Summer Camps: **Crafts, Games, & Sports**



Camp Onaway, New Hampshire, 1942

Archery. Canoeing. Swimming. Horseback riding. Hiking. Baseball. Soccer. Capture the flag. Obstacle courses. Tug o' war. Red Rover. Skits. Woodworking. Ceramics. Tie dyeing. Making friendship bracelets.

The assortment of activities offered at summer camps has continued to grow, ever since kids started going to camp. While these activities offer important benefits to campers—building skills, creating friendships and community, increasing confidence, and fostering personal growth—they help fulfill the most important goal of all kids who go to summer camp: *having fun*! Camp activities and traditions form the memories that keep generations of campers going back to summer camp year after year.

"The camp model designed by late-nineteenth century innovators, with its emphasis on swimming, boating, mountain hikes, morning chores, athletic competitions, and special songs, continues to exert broad appeal... Indeed, the aspects of camp life that now appear most clichéd—old bunks, faux-Native American rituals, and art and crafts activities—have continued to appeal precisely because they are traditional and predictable."

Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp



Camp Orkila, Washington



Camp Hale, New Hampshire



Camp Sealth, Washington





Joy Camps, Wisconsin, 1940s

"Camp directors who are sincerely interested in camp craft are agreed that of all activities in the camp program, this holds the greatest opportunity for practicing democratic group procedures, for practical application of nature lore and for its greatest appreciation, for building self reliance, resourcefulness, self-discipline, and respect for other people, for natural and material things, for work, and for earned playtime. They sense, although they can never measure either, the emotional maturation and the spiritual growth which result from an understanding and appreciation of primitive processes."

Camp Craft: A Manual...



Camp Yonahnoka, Virginia, 1940s



Brown Ledge Camp, Vermont



Hidden Valley Camp, Washington

Learn more about camp crafts, games, and sports:

- Boettcher, Shelley. "Summer Camps Open Up a Whole New World; Kids Can Learn and Experience New Adventures While Having Fun, Too." *Edmonton Journal*, 2023.
- Joy, Barbara Ellen. *Camp Craft: A Manual for Leaders Responsible for Organization of Camp Craft in the Summer Camp*. Burgess Publishing Co., 1955.
- Paris, Leslie. *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, New York University Press, 2008.
- "Summer Camp Results in Lasting Behaviour Change in Youth." *Targeted News Service*, 2013.