

# Watts and Wescott

## Camping As A Pedagogy - A Metaphor?

David Wescott, ©2019-2026

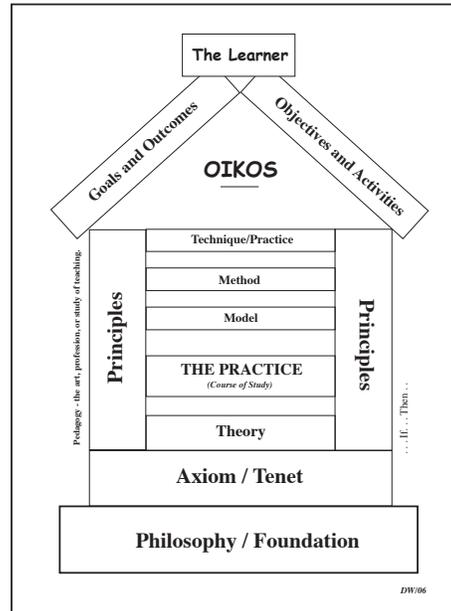
*Camping out may well be classed as one of the liberal arts\*, so wide is its application.*  
Warren H. Miller, 1918

**Pedagogy - the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.**

This may be a totally academic exercise, and of no value to anyone but myself. With that in mind, I'm happy to proceed. Definition encourages precision and discipline. To work without boundaries, one is free to disregard quality, mastery or heritage. *To achieve mastery in a "field of study" one must: recognize tradition, subordinate themselves, pursue excellence, advance the field, and mentor others.* (see Robert Greene, *Mastery*). It is impossible to address any of these ideals without a framework within which to judge progression to mastery. To refuse definition, a field has no focus or standards for comparison. **DW**

\* **The 7 Liberal Arts** - subjects or skills considered essential for a free person to know in order to take an active part in civic life.

- **The Trivium** - grammar, logic, and rhetoric.
- **The Quadrivium** - arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.



## Why Teach / Learn Traditional Camping - A Rationale

### 5 Tenents

### OIKOS - The House

See - *A Radical View of Experiential Education*,  
Wescott 2009

#### I. Greater Skill Competence - The Created Anachronism

- Intervention vs Innovation
- Innovation for Extremes
- Tradition vs Fad
- Creativity
- The Thinking Man's Sport

#### II. Reconnects Us To Nature - Meets the demands of a natural affinity

- X-Ray Art - Tipi/Laavu, Snowshoe/Canoe, Animals,
- Natural Materials - Beauty
- The Sublime

### III. Awareness of Impact - Directly related to and informed by PLACE

- *A working knowledge of the land*

### VI. Connects To Our Heritage - Bridges to The Past

*Anachronism - a thing belonging or appropriate to a period other than that in which it exists, especially a thing that is conspicuously old-fashioned...not appropriate for our time.*

- Where did these skills come from?
- Why did we lose them?
- How can we get them back?
- Is that appropriate/needed?

### V. Viable Alternative to Contemporary Ethics -"Style is Everything" -

- The more you know, the less you need.
- Style vs Ethics
- Hand Made - hands-on activity

### Why People Don't Use Traditional Camping Skills?

- Past Negative Experiences With Classic Gear
- Bias Through Hegemony
- No Frame of Reference For Judgment

*What is the problem - Who's problem is it? - What other problems might it cause?*

*Neoteny - the retention, by adults in a species, of traits previously seen only in juveniles.*

*Nemophily - a fondness or liking for forests, woods, or woodland scenery.*

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## 3 AXIOMS of Traditional Camping

- Traditional Camping skills and knowledge are – with proper instruction and mitigation methods - a viable alternative to modern camping pursuits.
- Traditional Camping skills are a continuum of a uniquely American tradition – the Frontier Connection
- Traditional Camping is the adaptation of tools and techniques reminiscent of the classic style used to camp in a modern world.

*"When the skills of the Golden Age of Camping meet the 21st century."*

*"Traditional Camping moves through time."*

### **Traditional Camping is:**

- romance with tradition that connects us to our heritage.
- skills and knowledge documented by the masters of the old style.
- a viable alternative to contemporary/emerging technologies.
- retention of skills and techniques over convenience and security.
- a reconnection of skills with place.
- a merging of past, present and future.

*Fashions fade away, while Traditions last forever.*

*David Wescott*

*New things depreciate, while the value old things grows.*

*Steve Watts*

*Classic Camping*

*Rustic • Romantic • Real*

*The goal of camping is camping itself.. The practice and the payoff are one and the same.*

*Steve Watts*

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*Camp as if the act of camping mattered.*

*Camping is what you do when you get to camp, not how you get there.*

*David Wescott*

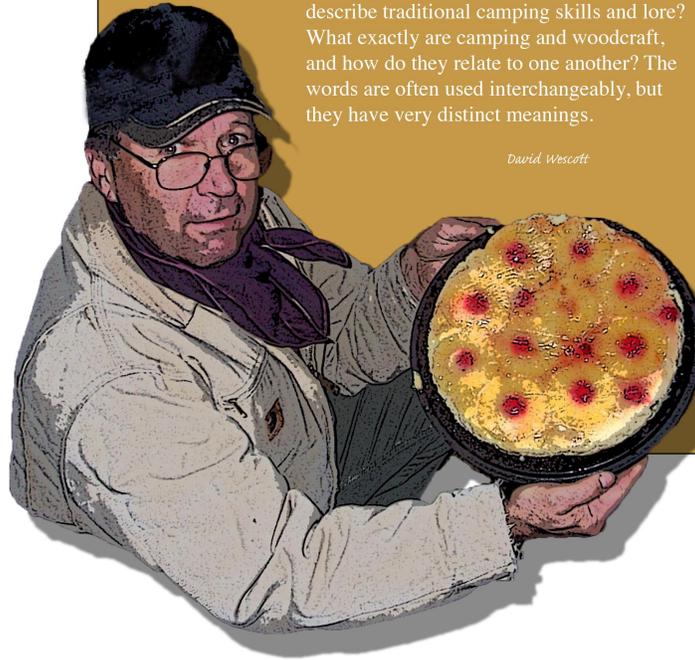
## **The 5 Tenets of Traditional Camping**

- I. Traditional Camping requires added skill and knowledge.**
- II. Traditional Camping fosters a reconnection with Nature.**
- III. Traditional Camping encourages awareness of local impact.**
- IV. Traditional Camping builds a bridge to our past.**
- V. Traditional Camping is a beautiful way to camp.**

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

How do we define campcraft, woodcraft, woodslore,  
bushcraft or any of the other terms used today to  
describe traditional camping skills and lore?  
What exactly are camping and woodcraft,  
and how do they relate to one another? The  
words are often used interchangeably, but  
they have very distinct meanings.

*David Wescott*



## 4 Pillars of Traditional Camping

- **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 (Woodslore)**

*Skills and techniques **informed by the land**. 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.*

*Canoe – Tramp – Horse – Winter – 2 Wheel – 4 Wheel*

## 5 Best Practices - Key Skills-Sets

### **Toolcraft**

*The proper use and maintenance of common camp tools – primarily edged tools.*

### **Firecraft**

*The production, use and care of the open flame for cooking, heating and lighting.*

### **Bindcraft**

*The use of manufactured or field expedient fibers for practical camp & field applications.*

### **Sheltercraft**

*Mastery of items used for the comfort and safety of the human body in an outdoor setting.*

### **Cookcraft**

*The planning, storage and preparation of food for camp and trail.*

### **Fieldcraft**

### **Trailcraft**

## 3 Skills Sub-Sets

### • Campcraft/Woodcraft Skill Sub-Sets

#### **Toolcraft**

- *Edged Tools – Knife, Axe, Saw*
- *Workshop and Workbench Tools*
- *The Ditty Bag – Tools of the Trade*

#### **Firecraft**

- *Ignition and Management*
- *The Hearth and Stove –  
Cooking and Heating*
- *Lighting*
- *Mitigation Methods*

#### **Bindcraft**

- *Ropecraft – making, management*
- *Knotcraft – knots, bends, hitches*
- *Pioneering – lashing and anchors*

#### **Sheltercraft**

- *Clothing*
- *Bedding*
- *Tenting*
- *Kitcraft*

#### **Cookcraft**

- *Open Hearth Tools & Techniques*
- *Jack-Knife Cookery*
- *Food Storage and Care*
- *Food and Nutrition - 4-Dog Potology*

#### • **Fieldcraft Sub-Sets**

- *Expedition Behavior*
- *Landcraft - Ethics*
- *Navigation & Mapping*
- *Nature Observation*
- *Woodlore & Wildcrafting*

#### • **Trailcraft Sub-Sets**

- *Journeying –Expeditioning*
- *Tramping - Hiking, Trekking*
- *Horse*
- *Canoe*
- *2-Wheel – Carts, Bikes, Motorcycles*
- *Autocamping*
- *Winter*