

# Case Study #1 - Notes

## The Classic Camping Revival; Can We Justify Teaching Traditional Camping Skills Today?

*Camping out may well be classed as one of the liberal arts,  
so wide is its application. Warren Miller, 1918*

In 2012 Steve Watts conducted an interview with Joe Flowers about his work in the field of Classic Camping. It was done at the celebration of Horace Kephart's birthday in Kephart's adopted state of North Carolina. Kephart was known as the Dean of American Camping. His book – *Camping and Woodcraft* – is one of the oldest books on the subject of camping and has never been out of print since it was first published in 1906.

The revival of classic style is all around us – traditional winter camping, traditional canoeing, the traditional elk camp and of course the explosion in the international study of Bushcraft. With this renaissance comes the notion that gear selection affects program outcomes as well as the nature of how we camp for recreation. Watch Steve Watt's interview, look over the information contained in *Case Study #1* and *Sections One and Seven* in *Camping In The Old Style* and answer the *Text* and *Context* questions below. Be ready to talk about this seminal issue in class.

### Case Study Resources

- *Defining The Ballpark*
- *The Pathfinders*
- *The Modern Woodsman* - [woodtrekker.blogspot.com](http://woodtrekker.blogspot.com)
- Primitivus Interviews David Wescott
- *Defining the Big 4*
- *Defining Classic Camping*
- *Classic Camping: Steve Watts gives a brief overview.*
- *The Literature of Traditional Camping*
- *Contemporary Ways We Use Camping As A Pedagogy*

### \* Text Questions to Consider:

1. Are the skills of Traditional Camping a viable alternative to the skills related to Emerging Technologies?  
(see Case Study #4 for a definition of Emerging Technologies)
2. Can Traditional Camping skills be used as a contemporary pedagogy for teaching in the out-of-doors? How?
3. List the 5 categories of literature identified in this case study.

*The Modern "Camping" Literature -*  
*The Classic Camping Literature -*  
*The Counter Culture Literature -*  
*The Revival Literature -*

## New History Literature -

4. List the main points covered in the Steve Watts interview.
5. Why do you think we are experiencing a revival of interest in Classic Camping style? **Megatrends**



### \* Context Questions:

#### Define:

##### • Campcraft

Skills used in camp and on trail to live **safely and comfortably** in the outdoors.

##### • Woodcraft

Skills and knowledge applied to live **simply and harmoniously** with the outdoors. Woodcraft implies working with materials found in the environment.

##### • Fieldcraft

A working knowledge of the land.

##### • Trailcraft

Skills for the moving camp. Includes both what is done in camp- campcraft - and the skills needed to negotiate the field in order to get to camp - fieldcraft.

##### • Traditional Camping

Skills that come from the past that can be seamlessly connected to the future. Requires a mentor.

Mastering tradition is honorable.

But if you don't keep up with changing times, you can't maintain tradition.

- Japanese Saying

tradition (tre-dish'en) - The transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on; a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on in this way; existing in or as part of a tradition; long-established; a method or style established and subsequently followed by others.

##### • Classic Camping

Classic Camping is the use of tools, techniques and traditions in the style of the Golden Age of Camping (1880-1930).

Classic Camping is:

- directly connected to its historic context.
- an understanding and appreciation for handmade craft.
- the use of classic style, timeless utility and aesthetic efficiency.
- a comfortable confessed relationship with romance and nostalgia.

##### • Bushcraft

What is Bushcraft? If you catalogued the accumulated knowledge of a society that lives close to the land, most of it would have to do with understanding the natural world and how it works...The rest of that knowledge would consist of how they interact with the land. We call that Bushcraft. **Tim Smith**

Bushcraft is the term I employ to describe a deeper knowledge of the wild and of nature. It is a huge tree that branches out in many directions to botany, zoology, craft work, outdoors leadership and countless other divisions. At its root, though, is reliance upon oneself and on nature. In the study of bushcraft we step beyond survival and learn the subtlety that makes outdoor life both certain and enjoyable. Everyone who visits wild places will benefit from bushcraft knowledge. What could be more natural than to recognize the wild things around us and find food, shelter, fire and water?

I do not wish, though, to suggest that we should turn our backs on the skills and tools of today. Far from it - my hope is that we shall learn to use our modern tools more wisely by bolstering them with wisdom from the past... For me, a large part of bushcraft is about combining modern and ancient expertise. **Ray Mears**

### • Friluftsliv

In Scandinavia we would say a deep experience with the landscape is the essence and reward of a lifestyle we call "friluftsliv" [free-lufts-leav]. The word translates to "free air life" meaning a philosophical lifestyle based on experiences of the freedom in nature and the spiritual connectedness with the landscape.

The essence of friluftsliv is difficult to define. It is a concept that can be found among outdoor people all over the world, but as a specific philosophy, and the use of a special word for it, is unique for Scandinavia, especially in Norway and Sweden. Here friluftsliv is deeply rooted in the soul of the people although far from everyone practices it. In Norway friluftsliv is an important part of most people's lives and a way of living close to the beautiful landscapes of the country.

Hans Gelter, Friluftsliv: The Scandinavian Philosophy of Outdoor Life

## Really Test Yourself: Extra Credit

1. What do the titles listed as the categories of literature refer to?
2. The Pathfinders are divided by category of source material. What are the categories and how do they affect life outdoors?

Trappers	Explorers
Sportsmen	Naturalists
Guides	Clubs
Writers	Government
Recreators	Youth Movement
Manufactures	

3. Define and create a context for:

### • Woodsmanship

...the modern woodsman is a person who is able to undertake long term trips, deep into the wilderness, only with supplies one could carry and what could be gathered from the surrounding environment. **Ross Gilmore**

...was a master woodsman, we mean that he could confidently enter an unmapped wilderness, with no outfit but what was carried by his horse, his canoe, or on his back, and with the intention of a protracted stay that he could find his way through the dense forest. Without man-made marks to guide him, that he knew the habits and properties of trees and plants and the ways of fish and game; **Kephart**

### • The Campaign

Camping is an escape from routine and restrictions of urban life, returning physically and spiritually renewed. It is a pilgrimage to a sacred space.

Terence Young, *Heading Out - A History of American Camping*, 2017

The campaign was conducted for war and conquest or exploration. The campaign was also used for

expeditioning that involved the hunt.

- **Tramping**

Until the 1950s traveling afoot went by a variety of names - traveling by shanks mare, trips afoot, knapsacking, tramping, pedestrian camping, packsacking, man packing, woods tramping, pickaback packing, and others. Hiking didn't become a common term until it was brought back to the UK after the Boer War and the compound word we use today - backpacking - was not even in the literature until the late 1950s - before that it was always back packing or back-packing.

- **Woodlore**

Those skills that are informed by the land. Many of them fall in the realm of Natural History but expand way beyond just that simple definition. For purposes of discussion, we are going to use the term "woodlore" to describe those sciences that come from the land and inform us of what we need to know in order for us to apply our skills. DW

**READ/View:** Make sure you watch this 12 minute video.

Classic Camping: Steve Watts gives a brief overview.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPCKIDZzSoI>

**Optional -**

Primitivus Interviews David Wescott.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt3\\_1\\_KlENk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt3_1_KlENk) 13 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7r916dd6nY> 11 minutes

Read The Woodtrekker Modern Woodsman Blogs.

### **Other Resources:**

#### **Elders Of The Tribe:**

- Lars Falt
- Mors Kochanski
- Ray Mears
- Tim Smith
- Horace Kephart
- T.H. Holding
- Warren H. Miller
- Richard Proenneke
- Calvin Rutstrum
- Paul Provencher
- Heberton Evans/Keewaydin Camps