

Case Study #5 - Notes

Camping As A Democratic Pastime

Ethics are so you don't screw it up for the next guy, and style is so you don't delude yourself into thinking you're so hot. Yvon Chouinard

Dirtbag is an endearing term used by *Patagonia* founder Yvon Chouinard to describe the people they design for - *people who have a passion for what they do* - like the surfer who sleeps out on the beach all night to be the first one in the water the next morning.

Chouinard forged pitons during the winter months, spent April to July on the walls of Yosemite, then headed out of the heat of summer for the high mountains of Wyoming, Canada, or the Alps, and then back to Yosemite in the fall until the snow fell in November. He supported himself selling gear from the back of his car. The profits were slim, though. For weeks at a time, he'd live on fifty cents to a dollar a day.

Before leaving for the Rockies one summer he bought two cases of dented, canned cat tuna from a damaged-can outlet in San Francisco. This food supply was supplemented by oatmeal, potatoes, and poached ground squirrel and porcupines.

In Yosemite, Chouinard and his friends were called *the Valley Cong*. They had to hide out from the rangers in the boulders above Camp 4 after they overstayed the 2-week camping limit. They took pride in the fact that climbing rocks and icefalls had no economic value - that *they were rebels*.



VIEW - To gain an appreciation for the life of climbers and adventurers, view *Valley Uprising* and *180°South* - both available on *Netflix*.

Case Study Resources

- *The Dirtbag Manifesto* By Donovan Webster
- *Roughing It - Quotes from the Masters*
- *Go Light Camping - Quotes from the Masters*
- *Recipe For a Dirtbagging Trip* by Steve Gillman
- *Dirtbag* by Yvon Chouinard
- *The Climber's Bill of Rights* by Yvon Chouinard
- *The Post-Modern Outdoor Ethic*
- *A Woodsman Reveals His Fashion Secrets*
By Mike Everett, 2003
- *In Defense of Wool Pants* By Rob Weller



* Text Questions to Consider:

1. What is a "manifesto?"

* a public declaration of intentions (as issued by a political party or government)
wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

* A manifesto is a public declaration of principles and intentions, often political in nature.
wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifesto

* in art a public declaration or exposition in print of the theories and directions of a movement. The manifestos issued by various individual artists or groups of artists, in the first half of the twentieth century served to reveal their motivations and *raison d'être* and stimulated support for or reactions against them.
www.eartmart.com/pages/glossary.html

* a document or public declaration of information, motives, or demands by a government, sect, or group of people; believed to be of some importance
www.psychedelicrainbow.com/glossary.html

2. What is a "pedagogy?"

3. What is a "dirtbagger?"

The dirt bag is the person that lives and breathes their passion, which is their sport. But in reality most of the dirt bags can't even afford Patagonia, and in fact they progress beyond needing any kind of equipment, you know. They've gotten so good at their game that they don't need our stuff. But that's who we focus our product on and that's who we try to design for.

4. How does the 10-80-10 rule apply to our previous discussions - Dirtbag Manifesto?

We will pack only the basic 10 percent of things truly necessary for a camping trip (extra change of clothes, weather protection). We will then happily sacrifice the middle 80 percent of above said stuff (tents, coolers, lanterns, flashlights, extra clothes, and that 12-inch "trail knife" you think makes you look "outdoorsy") while respecting and universally abiding

by the addition of the "fun" 10 percent of supplies usually taken into the wilds (a small cache of good food, a little hooch, some toys).

5. What does the author mean when he says "dirtbagging is a process." How does this relate to Chouinard's thesis in his paper *A Climber's Bill of Rights*?

So to achieve the ends of true dirtbagging, we will start slow. For our first camping trip, we will take only as much equipment as we feel comfortable with, noting what we don't use. We will then leave these items behind on our next trip. Quickly, a very small bag of highly effective gear will evolve.

6. Are we truly "losing adventure?"

* Context Questions:

1. Reflect on our previous discussions and write a simple manifesto that puts this reading in context for a camper in our time.
2. What's a "swagman?" a "billy," a "tucker bag."

Questions from *A Woodsman Reveals His Fashion*

1. How does the author define:

- FORM -
- FLASH -
- ACTION -

For a true woodsman the matter of looking good boils down to three basic principles: form, flash, and action.

"Let's start with form," he said, "Some fellers, especially the downstate sports, think they've got to dress special to go out in the woods. You know the ones with brand-new 'Mooseleuk slacks' and 'Tomhegan loafers' and 'Ripdam flannel' shirts. They might as well wear a little tag that says 'I just arrived in the woods five minutes ago and I'm not sure what I'm doing yet.'"

"Then again, some guys think it don't matter what they wear in the woods. They think the woods is 'casual' or something." He looked at the younger man with a flinty stare. "But, young feller, beware the poorly dressed woodsman. Such a feller has no self-respect. The woods ain't a pig-pen."

"The authentic woodsman first considers his clothing per se. That's form. It requires an artless, matter-of-fact approach, with no hint that a moment's thought has been squandered on his ensemble. The tout ensemble should suggest a regard for tradition combined with an absence of fussiness, with neither a conscious dressing up nor dressing down for the woods. No self-respecting woodsmen would ever wear anything new, for example, or anything made from Gore-tex or Polarpile or nylon, or anything the color of 'berry' or 'teal,' unless of course those colors are in a plaid. Any plaid is acceptable, except for socks. Two plaids is even better.

Now, flash is what I call accessorizing one's ensemble. It's the fashion accessories that make or break the woodsman's ensemble. Let's start with the hat.

"Yes, it's the action of the true woodsman that sets him apart from his numerous and sincere flatterers. I am reminded that the woodsman never appears to hurry, even if his pants are on fire."

2. What does the author cite as "the hallmarks of the true woodsman."

Mr. Joseph Knowles possessed an air of unflappable self-confidence and stylish suavity - the hallmarks of the true woodsman.

3. What are the items "that make or break the woodsman's ensemble?"

Now, flash is what I call accessorizing one's ensemble. It's the fashion accessories that make or break the woodsman's ensemble.

3. Why should we "beware the poorly dressed woodsman."

"Then again, some guys think it don't matter what they wear in the woods. They think the woods is 'casual' or something." He looked at the younger man with a flinty stare. "But, young feller, beware the poorly dressed woodsman. Such a feller has no self-respect. The woods ain't a pig-pen."

Questions from *In Defense of Wool Pants*

1. What concerns Weller most about the shift from tradition to high-tech gear?

What concerns me about the shift toward high-tech gear is that it removes some of the emphasis on education and replaces it with a piece of equipment. The more you depend on any one piece of equipment, the more you have to know what you're going to do when it breaks or you lose it. My intentions here are not to denigrate technology, I just think it's overemphasized lately.

2. How often do you hear the term "system" related to modern equipment? What's the supposed reasoning behind its use (Refer to "Hegemony").

But what about what's on your hands? The creators of the ski glove system would have you believe your gloves are carving those turns. All this item amounts to is multi-layers of insulation with a nylon shell. Sound familiar? It's what we've been using for years except we didn't call it a system and package it as a unit - we missed the boat. The key word here is system. Call something a system and half your marketing is done for you. I saw a breakfast cereal the other day that called itself a cereal system. It was a system, I imagine, because it was made up of two sacks of sugary grains that you mixed together.

3. What is the problem with state-of-the-art equipment? How does it affect the decision-making process?

The problem I have with state-of-the-art equipment is that too often it renders everything that preceded it obsolete, especially in the minds of people that are new to the activity or sport, e.g. our students. I think we owe it to them to offer less expensive alternatives when feasible. We need to them to be able to decide for themselves what constitutes a good piece of equipment, and if they really need it in the first place.

These days equipment has become increasingly high-tech and fashion oriented. As a result, it prices itself out of reach of increasing numbers of would-be backcountry travelers. Time that could have been spent traipsing about the tarns and glens in a two-buck, thrift store, Ozzie-Nelson cardigan, is used instead earning the money required to purchase some bitchin' bunting pullover. I see a subtle conservation practice at work here. By encouraging the use of expensive gear, fewer people are using the public lands because they have to work longer hours to equip themselves.

4. What are the actual technical comparisons between wool and synthetic clothing?

How do they actually match up? Include the carbon footprint.

A couple of years ago I came across a woolen union suit given to me by my brother-in-law's father. It had belonged to his father, and was thus a regular "fruit of the heirloom". It occurred to me to give it a try on a winter course, and I've been using it ever since. I couldn't believe how much more comfortable it was than polypro. It felt like clothing, not Glad Wrap; and though it was indeed rank after being worn for two weeks, its stench retention was 67% less than polypro used in a similar manner. I like wool pants because, once again, I prefer the feel of wool to the feel of polypro. I can wear them in a downpour and still stay comfortable; and I can stand near a fire and not be afraid of them melting and forming a petroleum glaze on my skin. Light wool pants with a tight weave aren't much warmer than windpants on a hot day and cut the wind pretty well. And I like the pockets; although the cotton pockets of the old army jobs soak up the water on a rainy day. Wool pants aren't stylish though. A fashion-minded colleague, who at the time was sporting a pair of running shorts over some polypro longjohns, told me this. I think wool pants have an air of style, although it's a style a lot of people would shun.

5. What are the two main factors in the Petzoldt school of economics?

His philosophy was based largely on economics, and boiled down to: go cheap and make do.

OPTIONAL READ: *The Importance of Traditional Woodcraft Skills*

By Paul Van Horn (#2 in the resources file)

Really Test Yourself: Extra Credit

1. What is a tumpline and how does it work?

2. What was President Hinkley's favorite quote about living simply?

"Use it up, Where it out, Make do, or do without."

3. Your instructor will review a phrase "Just beyond your doorstep." How does this apply to this case study?

You don't have to travel to discover the "the sublime." Wilderness is a state of mind.

4. What does the idea of "sustainability" have to do with tradition?

Connie Burditt, Instructor of Native American Studies shared her thoughts on the connection between sustainable backcountry ethics and traditional cultures. We realized there is a link between sustainability and traditional knowledge and talking to Connie made that even more apparent. So many of the problems we addressed are cultural in essence, so having the chance to probe into a culture based on harmonious life with the earth was important.

5. What does "style" have to do with this discussion?
6. Create your own "Post-Modern Land Use Ethic."
7. Where do hobos fit into this discussion?
8. Where does the term "Billy Can" come from?

For those unfamiliar with these devices, they were empty #10 tin food cans, mostly gleaned from the kitchen of the State Training School. And they were what you cooked in, unless you were frying up your spooza that night. The billy can was an ingenious, cost-efficient, environmentally-friendly piece of equipment. We recycled what was essentially a piece of discarded trash, and after using it for a month, tossed it out; saving in addition the water that would have been used to wash it back at outfitting. It only took until the late '70s to discover that cooking vessels whose embossed sides met their bottoms at right angles were prone to burning food and difficult to clean, and were therefore microbial gardens of Eden. This is not to mention the as yet unknown effects on the human body of the seam solder on the cans' sides and bottoms.

9. What is "spooza?"
10. What is a IIIB?

View: 30 Days To Survival - documentary of a NOLS course in 1969
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8zKt8btHYU>

Other Resources:

Simple Life (Friluftsliv) - People Meet Nature by Roger & Sarah Isberg

Elders Of The Tribe:

- Joseph Knowles • George Washington Sears • Jack London
- Rudyard Kipling • Paul Petzoldt • Yvon Chouinard
- James Austin Wilder • George Mallory • John Burroughs
- Henry David Thoreau • Ralph Waldo Emerson • Roy Chapman Andrews
- Richard Harding David • Charles Fletcher Lummis
- Frederick Russell Burnham • Millican Dalton • Willis Willey