

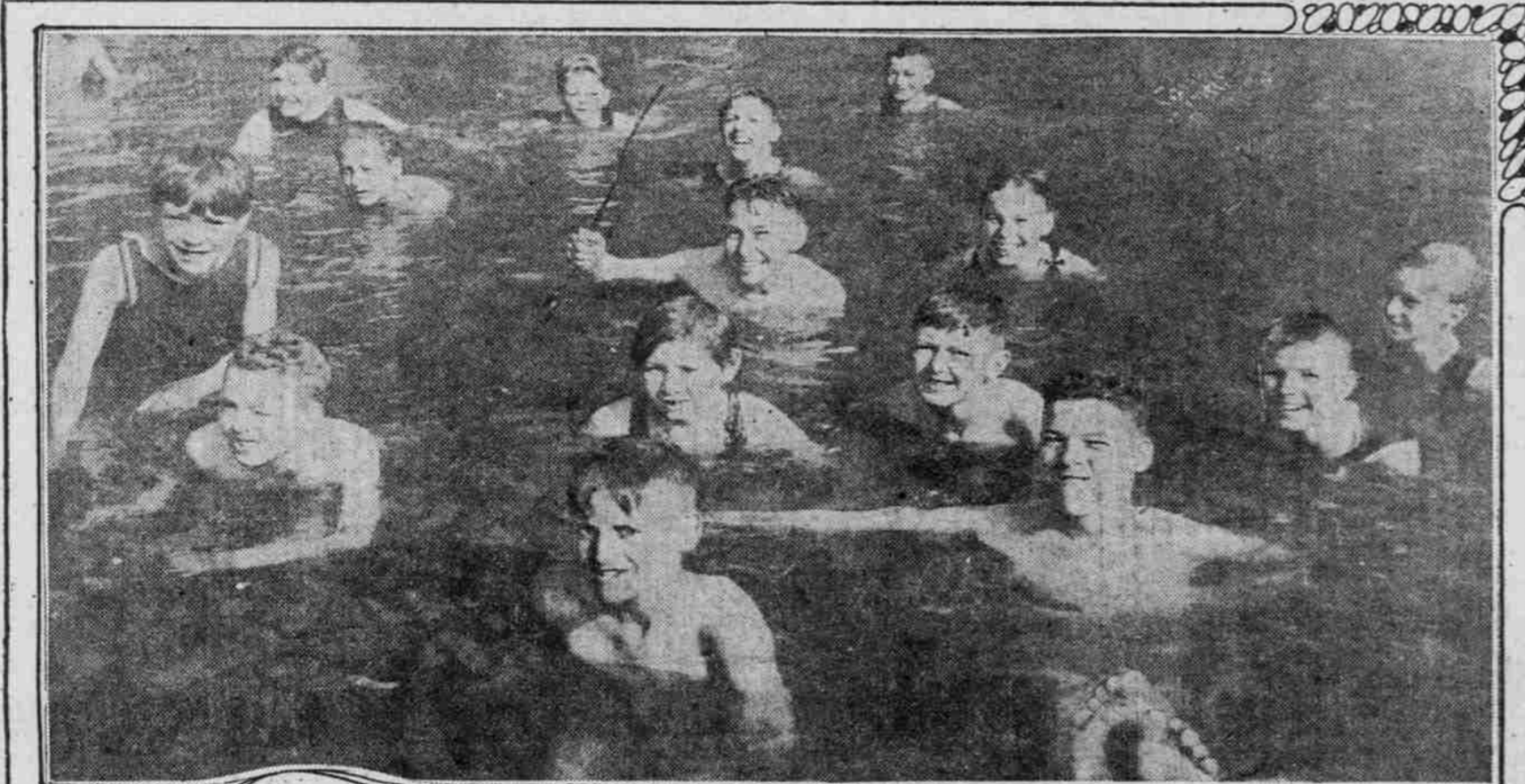


Boyville In Portland - Pirates, Indians, Soldiers on City's Back Lots



Ready to Go on a Week-End Camp.

Youngsters of Last Decade Just Grew Up and Found Own Ways to Play



There's Nothing to Compare With the Old Swimming Hole.

BY DEWITT HARRY.

BOYVILLE, come create again those memorable days you se-date Portlanders. Back when there were no playgrounds, no trained workers to supervise recreation per carefully prepared syllabus, no Boy Scouts, no rifle and rifle for play, and when every section of the city had its gang who inhabited the back lots and established headquarters in remote city places difficult of access.

Remember the Goose Hollow gang, the tough bunch from Albina that brought shivers of fear from the youngsters on account of the sheer terror of their accomplishments, the Sixth-street gang that hung out about the Harrison school, the South Portland crew who used to play hockey days and tease policemen nights about the old vacant lot at Front and Whittaker streets, the Portland Heights kids who had their lookout where the cable line ended way above the city, the Sunnyside gang who hung out near Lone Fir cemetery, the North Portland kids who defended the sacred precincts about Guild's lake, the Sellwooders, fellows from Woodstock, Mount Tabor, St. Johns way out on the little steam line, Woodlawn, those were the days.

Staid Portlanders Reminisce.

Just talk with nearly any one of the men in Portland today who spent their boyhood in the city and they will ordinarily be more than pleased to regale inquirers with choice tidbits and legends of deeds of derring-do in which they and their particular companions were concerned. The invasions of enemy territory that took place, the regular fights that had more of the nature of tournaments of old with favored knights carrying glory for their section, the battles between champions of different parts of the city, the many feuds to the bitter end that were started over some fair lady's hand, the baseball games and other athletic contests that occurred when the teams and competitors were escorted to their field by marshaled forces of the entire neighborhood in the expectation of the game ending up in a row. Well-armed retainers were these and seldom were they disappointed in seeking trouble, for, if memory does not fail, seldom was there an occurrence of this kind that was not enveloped by several little side battles, the more sanguinary the more satisfactory for the youngsters.

Those days bred a sure thinking bunch of youngsters. Early did they learn that they had to fend for themselves, and early did they realize the extreme value of co-operation. Reports of insult or injury brought to headquarters were generally acted on by a council of war called by the leader, usually a fellow who had gained his high and responsible position by combative and planning ability. The b'g crews were usually made up of a complete roster of the neighborhood boys, all ages. The youngsters normally flocked by

themselves and imitated the bigger fellows until some deed out of the ordinary, or their reaching a certain stage in their careers and development made them welcome in the charmed circle of older and more responsible boys who really controlled the destinies of the neighborhood. It was difficult to define any line of demarcation at which a chap grew out of his membership in the gang and went to manhood, for the younger men of the neighborhood even had their organizations and backed the boys up.

Courtship Had Dangers.

Theorists who study the development of humanity will easily perceive in this a purely normal outgrowth of the development of races since the beginning of time. Doubtless they are right but the young Portlander concerned himself not with such thoughts, merely went along as the rest of the fellows did and had his fun. Sweethearting in those days had its dangers for the fellow who became smitten with the charms of a lady fair who lived in some other section of the city was more than likely to become the target for concerted action on the part of the young males who lived in the vicinity, especially if the fair one who was sought after was more than ordinarily desirable in the eyes of the jealous males of her section or had at any time given any of them any encouragement.

Many were the clandestine meetings that were had and a real spice of danger was given them when the swain knew that he was liable at any time to meet up with some of her champions who resented the bestowal of any favors on fellows who did not reside near the home of the object of their affections. Escorts of protecting males were not unknown in those days. For instance a fellow would become smitten with the charms of some girl who lived way off on the other side of town. He just knew that existence was impossible for him unless he was rewarded with several of her smiles or given an opportunity to hank in her favor. The only way to get in touch with her, as any boy of those days will tell you, was to go to her part of town and lay in wait until she visited some entertainment or until she went to church and try and walk home with her. This would ordinarily be possible if the boy was not too faint-hearted and was certain that the lady would fall in with his plans, and most of the fellows were more than ready to take a chance that their advances would be received with favor, but the difficulty would be to put the act over unaided in the face of the gang from the neighborhood, every one of whom would regard himself as her self-appointed guardian and duty bound to defend her to the last drop of blood from any philanderers with anyone who was not a member of the charmed circle of which she was regarded as an adjunct.

Of course these practices often

complicated love affairs and rendered them rather hazardous, but then who would ever want the course of love too smooth? Back about 20 years ago in Portland few of the average courtships were any too easy and it was often necessary for the youngster to have a defensive escort safely hidden whenever he made his calls or tried to curry favor in the eyes of his lady love. Of course most of these agreements for offensive and defensive alliances were made on a co-operative basis the plan being for the exchange of protection.

Mock's bottoms and the South Portland bottoms used to be great places for play. Spring freshets used to flood both these low sections and during the high water period the boys of the city used to congregate there by hundreds. Favored fishing and bathing spots were staked there and by usage became the property of cliques. Baseball diamonds were made in South Portland and here each Sunday would resort the myriad teams from all over the city meeting for inter-city championships, the predecessor of the present well-organized leagues that nowadays sponsor the national sport. Sad to relate now, but highly enjoyable then, many of the games among the older fellows and men's teams would be played for a stake of a keg of beer, and another favorite stunt used to be to have the keg placed on third base so that every player who managed to reach that station could have as much as he wanted. This used to make some fast playing and it is more than possible that better games would result today could some similar practice be revived.

Orchard Raids Were Frequent.

Boys must be the same generation to generation, and many are the treasured remembrances of the back-lot ball game that used to necessitate chasing the ball into some forbidden nearby precincts. Just try and recollect the games that were played next to the orchard and the ripening fruit and the strange habit that the ball had of getting beneath the trees and the spirited chase and hunt with the ensuing difficulty of locating the missing and necessary sphere. What if it if there was a great deal of the half-ripe and sour, but carefully guarded, fruit lost? That could not be helped and was part of the game. Who wouldn't give half his worldly goods to be transported back once more to those halcyon days?

Spring days seem to get into the blood and the mere sight of a crowd of boys at play on a vacant lot, and Portland is extremely fortunate in that it has a great number of these, cannot fail to recall the days of yore when the big boys of today vied for the honors of their neighborhood in spirited competition. It seems but yesterday that the fellows who have to sit tight on alluring sweet-scented dais used to be the ones to venture forth to their favored nooks and test the waters of the Willamette with a sensitive toe to



He Sets a Semaphore Difficult to Imitate.



Magnificent Deeds are Accomplished in Her Name.

see if it was time to venture in for the spring bath.

And the hills. The exploration trips that used to take place into that realm of romance surrounding the city. The long all-day journeys fraught with all manner of adventure. The spirit testing ventures way back along the old abandoned line of the logging road that used to tap the hills behind Hamilton street in South Portland. The old trestles that stood as a monument, shaky 'tis true, to the skill of the engineers of old. The abandoned huts that marked the spots where some old-timer had endeavored to wrest a pittance from stumpage farms of tiny acreage that lay in the bottoms of the ravines that scamed the hills.

Then was none of the skilled guidance of trained scoutmasters or play supervisors, it was every fellow for himself, and the more adventurous had their select coterie of followers and competition was keen among the boys to make the deepest explorations into the backwoods. Land of unexplored adventure that it was, much of it pristine in its rugged simplicity and seemingly never before visited by humans, at least in the estimation of the boy adventurer.

Boys Took Usage Title.

Then there were the nooks that, by constantly repeated visits, came to be known as the individual property of some of the boy organizations. Some slight appeal was accentuated by constant improvement. Marquam gulch used to be a place of myriad adventures for could not the explorer by venturing up its narrow gorge make his way far back into wild country that might, even then, be teeming with savage Indians who had returned back after the main section of their tribes had taken their departure to the nearby reservations?

And the hills up canyon road at the head of Jefferson street. The city park was but a tiny place and plenty

of adventure offered therabouts, always providing a fellow did not get too near the rifle range where the members of the national guard did their target practice. And out behind Marshall street over the hills near Macleay park, down the river bank of Gold's lake and out near Linnton. On the other side by Columbia and Willamette sloughs before the time when the packing plants defied their neighborhood when the Union Meat company did their slaughtering at Troutdale and another plant near Fulton was in operation. The boy who was favored by the butchers and could venture into the sacred confines and get a bladder. Why, a fellow could even get livers and other by-products given him in those days by merely visiting the slaughter houses and asking for them, and many were the feasts that were had a la gypsy style alongside the river banks, the assorted delicacies that were served being the combined loot of the bunch and much of the history of their attainment being better left unwritten.

Barefoot Rare Today.

Barefoot, not much of that nowadays. The neighborhood bully and the leader of the bunch with his host of imitators. Leadership was always bestowed or earned as a right by some deed of more than passing brilliancy on the part of the extremely fortunate individual who had the ability to seize opportunity. Many were the notable achievements that set a youngster aside from his more ordinary playmates and made him the envy of all.

Mischief, of course there was mischief, but the youngsters had to invent their own relaxations; they did not have everything so carefully prescribed for them as is the case today. It is a question in many a grown-up's mind if the little lads of today are as happy as were those of a decade ago. Of course, everything is

so carefully thought out for them, they have so much more chance to get healthful sport; modern trends have been to not leave anything to chance and to perfect carefully considered plans for scientific playing. It is all set out in books just how boys should play at certain ages, what sports should be encouraged, what degree of interest the young fellows should show, how they should be led, the big brothers who should be their little imitators whose characters are in the formative stage, and doubtless the American boy of future generations, having all these advantages and with his play and development carefully regulated according to set schemes, will profit hugely thereby and be a much better chap than his dad; but dad cannot but regret that he is not back in his childhood days, and it is doubtful if many of them would choose to grow up any differently than was their actual lot.

Tree Belongs to Boy Tribe.

Out on the back lot on Tibbetts street there is a solitary tree standing that has been the companion of the Woodstock boys for years. Fathers in that locality can recall vividly the good times that they used to have playing in its shade or indulging in varied adventures aloft among its branches. Staunch and proud, this sturdy tree, yet stands in solitary glory on a vacant lot; but the gradual encroachments of a rapidly increasing population seem to have numbered its days. In its loftiest branches it bears graphic testimony as to its favor among Boyville of the locality in the form of an old barrel, hoisted to this dizzy height at the cost of untold labor at the hands of the tribe who inhabit the region.

Now this hoary old tree has taken on varying identities in its long and assorted career, but it has not declined one whit in favor. Last week it was the mainmast of a battle

cruiser and a skilled young job, who had never sailed on the ocean, occupied the barrel-like crow's nest and semaphored the location of enemy ships that he had in view to a waiting crew that clustered on the platform of the fighting peak below. At the base of the mast, on the green, mossy deck of the ship, waiting gun crews lay to, patiently ready to serve the enemy with a dose of hot shot when he was overhauled.

Pirate Crews Pass Out.

It was not thus with this tree in days gone by. Before the big war it was the mast of a pirate ship and swarthy villains swarmed up the rigging with cutlasses in hand, daggers in teeth and pistols in their broad sheathes as they scanned the horizon for their treasure-laden prey. Or at another time in its history a tribe of cliff-dwellers resided perched precariously on the narrow shelf of their lofty home. From day to day, even now, this giant does not know to what use he will be put, but his popularity never declines.

Compulsory military training has been advocated by many adults, but one resident of the vicinity of the Tibbetts-street tree stated that the vacant lot had produced some 15 soldiers who took part in the late war. Military games have always been popular with boys, and the daring hero who led his troops to victory, or the stubborn patriot who fought to the last, have had their myriad counterparts in the back-lot battles of Portland. The lessons inculcated in this manner are more than a passing fancy, for they have helped to form the men's character and only need opportunity for expression.

Water Heroes Are Noted.

Let's not forget the Willamette, scene of so many watery adventures, and also, sad to relate, of many a tragedy. Ross and Swan Islands, in opposite sections of the harbor, have always enjoyed their rightful share of popularity. Gathered along the river bank the young savages used to wait giesfully for the advent of the rapidly-moving river boats and the more adventurous and skilled would swim far from shore and clamber on log booms as they were towed past and atal rides. The fellow who could swim the river was a hero, but water life in Portland developed a fast and sure set of swimmers with the result that today the city has a great proportion of its population who are at home in the water.

Swimming parties, taking to the water in their native state and enjoying to the utmost the cool, soothing effect of the soft river flows, used to throng the banks of the Willamette, and often the boys would venture in from floats and logs right in the heart of the city. Skillfully decorated with mud in assorted patterns, some spotted like zebras, others resembling striped leopards, yet more bearing designs that would do any savage proud; these chaps would disport themselves for hours at a time until their little carcasses would have shriveled little sections all over. A good, brisk fire, built of driftwood, did the world and all for comfort, and the spirited deeds of athletics that took place on the muddy beaches made many a sturdy little chap. Nowadays a commercial bathing beach has encroached on the sacred precincts of Ross Island and other sections of the city are no more fortunate in that respect. However, a careful set of city dads have enabled the construction of a number of tanks in various sections of the city, where the young-

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