

Camping's Worth Cannot Be Measured

By Charles R. Jenkins

Where lies the magic of camping? Truly there is no single answer. It can be different things to different campers. But, it weaves a strong spell. It is the little things, half remembered but never wholly forgotten, that come flooding back in future years at the glint of sunlight on still water, the scent of pine forest or wood smoke, the endless, eternal canopy of night stars. It is the undying heritage of childhood that never fully leaves an adult.

Not Monetary

There are some who would measure the worth of a camp by the extent of its buildings, the monetary value of its equipment or the cost of its operation. But the true values of a camp are not for sale. Can one buy pride in accomplishment, close friendship or joy?

There can be no words to catch the spell of camping: no formula to bring its magic within the grasp of the unknowing. It is part of the American heritage, from the days when buffalo ran and our Red Brothers were masters of the woods and streams. Deep in the heart of every child lies the precious spirit of adventure and it is the warmth of this spirit that grows with camping.

Gifts of Camping

Who can measure the silence of the deep woods, the peace of the out-of-doors, the spirit of brotherhood that dwells in such surroundings? Can one hope to recapture that priceless moment when, sleeping under the countless stars, one feels the nearness of Things Eternal and caught a fleeting glimpse of the true power and majesty of God?

Many are the gifts of camping. Sure knowledge in many skills which may be acquired nowhere else, testing and strengthening other knowledge for the Great Game of Life. But, above all these, are the outspoken dreams which capture the American ideal and carry it forward.

The American Indian felt its power and knew its majesty. We but pass on his ideals to others. In the words of the poet:

“Ye who love the haunts of nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the wind among the branches,
Love the shadow of the forest,
And the rain shower and the snow storm,
And the rushing of great rivers.
Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who hath faith in God and Nature,
That the feeble hands and helpless
Groping blindly in the darkness
Touch Gods Right Hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened.”

We follow in the prints of their moccasins.