

The Classic Camper's Booklist



By Steve Watts and David Wescott

How to Know the Wild Things

All young folk want to know the ways and things of Nature. The difficulty is to know where to begin. There are so many kinds of flowers, ferns, birds, trees, grasses, bugs, insects, fish, rocks, etc., that one is confused and hardly knows where to begin his search for knowledge.

The trail is not so hard to find as it was a few years ago, for today there are plenty of blazes on its trees and the footway is well worn and cleared of logs - that is to say, there are plenty of good handbooks, not to speak of fellow travelers, who help by pointing to the blaze that perhaps escaped our eye, and who are wearing the pathway smooth.

Ernest Thompson Seton - *The Birch Bark Roll*, 1912

When we were growing up, there were two things common among boys – we were encouraged to read good books and we had freedom to create – we also had good mentors. Even though heroes filled the silver screen, we still went home and settled in for a good adventure read; we were carried away on pirate ships, battled with knights, and faced the wilderness as only “savage” boys can do. Classics like *Robin Hood*, *Ivanhoe*, *Tarzan* and *Robinson Crusoe* were well-worn additions to every nightstand.

But it was Seton's *Two Little Savages*, a book of skills training written as a novel for boys – as suggested to Seton by Kipling - that really gave you a reason to get outdoors and try for yourself what you just experienced with thirteen year-old Yan and Sam. Not long after “Savages” was released, many other stories of boys growing up or being stranded in the wild soon followed. Eastman's

My Indian Boyhood and *Indian Scout Talks* and Miller's *The Lone Woodsman* were a couple of favorites.

For today's boy there is a whole new batch of adventures about life for boys in the wild outdoors. *Hatchet*, the story of twelve year-old Brian Robeson's survival adventure is perhaps the best known series today, but there is also the *My Side of the Mountain* series and its companion volume *The Pocket Guide to the Outdoors* where you are taught the skills that young Sam Gibley used to survive his season in the woods.

Take a look around and you'll find even more stories - ten year-old Ted Kazimiroff experiences the last of a dying tribe in *The Last Algonquin* and from the age of 5, Little Tree learns the way of the woods from his “Granpa” in the *Education of Little Tree*.



Get a book, a real book that doesn't require batteries, go sit by a tree, and start your journey into learning classic woodcraft.

The Jack London Bookshelf

Every "kid" needs a project, and here's a real practical one that anyone can make. The shelf is part of the collections at Jack London's home, Wolf House, and just begs to be replicated. Simple hand tools are all you need – a hammer and saw, a coping or bandsaw, nail set, and drill with hole cutters – $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and 2" or a brace and bit and auger bits of the same size. Just follow the measurements on the plan and you're on your way. The only trick is to clamp the end boards side by side on a flat surface to drill the half holes. Once you do one, clamp the other ends together snugly and do it again. Nail it together. Paint or varnish if you want and stack in your woodcraft library.

What could be simpler? Now go get comfortable by the fire and enjoy some Kipling.

*Who hath smelt woodsmoke at twilight?
Who hath heard the birch log burning?
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others.
For the young men's feet are turning,
To the camps of proved desire and known delight.*

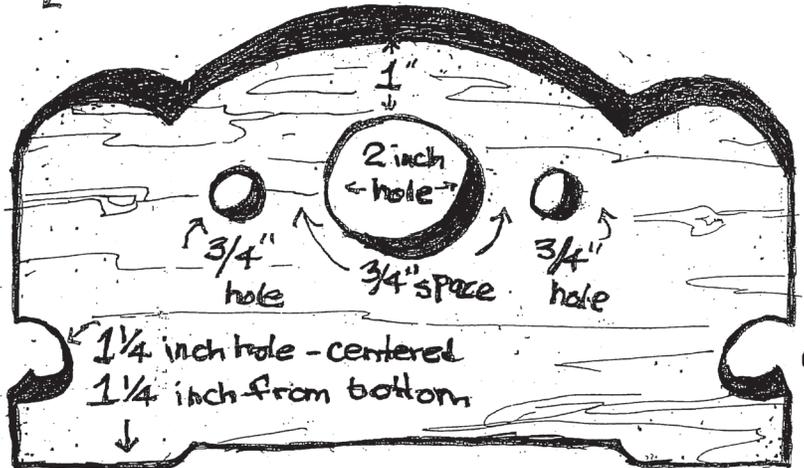
Rudyard Kipling



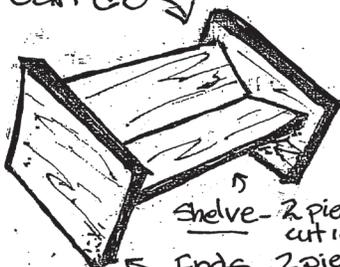
Jack London's Book Shelf



To create the shelf: cut down two 18" pieces of 1x6 stock to 5 inches & 4 inches wide... nail them together at a 90° angle.



Basic pattern:
that any kid
can do



1x10
board
cut to
9" long

Shelf - 2 pieces of 1x6
cut 18" long
Ends - 2 pieces of 1x10
cut 16" long

To make the side holes: use a 1 1/4" hole saw, clamp the two pieces side-by-side, and drill in the middle - flip over & do the other side.