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A Summer With Ames Foresters

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Oh listen, ye foresters, all lend me your ears,
And I shall relate ye of camp held last year.
'Twas the camp of camps, with joys and trials,
A place where work was mingled with smiles.
Where eyes were bright and faces were dirty;
All hail to the camps of nineteen and thirty.

'Twas the sixteenth of June when at camp I had landed;
On the shores of Au Train, my comrades were banded.
There were tools, there were tents already at hand;
For a camp was to rise there, right out of the sand.
So said our professors, both Perkins and Jeff,
Likewise spoke the cook, Mrs. Fish, our chef.

Ere many an hour had sped on its way,
The tents were all up, and all set there to stay.
The mess hall long, with its cook tent so neat,
Was then making ready to hand out a feed.
While out on the shore a pier pointed out,
From which there would dive both the lean and the stout.

And ere the bright sun his eyes he could close,
Balsam beds were all made for nocturnal repose.
Soft over the tree tops the moon he did rise,
To look down on a sight that did open his eyes.
For where there had been both the sand and the waves,
Had now many tepees for forestry braves.

Like a swish in the air, three days went past,
'Till early Monday morning, camp started at last.
With canteens filled and lunches packed,
Over trails and swamps our way we hacked.
At noon we stopped, we ate, we went;
And arrived in camp after a day well spent.

In quick succession the days went by;
The professors' motto was work or die.
With chain and compass and Jacob stick,
We traced our lines through timber and creek.
They taught us reading and arithmetic,
In volume tables and on Biltmore sticks.
But Saturday nights came, as they often do,
And the city of Munising drew a motley crew.
There was Soukup, and Olson, and Hamilton there,
Schroeder, and Beveridge with his beautiful hair.
Many a maid heaved a maidenly sigh;
For these manly boys would make any girl die.

Yet Saturday nights were not always for mashing,
For there were clothes that needed both mending and washing.
The sewing of buttons created a strife;
But then that was all part of a forester's life.
Sewing to one of our foresters was play;
For you see her name was Miss Hazel Hammersly.

Ike Waltons in camp, we had in a-plenty;
Of whom Perkins and Moessner were the best of the many.
Far over the water their boats they would take,
And the fish they did follow right close in their wake.
Whenever a big one by either was seen,
A club was applied to the poor fish's bean.

Our camp, be it known, was musically endowed,
With Soukup's guitar, Perk could sure draw a crowd.
But when Kline started out with his old accordion,
Why everybody else would just sit there and grin.
Nothing was wrong with the sounds that he made,
But still you would wonder just what he had played.

Old Daniel Boone would sure have looked green,
If our budding woodsmen he had ever seen.
Of a compass, our Smith had never a need;
He could find any swamp when he was the lead.
Of General, too, 'tis urgent I tell,
He could name off a tree by only its smell.

With summer half over, and work to be done,
They took us a-visiting, but not for the fun.
We saw all the 'jacks, they were a hard crew;
We went to their camps and talked with them, too;
And when 'twas all over, and we're back to our fort,
Instead of our resting, we all wrote reports.

Then back to the woods, and the cloudy days came,
As we traced out the contours, and cruised in the rain.
When the clouds left the skies, the no-see-ums did come,
They stung like a wasp, yet they didn't even hum.
If words could have killed, I'm sure 'twould be true,
Steck's method of speech could have sure made them so few.
One day 'twas decided, the Sault we must see,
To visit the paper mills, would they let us in free;
With one car and some Fords the trip it did start,
And for a few days, from our camp we did part.
Arrived at that city, our prosfs were intent,
That our time in that place should all be well spent.

We saw paper mills and saw mills in Canada, too,
But certain things in that country they sure showed us few.
But then there were shows, and more things to see;
For though there was work, we all had a spree.
Finally it was over, and we had need to return,
To gain more of knowledge, and of forestry learn.

It was late in the summer when Doc Pammel did come;
Of flowers of all kinds, he sure wanted some.
He named off a million, I'm sure it is so,
For I have them listed in my book, row upon row.
The study of Amelanchier was of interest indeed;
For the fruit of this tree made a very nice feed.

"The Grand Island flora you foresters should know,"
So spoke Doctor Pammel, and Jeff said we would go.
After touring the island, and our knowledge was gleaned,
Out onto the lake in a boat we did steam.
But the waves they were high, the captain wouldn't try,
So we steamed right back home, by and by.
With camp drawing to close, the estimates were due, 
And the tents that were done were very, very few. 
Far into the night, in fact, far into the morn, 
These foresters worked with ambition new-born; 
But, alas, on that day when there was work to be, 
These gay little foresters were asleep under a tree.

Of the polar bear club, I shall now relate; 
They swam in the water, be it early or late. 
To be a club member, seven times must ye cast 
Yourself in the water before break of fast; 
And on the seventh of these days, the rules they do say, 
You must sing a song in the water at the dawn of the day.

And now, lest my tale does get weary and long-drawn, 
And lest every word makes you want to yawn, 
I'll skip over things that befell in those days. 
Of Kline, how he did make Moessner blaze, 
When he and some others threw Monk in the lake 
Not with intent his thirst to slake.

Of General, his ducking, his camera of fame, 
Which has taken pictures of many a dame; 
Of damsels that like big handsome heroes of the West, 
Of which, thank the Lord, we were luckily blest. 
Of the prep in our camp, and his expressions so funny, 
Of all the things that made camp life so sunny.

But our summer was spent and our tasks they were done; 
Our friendships cemented in work and in fun. 
Farewell to the spots we may never see again, 
Though deep in our memories they will stick to the end. 
So here ends my tale, let another spin you one; 
In words my story is ended, in thoughts it's just begun.