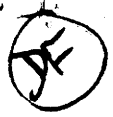


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THE HISTORY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

M. V. SUMMER CAMPS

A Term Paper

Submitted by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

In

CH 570

History of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church

Professor: Dr. C. Mervyn Maxwell

Date: May 1, 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
A Brief History Leading Up to Seventh-day Adventist MV Summer Camps	2
First Seventh-day Adventist Summer Camp	3
Growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Summer Camps	7
Seventh-day Adventist Summer Camps of Today	10
The Philosophy and Objective of the Seventh-day Adventist Summer Camps	13
Conclusion	14

THE HISTORY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

M. V. SUMMER CAMPS

A mother many years ago told Elder John H. Hancock, Seventh-day Adventist World Youth Leader, that she wished summer camp could last all year long. When Elder Hancock asked why, thinking that the counselors were glad camp didn't last that long, her reply was, "Because my boy comes home from camp with the light of heaven in his eyes."¹

Yes, when summer rolls around each year, thousands of junior and senior youth attend Seventh-day Adventist youth camps all around the world. For many, camp is the first night away from home or maybe it is their first time on a horse. Camp to some is the first time they learn how to swim or enjoy the nature that God has given. To others, camp is the time they give their hearts to Jesus and fully surrender their lives to Him.

How did the wonderful plan of summer camps for the Seventh-day Adventist youth begin? How have they grown and what are their objectives? These are the basic questions this paper will answer. But before I begin, I feel that a brief history of Seventh-day Adventist young people and how they got started is worth our time.

¹John H. Hancock, "Happy Summers," Signs of the Times, (July, 1972), p. 7.

A BRIEF HISTORY LEADING UP TO SEVENTH-DAY

ADVENTIST M. V. SUMMER CAMPS*

In 1879, Luther Warren and Harry Fenner in Hazelton Township, Michigan organized the first youth society. This first society was made up of boys, but later girls were also admitted.

The next society was organized twelve years later by a sixteen year old boy named Meade MacGuire in Antigo, Wisconsin.

In 1893 at College View, Nebraska the Young People's Society of Christian Service was organized.

One year later Luther Warren organized the first Sunshine Band in South Dakota and members of different Sunshine Bands held a convention in 1896 in the same state.

In 1892 Mrs. White wrote from Australia to the Seventh-day Adventist church concerning the work that needed to be done with its young people. " ' "We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged...We want them to act a part in well organized plans for helping other youth." ' "2 And the next year she instructed, " ' "Let young men, and women, and children go to work in the name of Jesus. Let them unite together upon some plan and order of action. Cannot you form a band of workers, and have set time to pray together and ask the Lord to give you His grace, and put

²A. W. Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, Vol. III, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D. C., 1962.), p. 121.

* The facts for this section are taken from the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 10, pp. 1441, 1442.

forth united action? You should consult with men who love and fear God, and who have experience in the work, that under the movings of the Spirit of God, you may form plans and develop methods by which you may work in earnest and for certain results.' "3

Finally, in 1901 the General Conference Committee decided to ask the Sabbath School Department to take charge of the young peoples work. However, with the rapidly growing youth activities, the General Conference Council, in May of 1907, voted to create a special department to be in charge of all the youth activities.

In 1916 the union M. V. Departments were given full administrative duties in the activities of the young people which set the stage for Seventh-day Adventist summer camps.

FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SUMMER CAMP

In the year 1926, Elder Grover Fattic who was the M. V. secretary of the East Michigan Conference decided that the children of the Seventh-day Adventist Church needed some kind of a summer camping program. This idea of a church sponsored camping program was a new idea in the United States; but Elder Fattic felt that it must be done.

Why did he have a burden for camps? Before 1926, "summer camps under the auspices of various organizations and individuals had been popular, and more and more of our Seventh-day Adventist children were attending them. It was becoming apparent that unless we provide some

³Ibid.

opportunities for our own children, many of them would go to camps under influences that we could not wholly approve; and those who were held from going to them felt deeply that they had a real deprivation. Moreover, it was recognized that in the summer camp, rightly situated and rightly conducted, we have a very great opportunity, brief though it is, to inculcate right ideas of life and living in our young people at their most impressionable and critical age."⁴ Elder Fattic had also taken a Scout Leaders' training course and saw the value of outdoor recreation and association.

But to many people, this idea of taking boys and girls out to the woods and turning them loose was not such a good idea and Elder Fattic had a hard time getting support. One must also remember that at this time there were no Pathfinder clubs in existence and that the Master Comrade (now Master Guide) leadership was still unheard of.

Elder Fattic decided to take his request for a camp to the Michigan Conference Committee for approval but was turned down several times. But Elder Fattic still felt his burden for the youth and finally on his fourth try to the committee he was given the go ahead. However, the committee made it very plain to him that he would have to finance the camp because they had no money to put into this experiment.

There were several things that Elder Fattic needed. Money, equipment, staff and a place to hold the camp. Stepping out on faith, he

⁴Camp Leaders Handbook for Junior and Senior Missionary Volunteer Summer Training Camps, (Issued by the Young People's Department of Missionary Volunteers, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington, D. C., 1955), p. 4.

started to get support for his idea. Finally two church members, listened to his plan and decided to give \$100 each.

Now with \$200 promised, he needed to find a campsite suitable for his ideas. He decided to ask a scoutmaster from Detroit if he knew of a place where he might have his camp. The scoutmaster suggested that Elder Fattic go up to Montcalm County in northern Michigan and look at a place called Town Line Lake.

Elder Fattic decided next to call Gordon Smith who was the MV secretary of the Lake Union. He asked Elder Smith to go with him and look over the place to see if it fit the idea that he had.

In a few days Elders Smith and Fattic were looking across Town Line Lake. What a far cry that first camp was from some of the camps of today. The lake was a good place to swim but that was about all the facilities at the site. There was only one building, more like a shack, that could probably be the kitchen and dining hall and no place for campers to sleep.

Since they had no money to buy or even to rent tents there was no way to they could sleep everybody in the small building. But Elder Fattic got a splendid idea. He asked Elder Smith what he thought about maybe using the tents that were stored for campmeeting. Elder Smith then reminded him that the conference had said that no help could be given and that they were on their own.

Elder Fattic decided to try anyway and so he went to see the president of the East Michigan Conference, Elder J. F. Piper. Elder Piper took Elder Fattic's request to the committee and to Elder Fattic's

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surprise the committee voted to let him have the tents plus the conference truck to haul the tents to the camp.

As for staff, Elder Fattic got several church school teachers to volunteer to go as counselors and a church member from northern Michigan agreed to do all the cooking for ten days for \$20. Even some farmers said they would donate some food and help pitch the tents.

Next Elder Fattic wrote letters to all the church elders explaining the camp program and asking them to announce the details to their churches. He also decided that the first camp would be for boys only since facilities were so meager.

Finally the day arrived and the campers and their parents started coming. But once there, the parents started asking questions since Elder Fattic and his helpers hadn't gotten the tents up because of some troubles the night before in getting the tents there. Their questions ran something like this.

" 'What are you going to do at the camp? '

'How are you going to feed all the campers?'

'Who's going to take care of my boy if he gets sick?'

'How do I know my boy won't drown if I leave him here for ten days?'

'Where are the boys going to sleep tonight?'

'Who's going to keep the boys from wandering off and getting lost out here in the woods?' "5

⁵John H. Hancock, "How Summer Camps Began", Junior Guide, Vol. 14, No. 29, (July 20, 1966), p. 7.

Instead of giving the youth leaders time to set up the camp, most of the parents, some who had traveled hours, took their sons back home.

When the tents were pitched and the whistle blew, the 18 remaining boys fell in for their first line call and the first Seventh-day Adventist summer camp began. The date was June, 1926 at Town Line Lake in Michigan.⁶

GROWTH OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SUMMER CAMPS

The camp was so successful that during the next summer, 1927, Elder Fattic had two camps--one for the boys and one for the girls.

The idea of summer camps began to spread and in the same summer T. S. Copeland and Mrs. Harriet Holt held a girls' camp on Silver Lake near Portage, Wisconsin.

"News of these successful camps spread to the West Coast, where camping fever spread rapidly. Near Julian, in the Southeastern California Conference, Guy Mann, John McKim and L. A. Skinner conducted the first West Coast MV camps in 1928 for boys, with Mrs. Claude Steen as girls' camp director...In 1929 Professor A. W. Spalding helped to inaugurate the camping program in the New England States. Some of the thrilling experiences of those early days of camping can be relived by reading the stories in the old book, Camping With the JMV's."⁷ It soon became apparent that summer camps were here to stay.

⁶This story can be found in more detail in the Junior Guide. Ibid., No. 28 and 29, (July 13 and 20, 1966), pp. 16, 17, 22, 23 (July 13) and pp. 6-9, 20, 21 (July 20).

⁷Ibid., (July 20, 1966), p. 20.

After the General Conference Session of 1930, Chester A. Holt, MV secretary of the Pacific Union and his wife Harriet, along with J. T. Porter, MV secretary of the Central California Conference lead out in a special camp leaders' institute at Wawona which is in Yosemite National Park. It was also here that the first permanent camp-site was purchased and developed.

The Junior camp enterprise was working so well that in "1936 the service was extended to the Senior young people in a number of conferences; and the Senior Camp, necessarily conducted on somewhat different lines from the Junior Camp, has become a factor in the training of Missionary Volunteers."⁸

But before I go on I must state that the idea of MV summer camps didn't go over very big with the church members or the church leaders. It took a lot of courage for Elder Fattic and Elder Smith to go ahead with that first summer camp in 1926. The church members wondered what good summer camps would do for boys and girls and "even their request [Fattic's and Smith's] to the General Conference to send a representative to the camp was turned down."⁹

It wasn't until the year 1954--28 years after the first camp-- that the General Conference finally took action on summer camps. When they did take action it read like this:

⁸Spalding, op. cit., p. 217.

⁹John H. Hancock, "How Summer Camps Began", Junior Guide, Vol. 14, No. 29, (July 20, 1966), p. 7.

"WHEREAS, Missionary Volunteer summer camps for junior and senior youth during the quadrennium 1950-1954 have resulted in 10,203 decisions for Christ and the church, and

WHEREAS, twenty-eight conferences in North America and several fields overseas have found by experience that conference or mission-owned campsites greatly enhance the effectiveness of the MV camping program, and

WHEREAS, only thirty per cent of our MV membership had the advantages of Adventist camping in 1953, we

RECOMMEND, that conferences and missions, wherever possible, enlarge their plans and facilities to make the camping experience available to all our youth, and we

RECOMMEND, that all our conferences and missions seriously consider the purchase of campsites and facilities for youth camps, which will be completely under the direction of our own organization."¹⁰

This recommendation was voted in the forty-seventh session of the General Conference May 24-June 5, 1954.

The following is a chart showing the growth of summer camps since that first camp in 1926.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Camps held world-wide</u>
1926	1
1930	No report
1935	38
1940	36
1945	No report
1949	267
1953	No report
1957	No report
1961	464
1965	590
1969	Over 750 world-wide ¹¹

¹⁰ General Conference Bulletin, 1954, p. 216

¹¹ Ibid., 1936, p. 76; 1941, p. 80; 1950, p. 42; 1962, p. 166; 1966, p. 116; 1970, p. 72.

As one can see from the chart the Lord has divinely ordained the idea of summer camps. Many stories have come out of these summer camps but time and space does not permit them to be told. Thousands upon thousands of children and senior youth have made their decisions to follow Christ and have been baptized because of an experience that they may have had at camp.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SUMMER CAMPS OF TODAY

"For Adventists, camping has become a million-dollar operation with modern equipped camps located in just about every one of the 50 states and in the provinces of Canada."¹²

The largest camp the Seventh-day Adventists own and operate is Camp Au Sable sitting on the shores of a 115 acre lake near Grayling, Michigan. In a way, it is rather appropriate that since Michigan started the idea of summer camps they should have the largest. Campers at Au Sable not only have swimming but other activities such as canoeing, water skiing, horseback riding and hiking on the 850 acres owned by the camp. On these acres campers can spend time at outpost camping spots and enjoy the nature that God has given. Like other Adventist campsites, Au Sable is winterized and church groups from the conference come up during the winter to enjoy skiing and skating.

Another camp located in the south is Camp Kulaqua which is located on 523 acres in High Springs, Florida. In the center of this camp a clear spring of water gushes out from a hidden river to form a swimming

¹² John H. Hancock, "Happy Summers", Sions of the Times, (July, 1972), p. 5.

area. The stream winds its way through the cypresses, magnolias, and oaks and empties itself in the Santa Fe River.

Along this beautiful river are three houses which are built 30 feet above the water with ladders and bridges connecting each other. These tree houses can only be reached by canoe and campers love to sleep in these tree houses overnight.

Camp Kulaqua also has a zoo which is cared for by a full time keeper who takes care of the deer, goats, raccoons, alligators, monkeys, squirrels, a full-grown African lion and a six-foot, 260 pound black bear.

Besides the zoo, Kulaqua has a riding stable, a wagon camp and an Indian camp. "The church's philosophy of camping has undergone considerable change in the past forty years. Once the camps were built very centralized with almost all activities taking place in a well-defined area. Now the trend is toward decentralization, with cabins scattered through the woods and activities taking place over a wide acreage. Older campers are often taken on four-to-five-day pack trips into rugged, remote country, learning skills on the trail to challenge the most adventuresome youth."¹³

Today, Seventh-day Adventist camps have a camping program for underprivileged children. Many a time a camper at this camp for the first time meets Jesus and becomes acquainted with Him. When the

¹³Ibid., p. 6.

camp is over, these children, even the bad or problem ones, come up with tears in their eyes and tell you what camp has meant to them.

The following is a letter from an eleven year old Spanish-American boy to his mother telling her what Opportunity Camp was like to him:

"Dear Mom,

I am having a real good time here. We are going swimming, hiking, canoeing, boating and horseback riding. The name of my tribe is Blackfoot. We were up 9,000 feet. We had to have roll call. My counselor is real nice and there are six other boys in my cabin. We live in a cabin. It was real nice. We had a great lunch that was as big as a fiesta. We have three whole meals a day and we sleep in bunk beds, and they are really soft.

Your son"¹⁴

Some of the camps with better facilities have blind camp which is conducted in cooperation with the Christian Record Braille Foundation.

Yes, over the last 47 years summer camps have really grown from the first one where playing tag, swimming and eating blueberries was the main activities offered. But there is one thing that hasn't changed and that is the spiritual programs of the Seventh-day Adventist summer camps. The camps were and are designed to strengthen Christian fellowship and to help each camper have a deeper experience with their Creator. In 1969 in North America alone 7,000 campers made decisions to accept Christ as their personal Saviour. If that isn't evangelism I personally don't know what is!

¹⁴Ibid.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVE OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SUMMER CAMPS

What is the philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Camps?

"A summer camp experience is one of education so that... 'It includes the harmonious development of all the physical powers and the mental faculties. It teaches the love and fear of God, and is a preparation for the faithful discharge of life's duties.' Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students, p. 64."¹⁵

The objectives of camp are really the break down of its philosophy and I'm sure that if Elder Fattic and Elder Smith were alive today they would agree to the following objectives of the summer camp.

1. To make attractive the joy and privileges of Christian living.
2. To stimulate the devotional life, including the art of meditation, science of prayer and comprehension of true worship.
3. To give opportunity for making Christian friendships and the broadening of social development.
4. To effect in each camper desirable changes in Christian conduct and character which will lead to a decision of Christ.
5. To provide an opportunity for the development of good citizenship, loyalty, teamwork, and sense of responsibility.
6. To teach self-reliance and resourcefulness, awakening the noblest qualities of mind and spirit.
7. To teach an appreciation for the knowledge of the created works of God, and thereby an insight into the wisdom and love of God.

¹⁵Don L. Aalborg, Camp Cumby-Gay Staff Leadership Manual, p. 6.

8. To give knowledge of outdoor skills which may lead to a lifetime of enjoyment in outdoor recreation.
9. To interpret true principles of healthful living, physical fitness and safety.
10. To deepen the sense of service."¹⁶

CONCLUSION

When one looks back over the 47 years to that first MV camp, one has to give the pioneer youth leaders credit for courage and foresight for working toward the goal of saving our children and youth.

Truly the Lord has blessed the idea of MV summer camps and when the day of the Lord comes, there will be many people in heaven because of Seventh-day Adventist MV summer camps.

¹⁶Ibid.

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Camping with the SMV's ??

Change in Term Paper ??

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been used.