to find their way back. All return safely but exhausted and are convinced they have learned "plenty." This last expedition is a climax to all of their previous days.

Such then, are the outdoor expeditions. They are organized in such a way as to require the students to observe, think, discuss and draw conclusions. It is an integrative experience calling upon the students to draw from all areas of knowledge and to use their previous learning in progressively more difficult problems.

Discussions

During the ten days a number of occasions arise where group discussion is needed in order to capitalize on experience or demonstrations of educational procedures. These discussions occur on the trail, in the dining hall, around the campfire or upon special call in the library. These are the times when the students can question methods of organizing and conducting trips or when members of the staff can probe to see if the full significance of an

Expeditions in Learning at National Camp..



At "Stump Session" students learn to read diary of tree from evidence in stump. After they have learned the rudiments students are divided into small groups, each to study the story of a different tree and report findings to entire group. Cap'n Bill helps solve problem, does not give answer.



Construction of the roof of New Jersey is explained with the aid of colored charts showing cross sections of rock formation that form the sky line around camp. Students gather rocks—come to appreciate the ages of sedimentation—the contortions of a cooling world—the force of the ice age.



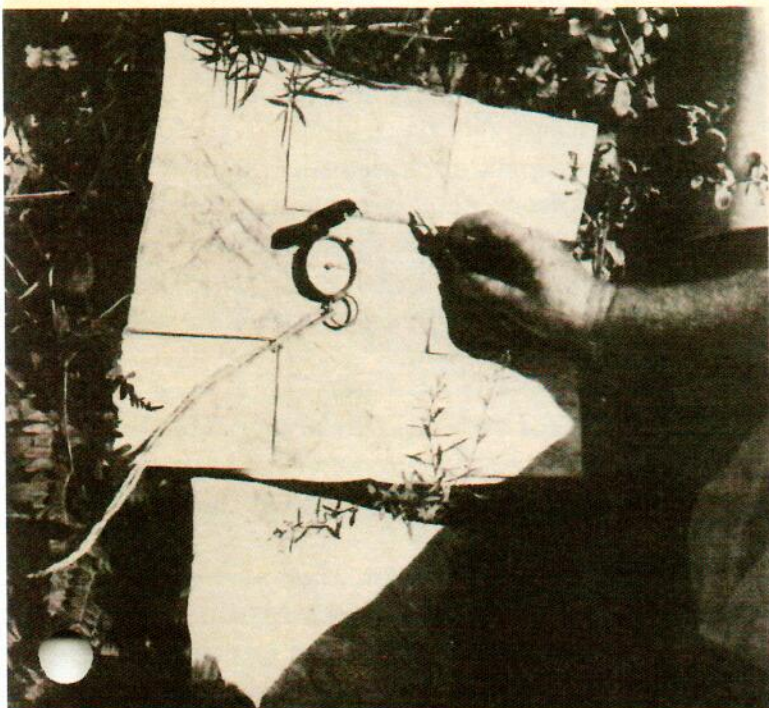
Poison Sumach—which students must learn to recognize before they go into the quaking bog, is held up gingerly by Cap'n Bill for group to see while he points out identification marks. Contact with this shrub causes irritation similar to poison ivy for those unfortunate ones who are susceptible.



Pitcher Plants grow in profusion on bog surrounding Lost Lake. These carnivorous plants gather nitrogen from air. Tall shoot in center of plant is a flower—pitcher shaped leaves at bottom are one way streets down which insects go but seldom come back—remain there in liquid to be digested.

The main purpose of National Camp is to teach educators at all levels—teachers, administrators and youth leaders—how to use the outdoors in the educational process. A vital part of this program is the series of outdoor projects developed and conducted by Dr. William G. (Cap'n Bill) Vinal. By tirelessly exploring the environment

of National Camp and collecting information from printed sources, old maps, aged residents, Dr. Vinal has created a fascinating series of problems—graduated in difficulty and demanding the careful evaluation of each student. Shown here are a few of the learning expeditions which Cap'n Bill leads in his own inimitable way.



Finding Way by compass and map is a skill that one can learn only in the outdoors. Teachers who explain contours in the classroom actually learn to follow maps in the projects Cap'n Bill provides for students. On one all day trip students search their way through nine miles of woods back to camp.



Symbiosis—the mutual help of two organisms for each other—is illustrated by aphids, or ant's cows and ants. Cap'n Bill has discovered that most teachers who have taught about aphids from a book fail to recognize the real thing when they see it, showing the great value of actual experience.



On Shore of Lost Lake Dr. Vinal points out how vegetation slowly conquers the lake. Zoning of plants from sphagnum moss and cotton grass on the water's edge to evergreens further back can clearly be seen. Orchids, sun dew, cranberries, Jersey tea, leather leaf are among rare plants growing there.



Informal Group discussion after an outdoor expedition brings loose-ends together, gives students chance to raise questions. Students are urged to think out solutions themselves rather than depend upon answers from staff members. Student evaluations emphasize the importance of these discussions.

Photographs by Walter Saunders of LIFE

experience has been appreciated. There is no time limit on the discussions and no attempt to cover a specified field of subject matter. Rather, the purpose is to integrate the various experiences and allow for creative self-expression. The method of the discussion varies—sometimes led by a staff member, other times by a student and still other times by a panel of students and staff.

Further self-expression is encouraged through the institute paper, the *Canthook*, which is published at the end of the ten days and is edited and produced by the students themselves.

Man and food

The planning, cooking and serving of meals during the ten days is definitely designed to introduce the students to a new understanding of food. The meals are planned by trained dieticians who discuss the whole procedure with the students at various times. Each small camp is encouraged to cook several meals outdoors including those on overnight camping trips. These meals are planned by the students in consultation with the dietician well in advance. Thus the students learn how to plan, cook and serve meals, build fires, chop wood, keep sanitary as a part of the process of living outdoors. The motivation to do a good job in these things is simple but effective. They learn to cook, for example, under the necessity of eating food that is prepared. In other words, what the student learns about food is from actual experience and in relation to its natural setting. A surprising number of students who come to camp have never cooked a complete meal and fewer have ever done it out of doors.

Creative Craft Work

At National Camp there is no craft shop and no craft instructor. There is, however, an area in the camp known as "The Puttery Place." Here are all kinds of tools — a blacksmith forge, clay, work benches. Afternoons usually find the Puttery Place teeming with activity. Staff members are on hand to help and give suggestions on the use of tools.

The craft program grows out of the needs of life in camp and the creative urge of the students. In order to live comfortably one finds it necessary to

make a coat hanger, repair a dish-drying rack or fix the camp oven. There is no time or place for tailored, pre-designed craft projects that come out of a box from the factory. The student instead is encouraged to use the materials at hand to create what is beautiful and useful.

Evening programs

Evening programs during the ten days are re-creative or inspirational with a purpose. The purpose is to demonstrate several different kinds of programs growing out of participation by the students and working on wholesome kinds of activity. Students learn during the ten days that real recreation can be creative and that it need not cost money. Scheduled in the ten day course are the following types of experiences.

Opening Campfire. The first evening in camp students gather around the council fire to sing and hear staff members outline the purpose of the institute. Each person introduces himself and tells his own background briefly.

Vespers on Sunday Evenings. These services of a non-denominational character are held twice. The first time the program is planned and executed by the staff, the second by the students themselves. The service is held in the natural amphitheater on the shore of the lake just at sun-down. A number of students mention these vespers in their written evaluations as the most unforgettable experience during the ten days.

Indian Night. The group cooks a real Indian meal outdoors, hears a description of Indian life before the white man came, and then all participate in authentic Indian dances they have learned.

Barn Dance. Square dances, Virginia reels, Southern circle dances are taught the group. On Saturday evening everyone assembles at the dining hall to dance and sing. Here again the stress is on the simple, wholesome types of activity based upon group participation.

Closing Campfire. An open meeting the last evening in camp when all are encouraged to describe their reactions and make suggestions for coming Institutes.

How the students are chosen

Perhaps a word should be said here about the

plan for financing the Institutes and the method of selecting students. The New Jersey Institutes are conducted by National Camp in cooperation with the Department of Teacher Education of the State Department of Public Instruction. Each of the participating colleges (in 1943 there were 7) agrees to send six students. The fee per student for the ten days, including two points of undergraduate credit granted by the respective institutions to students who successfully complete the course, is \$30.00. This includes board and lodging. The method of financing the students varies from college to college. In some cases the \$30.00 fee for the ten days is raised by student organizations; in other cases the fee is provided on a scholarship basis to outstanding students. Students from two colleges have paid their own way in the past. Staff members from the various colleges are paid an extra fee by the college for their services during the ten days, since it is in addition to the regular teaching schedule.

The method of selecting students from the various colleges also varies. In most cases, especially where the fee is paid by the college in some way, the students make application to attend the Institute and are then selected by a special faculty committee on the basis of ability and possible benefit from the ten day experience. This has in the past insured a high type of student attending.

The college faculty members who have attended include those from many subject-matter fields. English, psychology, science, physical education, nursing have been included to date and the plan is to extend this sampling in the future, since experience has shown that the faculty members derive considerable benefit themselves from the ten day Institute.

Personal Evaluations

From the opening campfire to the closing session ten days later the students live, breathe, eat, sleep education under the guidance of experts in camping education. What do these experiences mean to them? Could ten days of *living* education help to influence the teaching philosophy of these students? A partial answer to these questions can be found in the student evaluations written at the close of the ten day period.

"I have just spent ten of the most enjoyable, en-

lightening and educational days of my entire life," said one.

Another, "Many of the things I learned up here I had heard in the classroom. Very few of them meant anything to me then."

"I have learned new methods of motivation and teaching; and above all I now have a deeper appreciation of the natural beauty that surrounds us."

"You seem somehow or other to have reached the real heart of things at National Camp."

The above statements came from some of the students after their ten day experience. And here are a few unsolicited statements from teachers—college faculty members who were on the institute staff or who visited camp during the week-end.

"The camping institute afforded many splendid teaching and learning opportunities such as:

- "1. Studying nature first hand.
- "2. Encouraging independent and original thinking.
- "3. Learning to live in a small group and sharing responsibilities for the group.
- "4. Taking consequences when responsibilities were not met.
- "5. Having students from different colleges live together.
- "6. Fostering the democratic spirit by giving the students a share in solving the problems of the camp."

A week-end visitor volunteered the following evaluation:

... "The experiences that were crowded into the week-end have and will mean much to me. I do think you do a marvelous job through your program of real experiences for the students and faculty who share the privilege of attending. I've never seen a group as bubbling over with genuine enthusiasm as that which was in camp when I was there. You do give them the greatest stimulation of their lives. To share in the program and feel their satisfaction of accomplishment was something that I shall never forget..."

Evidence that these impressions carry over after many months is to be found in the correspondence from students who attended the Institute the previous year. According to their own unsolicited testimony the experiences they had stayed with them and carried over into their teaching.

Future Plans

Future plans envisage several institutes each year for undergraduates, to serve students from a wide area of the country. Already the groundwork is being laid for a group of elementary school students to be in the nearby LIFE Girls Camp with their own teachers during the Institute for students of the New Jersey Teachers Colleges. The teachers of these pupils will take a special training course during the spring vacation to prepare them to conduct the demonstration camp.

Another state department has requested an Institute for the undergraduates of the teachers colleges in that state. Plans for this new course are already in formation.

Summary and conclusions

At the close of the ten day experience students are eager for more . . . they want to stay in camp and carry on the adventures they have sampled. At best the Institute is only a short glimpse of the world of living, breathing things, but it leaves the students inspired to seek more real experience and to make

outdoor experience a part of their teaching. The demonstration of how outdoor experiences can be organized and conducted is something the average teacher seldom will see in the traditional teacher-training institution. Furthermore, many prospective teachers graduate after having filled formal course requirements but with a meagre background of experience about the very concepts they are to teach.

The difference between book learning and experience learning is brought out dramatically during these ten day Institutes. Students who have read about such things as ants, cows, carnivorous plants, and peat moss actually fail to recognize them in their natural haunts. This is no doubt due partly to the fact that book learning is specialized and unrelated while in actual life things are related and happen together in natural settings.

It is quite clear on the basis of the experience of these Institutes (1) that undergraduate students in education can benefit greatly from a camping experience even as short as ten days; (2) that students of all subject-matter fields grow in the experience; (3) that the students and faculty who attend the Institute feel that *all* students would benefit from such an experience.

Films, Slides and Reprints

Those desiring more information about National Camp or Camping Education will find the following materials helpful:

FILMS:

"Camping Education, the Story of National Camp" . . . A twenty minute portrayal of the program at National Camp for training leaders in Camping Education. Will be sent to colleges, camping organizations, youth groups upon request and payment of transportation charges. 16 and 35 millimeter sound copies available.

"Youth in Camps" . . . An extended version of the March of Time release which shows the camping education method in action at Life Camps. Showing time 15 minutes. Available in both 16 and 35 millimeter sound. Sent upon request and payment of shipping

charges to schools, colleges, youth organizations.

SLIDES:

National Camp in Color. 100-35 millimeter kodachrome slides showing the program and facilities of the camp together with a description of each slide. Available upon request to responsible groups.

REPRINTS AND PAMPHLETS:

"Outside the Classroom", reprinted from *Educational Forum*, by L. B. Sharp. . . ea. 5¢

"Camping Education, the Story of National Camp", mimeographed, illustrated 25¢

"Some Psychological Backgrounds of Camping", by E. D. Partridge, reprinted from *Camping Magazine*. 5¢

"Summer Camps a la Carte" from *Reader's Digest* 5¢

"Schools and Camping" from *Progressive Education*, by L. B. Sharp and E. G. Osborne. 5¢

"Growth of the Modern Camping Movement", L. B. Sharp. 5¢

"Role of Camping in our American Heritage", L. B. Sharp, from *Camping Magazine* 5¢

"Leadership for Camping . . . Now . . . and in the Post-war World." Report of a workshop of the American Camping Association, October 21 to 24, 1943. . . . 5¢

Quantity prices for any of the above material will be furnished upon request.