The Summer Camp of 1930

Frank Kowski
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester
Part of the Forest Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester/vol19/iss1/8

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ames Forester by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
The Summer Camp of 1930

FRANK KOWSKI, '33

"SO THIS is Bitterroot!"

The foresters had arrived. The first four of the student woodchoppers stood on the bank of the clear blue lake and viewed their prospective home for the summer. It met their approval.

The lake mentioned was Little Bitterroot Lake hidden in the northwestern tip of Montana. This site had been chosen as the home of the Iowa State foresters for their 1930 summer camp. And a beautiful home it was. The five-mile lake was located in the foothills of the Bitterroot range and throughout the summer it provided the swimming, boating and fishing so necessary to a forester's camp.

On June 17, a check revealed the required number of noses present at the lake and work on the camp proper was begun. Shortly the camp took shape. The 10 army squad tents, pitched under a tall stand of larch-fir, faced southward over the lake from the top of a forty foot bluff—an ideal campsite.

After each forester had availed himself of all the personal household effects that he could summon to mind, work on the individual homes was abandoned for the time to take up the practical field work.

The first step necessary in the field study was to become acquainted with the vegetation of that region. Likewise the first day's practical work consisted of a thorough survey of all ground vegetation and timber species. Of the timber types the prevalent species were found to be larch, lodgepole pine, western yellow pine and Douglas fir. With this survey as a foundation the next work undertaken was the study of growing timber, i.e., stand growth, spacing, natural pruning, growth periods and growth classification. Practical work was also undertaken in clearing out and pruning dense stands to better observe how the remaining stock was affected.

In connection with this study data was gathered to be used in a course in forest mensuration. This study included the determination of tree heights, diameters, circumferences, board foot content and the composition of volume tables. The work proved very interesting until it was learned that the data collected was to be used on the return to school.

A detailed time study was made of the Conrad logging camp located near Marion, Montana. Here the summer campers had a chance to observe the operation of a modern lumber camp as well as the personal life of the modern lumberjack. Much more was learned from the latter study.
It was from this work that the foresters were called out to fight fire. Will they ever forget that night of terror spent fighting that blazing inferno of hell. It was rather disheartening after a day of self-imposed heroism to hear the chief say that two men could have handled the five acre burn but he just wanted to give the "boys" the experience. From then on the "boys" shied from anything that even hinted at experience.

The old adage of "all work and no play" was the gospel of the 1930 crop of barkeaters and throughout the entire camp they made it a point not to "make Jack a dull boy." The favorite recreation was the evening swim which later developed into the heralded regatta. This boat race was in every respect a big time affair even to the extent of one of the contestants sinking on the home stretch.

Weekly sojourns were made to Kalispell and Whitefish to indulge in the luxuries of civilization. To the car owners these trips meant a visit to the garage,—to the more fortunate it provided a time for inspirations—mostly feminine.

Hikes back into the foothills or climbs up to lookout peaks proved popular pastime for the more ambitious. Horseshoe, axe throwing and car repairing were the chief parlor sports for the less ambitious. Campfires and song fests frequently gathered the foresters in the evenings to give concert to the coyotes. It was always thought strange that on the nights of fireside singing the coyotes would never be heard. Jealousy? Probably.

Two trips were taken during the course of the summer. The first was to Coram, Montana, where an intensive study of the ranger station was made. A visit was also made to the Somers mill at Somers, Montana, where all working operations were studied thoroughly. From Coram the foresters took a sight seeing trip to Glacier National Park and spent a day rambling over various mountain peaks.

The second trip of the camp period was made to Spokane, Washington, and Lewiston, Idaho. In Spokane several lumber product industries were studied and at Lewiston the Clearwater Lumber Mill was thoroughly surveyed. At this point on the trip the camp was officially dismissed and nineteen travelworn foresters faced east and headed for Iowa—a summer, ever to be remembered, behind them.