

Friends of the Radio:

One of the most interesting and important movements for young people is camping --- and camping is living in the woods and open spaces. It has a strong appeal for youngsters. Camp life has a strong appeal for the campers and something really happens to those who become skilled in the ways of camping which causes them to want to return. First of all the camper realizes that he is away from influence and must depend upon himself. He must now make good all by himself. He is placed on an even basis with others and he has an even chance. This sense of having equal rights and privileges is of a fundamental importance in the building of confidence and character.

Camp should be a place where the humblest bit of work is of great importance. Every minute task plays an important part in the success and happiness of the camp. The campers are aware of this, they learn it and feel it. There is no class distinction. There is opportunity for everyone to make his way through his abilities and interests. There is an atmosphere at camp which causes the youngster to want to do his best. What the camper does at home or at school does not really count at camp. He has to make good in this new situation. In this way everyone at camp has an equal chance. The many little faults and failures at home retard the full development of his personality, but at camp all these things are brushed aside and he has a chance to start anew.

Many talents and abilities are discovered at camp which otherwise would not have been brought to the surface. At camp one is judged not by his position in his social group at home but by the way he does his job at camp, however humble that

job may be. The seclusion of self is impossible at camp. Sooner or later the true individual comes to the surface. A camper cannot live unto himself because there are so many situations which cause him to depend so completely on others.

Camping, in a word, is a place of peace. The campers are at peace with themselves, their fellow campers, and nature. Everywhere there is a spirit of happiness and harmony, chiefly because everyone is so busy with things in which he is interested. The mountains, hill, streams, and country sides are filled with so many interesting things of nature that life in camp is a continuous series of adventures and discoveries.

Climbing to the top of trees – scrambling over to the brook to see what is in it – scaling to the side of the hill or mountain to see what is on the other side – upturning the log or rock to see what is underneath – discovering what is at the end of the path – what lives in this hole – what made this track – how did all this brush and sticks get built up into a nice round pile of water – what was that noise – I saw a deer – no it was a rabbit – we hiked 40 miles, well no, it was only four – we put out a big forest fire – and we were lost and had to find our way back. Thrills and exaggerations cultures the child's mind.

At every turn and at every step, some phenomena of nature register upon the mind of the child. He travels and plays in the woods in awe and wonder at the various treasures which unfolded before him. Everything is in its natural setting – the squirrel – the rabbit – the snake – the chipmunk – the woodchuck – the birds and other moving objects are living at home ready to receive kind visitors. They are all moving. They are not lifeless and grouped alphabetically behind glass doors.

They do not have labels on them. Things are quite different. Everything is real. Nothing artificial. Everything is designed and placed there by nature itself. There is nothing mechanical. Man's work is no place to be seen, we hope. In a situation of this sort negativeness in the child is gone. He is in a state of readiness for companionship and learning. All this makes a lasting and deep impression upon the camper. It carries on through life.

Perhaps the story of Mickey would make my point more interesting and clear. Mickey, the little camper in his first experience in the open country, made a great discovery. He was running across the fields headed for a swim. Suddenly he noticed something rising out of the grass. His eyes followed it until it lighted again. Cautiously he approached. Taking his towel he made a dive to catch the mysterious object and clutching it excitedly in his hand he raced over to me and said, "Hey look at it, a flying cockroach, ain't it?" Well, Mickey had never seen a grasshopper but without knowing it at least he had it placed in the right family. In all the camps this kind of adventure and thrills and discoveries go on all over the country for the thousands of children who go to camps in the summer. But what about the camps in New Jersey? There are approximately 3500 children exploring and adventuring each summer in the valleys, hills, woods and mountains of New Jersey. Perhaps many of you may not realize that there are 275 children's camps in New Jersey. Of course, during war time not so many are in operation but soon we hope that all of the 275 and even more will be in full operation.

The largest number of camps in New Jersey will be found in Warren, Sussex and Morris – 19 in Warren, 31 in Sussex and 25 in Morris, Nearly all types of camps

are represented – YMCA, 4H, religious organizations, charity camps, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and at least 21 private camps. There is also a camp for blind children in High Point Park. Unless one had travelled over New Jersey quite extensively he might not realize where all of these camps could be placed, but very few people know where the camps are located because they are back in the mountains and valleys in secluded places hidden from highways.

In the 8224 square miles of beautiful New Jersey there are many state parks and forest areas where these campers go for camping and exploration trips during the summer. Though the New Jersey State Department of Conservation and Development there is made available not only for campers use but for the public, 7579 acres of park, forest land. In these areas you will find some of the most beautiful scenery, as beautiful scenery and forest land as found any place. This may seem like a lot of land but because of the large population of New Jersey and increased demands after the war there should be more land set aside for the year-round recreational and leisure-time use for its people.

Just to mention a few of these larger area – Lebanon Park, Strokes Forest, Parvi, Bass River, Jenny Jump and High Point park, Swartswood and others. In all of these the State Department of Conservation and Development has made available fishing sites, bathing facilities, cabins that can be rented. These facilities are used to capacity during the summer time but also an interesting number of people are enjoying the winter camping. At High Point Park there are excellent facilities for skiing, skating and coasting. There is a camp for families on Saw Mill Lake where they may live under canvas and be on their own. No one has a real understanding of

New Jersey until they have seen it from the highest point which is in High Point Park, or travelled over Appalachian Trail, down the Kittatinny Mountains, leisured through some of the beautiful valleys and over the hills and trekked through the large forest area and enjoyed the pleasure of its far-flung coast line. These views should be experienced in the winter as well as summer. Just last weekend I saw a group of youngsters with their leaders, packs on their backs, ruddy faces glowing. They had just returned from a weekend camping trip in Stokes Forest. It was plenty tough hiking in the deep snow. I asked one of the youngsters, "How was it out there in the woods?" and in one word he said, "Gee, it was beautiful."

After the war the demand will be greater than ever to go camping, to live in the open spaces in the woods. I have a strong feeling that our boys who are having a very dangerous and tough type of camping in all parts of the world just now, struggling for their existence will want an opportunity to turn the free, peaceful open spaces of the hill and mountains where they can enjoy a part of their heritage, their land, their freedom, our freedom that they have fought to defend and make secure. And for those who can never return to enjoy these things perhaps we will want to dedicate more land and forest areas as a living memorial to these boys.

Since so many camps have located in New Jersey, and there will be many more, I would like to point out some of the things here in New Jersey that make it a desirable place for camps.

As for myself, I have been camping in New Jersey every summer since 1925. It has been good fortune to have had some part in camping with over 12000 youngsters during this period of time. Two of our Life Camps are located in New

Jersey and of course our National Camp, which is an adult camp for training of camp directors and leaders is also in New Jersey, located on Lake Mashipacong.

In looking for a campsite there are some very important things that one should consider – scenic beauty and certainly you have it in the mountains and valleys and shore line of New Jersey. It is desirable to have country that is rich in historical background and that we certainly have in New Jersey, with its early American history, its mills, its Revolutionary points of interest. The old Mill Road. Healthy climate is another important factor and of this you have a wide range of choice. A country that is rich in Indian culture is a fine addition to a summer camp program and history of the Indian life in New Jersey is an exciting one. New Jersey abounds in interesting natural phenomena – the evidence of how the mountains were formed are plain to be seen if you explore them – traces of the last glacier period are found in the northern lakes and bogs --- the miles of intriguing coast line, the lowlands, the rivers and streams. One of the rare natural phenomena is Tillman Ravine in Strokes Forest. It is a section of virgin timber in a deep ravine. This place should be visited with spirit of awe and reverence.

New Jersey has many interesting rivers. Most of them are navigable by canoe. A most interesting history of early life, and modern industrialization can be seen by exploring these rivers. There is the Great Egg Harbor River, the Millstone, the Rancocas, the Batso and Mullica, the Maurice, the Raritan, Paulins Kill, the Hackensack, the Musconetcong, the Toms and others. By way of suggestion you should read the very interesting book, “exploring the Little Rivers of New Jersey” by

James and Margaret Cawley, to refresh your minds as to the wonderful facilities available to the residents of New Jersey as well as the campers.

One of the most essential things a camp needs is health protection. In your State Department of Health there is ready help and advice in all matters pertaining to camp health. It is interesting to note that rather than an arbitrary approach to camp health, it is the policy of the Health Department after meeting a minimum of essentials to urge the camps to work for better health protection because it is a better way to live. It is reassuring to camp people to have this helpful attitude on the part of health authorities in the state and in the various districts.

Those in charge of the various state parks and forests areas of the Department of Conservation and Development and at High Point are eager to help in every way possible so that people may learn to enjoy and use the public lands in the way they are intended to be used.

Our campers in Life Camps and National Camp have covered many of the trails by way of covered wagon and on foot. There is much in store in New Jersey for those who will hike, seek, and find.

May I add a word as to the future. Summer camps for children are well established. The education value of them is recognized by outstanding leaders in education. The State Department of Education in New Jersey recognizes this and is conducting Camping Education Institutes in cooperation with us at National Camp for the training of teachers in Outdoor Education. This is an indication that in the future our public and private schools will use the outdoors more and more as an integral part of the school. Many of these things that school children ought to learn

can best be taught inside the classroom and certainly there is much, yes, ever so much that they can best learn in the outdoors, in actual experience dealing with native materials and life situations. In the future a school system will not be complete unless each school has its camp where its children can live, study, work and learn together, where they can plant and grow things and come in close contact with the soil a part of their priceless heritage the seldom touch.

The camp trails of New Jersey and I hope those of other states too are leading to the outdoors for a better education and a better way of life.

Thank you.