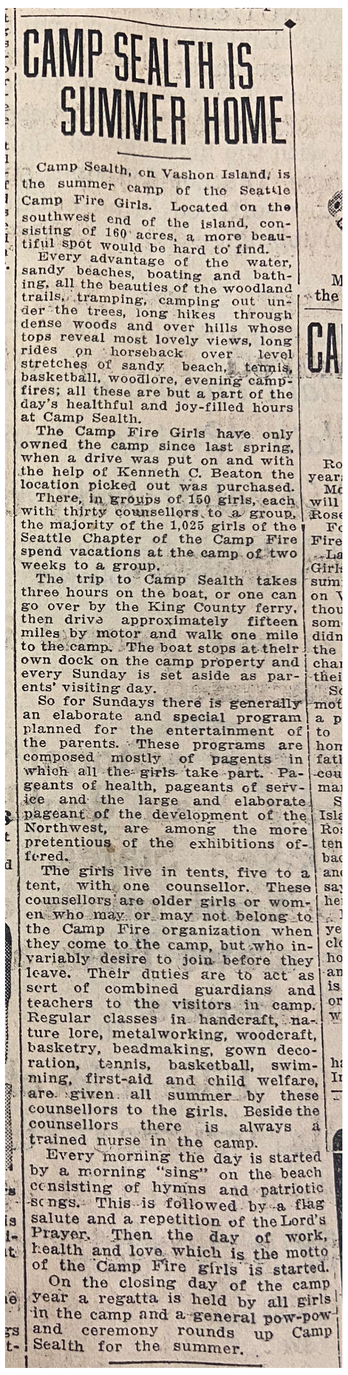
Summer Camps: **Camp Sealth**




CAMP SEALTH IS SUMMER HOME

Camp Sealth, on Vashon Island, is the summer camp of the Seattle Camp Fire Girls. Located on the southwest end of the island, consisting of 160 acres, a more beautiful spot would be hard to find.

Every advantage of the water, sandy beaches, boating and bathing, all the beauties of the woodland trails, tramping, camping out under the trees, long hikes through dense woods and over hills whose tops reveal most lovely views, long rides on horseback over level stretches of sandy beach, tennis, basketball, woodlore, evening campfires; all these are but a part of the day's healthful and joy-filled hours at Camp Sealth.

The Camp Fire Girls have only owned the camp since last spring, when a drive was put on and with the help of Kenneth C. Beaton the location picked out was purchased.

There, in groups of 150 girls, each with thirty counsellors to a group, the majority of the 1,025 girls of the Seattle Chapter of the Camp Fire spend vacations at the camp of two weeks to a group.

The trip to Camp Sealth takes three hours on the boat, or one can go over by the King County ferry, then drive approximately fifteen miles by motor and walk one mile to the camp. The boat stops at their own dock on the camp property and every Sunday is set aside as parents' visiting day.

So for Sundays there is generally an elaborate and special program planned for the entertainment of the parents. These programs are composed mostly of pagents in which all the girls take part. Pageants of health, pageants of service and the large and elaborate pageant of the development of the Northwest, are among the more pretentious of the exhibitions offered.

The girls live in tents, five to a tent, with one counsellor. These counsellors are older girls or women who may or may not belong to the Camp Fire organization when they come to the camp, but who invariably desire to join before they leave. Their duties are to act as sort of combined guardians and teachers to the visitors in camp. Regular classes in handcraft, nature lore, metalworking, woodcraft, basketry, beadmaking, gown decoration, tennis, basketball, swimming, first-aid and child welfare, are given all summer by these counsellors to the girls. Beside the counsellors there is always a trained nurse in the camp.

Every morning the day is started by a morning "sing" on the beach consisting of hymns and patriotic songs. This is followed by a flag salute and a repetition of the Lord's Prayer. Then the day of work, health and love which is the motto of the Camp Fire girls is started.

On the closing day of the camp year a regatta is held by all girls in the camp and a general pow-pow and ceremony rounds up Camp Sealth for the summer.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer 19 March 1922.



HAVING A GOOD TIME AT CAMP SEALTH

Seattle Post-Intelligencer 4 July 1920.


OUT FOR GOOD TIME AND NOTHING ELSE.

—Photo by Cress-Dale.

Miss Gertrude Bates.

GERTRUDE BATES, member of Kowotohoma Camp Fire, was fully equipped for a good time and traveling light when she reached the dock Monday morning prepared to join the first party going to Camp Sealth. Girls in skirts, with frilly waists, looked enviously at her and more than one of them promised herself that she would get into breeches, or at least into bloomers, as soon as she reached camp.

"We are still waiting for some reply to our challenge to national Camp Fire headquarters to tell us where there has been held this year, or in any previous year, a better attended, better managed or more successful camp than Camp Sealth on Trimble Island, Puget Sound. Maybe the reason we haven't heard anything from New York recently is that the national publicity director was completely overcome with surprise when she-or is it a he?- learned that instead of having "possibly thirty girls the first season," Camp Sealth had 600. Miss Brown, the executive secretary, to whom it is due a large share of the credit for the big success, deserves a vacation, and we are glad to learn that she is going to get it."

Seattle Post-Intelligencer 5 September 1920.

A brief history of Camp Sealth

1920 Camp Sealth was established as the first permanent resident camp for girls in Washington State. Located on Trimble Island (now Blake Island), 650 girls attended at a cost of $1 per day.

1921 Camp Fire raised $9,000 to purchase the Vashon Island site where it remains today.

1932 Horseback riding is added to camp activities.

1939 Camp Sealth began partnering with the American Diabetes Association and accommodates the special dietary and medical needs of 35 diabetic campers.

1975 Camp Fire welcomed boys in all programs.

2011 Camp Fire received a conservation easement from King County forever protecting 101 acres of environmentally sensitive land at Camp Sealth.

2020 Camp Sealth closed for the first time in 100 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp staff provided virtual programming, mailed "camp-in-a-box" to families, rented cabins to families, and provided child care for kids impacted by school closures.

2021 Camp Sealth and Seattle Day Camps reopened, safely serving 3,000 youth without a single case of COVID.

Today Camp Sealth emphasizes diversity and inclusion. Partnerships with the American Diabetes Association, the Gluten Intolerance Group and the PKU clinic at UW support campers with special medical and dietary needs. Scholarships ("camperships") for low-income kids are available.

Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council History campfireseattle.org/council-history



The ship's berth is Fishermen's Wharf, Ballard.

Sentimental Cruise

EACH Monday throughout the summer the Virginia V. makes a cruise to Camp Sealth, Seattle-area Camp Fire Girls encampment on the west side of Vashon Island.

It is something of a sentimental journey, this 25- or 30-mile trip, a 2½-hour run at the Virginia V's easygoing 10 knots. She leaves her berth at Fishermen's Wharf, goes out through the Locks, past West Point and down Colvos (or West) Passage to camp.

Built in 1923 at Olalla, a town on Colvos Passage, the Virginia V calls up romantic memories to many of the parents who see their youngsters off or welcome them home from a week at camp. About 200 girls make the journey each way.

For the girls, a voyage on the Virginia V. provides the stuff of which good dreams are made. Girlhood friendships and family ties assume new importance as the ship leaves "home base" or returns again.

There is much laughter and singing during the voyage each way. There are flurries of tears, too; at leaving home; at leaving camp.

Times Photos by Roy Scully

"Duck your head," Capt. E. M. Fosse told Marlene Spencer, 3423 Hunts Point Road, Bellevue, as she boarded the ship, bound for camp.

Parents and daughters carried luggage to the ship.

Jorja Andrew of 1826 Dartmouth Pl. popped her bubble gum as the ship began to move.

The Virginia V. began loading at 7:35 in the morning; at 9 o'clock, the craft headed out into the Ship Canal.

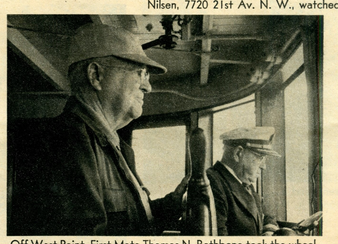

Cruise CONTINUED

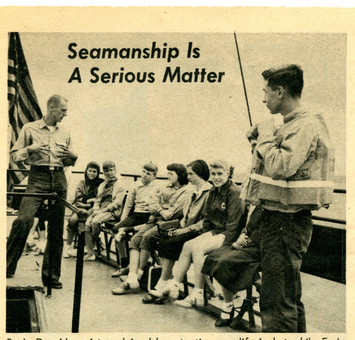

Letter Home—From the Locks

Lynn Newkirk, Box 713, Issaquah, began a letter while still in the Locks.


Sara Smith, 1924 Fourth Av. W., cuddled her elephant and cried at the thought of a week away from home. At this point (the Locks) it was technically possible to go ashore; no one did.

Judy Chambers, 3624 28th Av. W., practiced aboard the ship. Susan Nilsen, 7720 21st Av. N. W., watched.


Off West Point, First Mate Thomas N. Rathbone took the wheel. Rathbone, 81 years old, was a Panama Canal pilot for 25 years.

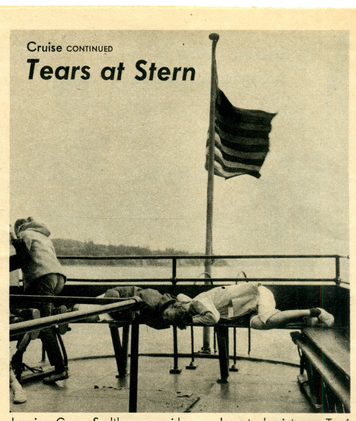

Seamanship Is A Serious Matter

Bos'n Dan Norquist explained how to tie on a life jacket while Ernie Rosenkranz demonstrated. Such instruction is given during each trip.


Knitting were, from the left, Carolyn Smuck, Judy Thompson, Janie Munro, Connie Ahola, Nancy Munro and Margaret Wiester, all of Seattle.


Newcomers to Sealth were greeted from shore with bagpipe music and songs. Crewmen stood by on the bow to secure the ship.

CONTINUED


Cruise CONTINUED

Tears at Stern

Leaving Camp Sealth, some girls waved or took pictures. Tami Wyman, left, and Catherine Parrott lay on the rear bench and cried.


Some sat on the forward companionway and sang "We Are the White Caps of Sealth" and other songs. Crew member Ernie Rosekranz learned the words. Music filled the Virginia V. on both of her trips.

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Three girls played "fish," a card game. From left: Linda Smith, Kathleen Grant and Mary Worcester.


Nancy Kennedy, 14822 Ashworth Av., found and shellacked rock "turtles" while at camp.


Parents, brothers, sisters and pets greeted the returning girls.