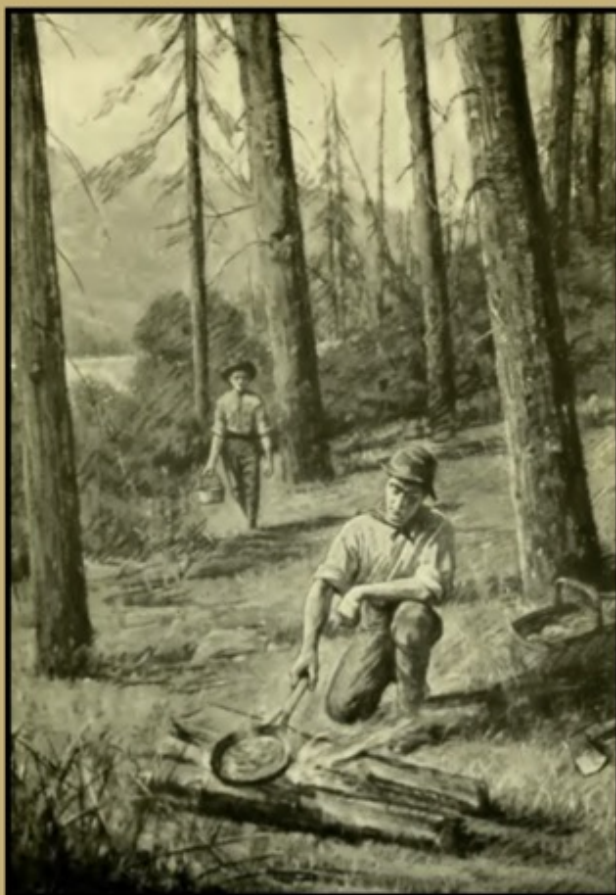


KEEPSAKE CURRICULUM

# STORIES TO GROW UP WITH



## The Boy Scouts of Woodcraft Camp

By

Thornton W. Burgess

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By  
Thornton W. Burgess

Author of  
*The Boy Scouts on Swift River*  
*The Boy Scouts on Lost Trail*  
*The Boy Scouts in a Trapper's Camp*

**Illustrated by C. S. Corson**

**The Penn Publishing  
Company Philadelphia  
1922**

# Note from the Publisher:

This book is a wonderful book of adventure for young boys. Written in 1912, it cultivates the natural adventuresome spirit of boys balanced with character development. This book is in the public domain so I have formatted it to make it available either in an ebook form or as a paperback. Though I have changed some of the language to make it easier to read, I have left many of the words...to encourage a larger vocabulary....several of which I have footnoted with a more modern translation. I have also added an illustration by my daughter Bethany to enhance the story.

Though not religious in its expression, the story is full of character and morals. It lends itself to many good conversations in which the character of God and His laws can be talked about and applied in the various circumstances which arise in the story.

**Additional Illustration by Bethany Voss**

*THE KING OF LONESOME POND*

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THE CHIEF GREETED HIM PLEASANTLY  
(PAGE 29)

# Introduction

The Boy Scout movement has appealed to me from the very first as a long step in the right direction. It stands for an organized boyhood on a worldwide plan. It has in it the essentials for a stronger and better manhood, based on character building and physical development. Clear and clean thinking and self-reliance are its fundamental principles. Its weakness has been and is the difficulty in securing leaders, men with an understanding of and sympathy with boys, who can give the necessary time to active work in the field with the patrols, and who are themselves sufficiently versed in the lore of the woods and fields.

For years, before ever the Boy Scouts were organized, I had dreamed of a woodcraft camp for boys, a camp which in its appointments and surroundings should make constant appeal to the imagination of red-blooded, adventure-loving boys, and which should at the same time be a true "school of the woods" wherein woodcraft and the ways of nature should be taught along much the same lines as those on which the Boy Scout movement is founded.

In this and succeeding volumes, "The Boy Scouts on Swift River", "The Boy Scouts on Lost Trail", "The Boy Scouts in a Trapper's Camp", I have sought to portray the life of such a school camp under Boy Scout rules. "The Boy Scouts of Woodcraft Camp" has been written with a twofold purpose: To stimulate on the part of every one of my boy readers a desire to master for himself the mysteries of nature's great out-of-doors, the secrets of field and wood and stream, and to show by example what the Boy Scout's oath means in the development of character. Many of the incidents in the succeeding pages are drawn from my own experiences. And if, because of reading this story, one more boy is led to the Shrine of the Hemlock, there to inhale the pungent incense from a campfire and to master the art of tossing a flapjack, I shall feel that I have not written in vain.

THE AUTHOR

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# Chapter XIII

## THE HONEY SEEKERS

Two very sober boys came forth from their interview with the big chief. It was not that their punishment for infraction of the two most rigidly enforced rules of the camp---jumping bounds and building fires---was to be so severe. In fact they were getting off much lighter than they had dared to hope for, being ordered to police camp for one month and also being denied the privilege of joining any of the various special parties going out with the guides for two and three day trips. Dr. Merriam considered that their experience had been in the nature of punishment, severe enough to warrant him in being lenient in his dealings with the culprits.

He had simply talked to them, quietly, kindly, with no shadow of resentment, no suggestion of scolding. It was just a plain talk as man to man, in which the doctor made clear to them how the welfare of all is wholly dependent upon the individual, and that the breaking of laws made for the community in no way harms those in authority, but is an outrage upon the great body politic and in time is bound to react upon the lawbreaker.

"The honor of Woodcraft Camp as a whole is to be safeguarded only by keeping unsullied the honor of each individual member. By your acts of deliberate disobedience yesterday you not only besmirched your own honor as Scouts under oath, but you blotted the honor of the entire camp. Buxby, by your own confession you have sought to take upon your shoulders the entire blame for this unfortunate affair. The motive does you credit. But, my boy," he concluded, turning to Spud, "I want you to realize that weakness which allows one to follow another in wrong-doing is quite as blameworthy as the act of the leader, and that therefore I hold you equally culpable with Buxby in this affair."

His face lighted with one of his rare smiles. "I believe that from now on I can trust both of you implicitly," he said, giving each the Scout's grip.

"The thing that hurts me most is the fact that the big chief won't let the findin' of that bee tree score for the Delawares. There's fifty points thrown away just because I wouldn't take your advice, Spud, and wait till we got permission to go



out of bounds,” said Billy, as half an hour later the two boys sat at one end of the mess table making up for their prolonged fast.

Spud stopped a huge slice of bread and butter halfway to his mouth. “What about that second line we ain’t run down yet?” he asked slowly.

Billy stared at him for a minute, then suddenly choked over the cup of hot cocoa he was drinking. When he had recovered his breath a broad smile lighted his battered face.

“Spud, old Scout, we win!” he exulted. “Here’s where we beat the big chief after all! Why didn’t I think of it before? It’s as easy as picking up chips at a woodpile. We haven’t said a word about that second line. We won’t, except to Woodhull. We’ll take him along and run that line clear to bounds. Then we’ll show Louis how to use that bee box, and let him go on and find the tree. You know there are no bounds for the tribe leaders. Fifty points for the Delawares---Oh, my lucky stars!” Billy finished with a whoop that brought the cook running to see what the trouble was.

In the meantime Dr. Merriam was having a conference with Big Jim at the headquarters. “I tell yer, doctor, that little scatterbrain has got more woods sense than three-fourths o’ th’ rest o’ these youngsters put together. Wish yer could see that camp o’ theirs. Couldn’t ‘a’ built it no better myself. An’ then he had sense enough t’ stick right there and send up them smoke signals. If he only had th’ level top piece o’ that youngster that went in t’ Lonesome with me he’d have th’ makin’ o’ one o’ th’ best leaders in camp, even if he did hear a bear.” The big guide chuckled.

“So you don’t take any stock in the bear?” asked the doctor.

“Not th’ least little mite,” replied Jim. “Folks that’s lost always hears bears or wildcats. I been watchin’ out some sharp an’ I ain’t see no sign o’ bear nigher’n ten mile o’ this camp in th’ last three years.”

“Where did those bees come from?” asked the doctor.

“Feller that lived in this camp th’ summer ‘fore you bought it had a couple o’ hives. Guess some o’ them must have got away from him. That youngster cert’nly did run ‘em down slick. Hadn’t never noticed th’ little honey bugs myself.”

The doctor smiled. "I had," said he, "and I had intended to line them out someday, but Billy got ahead of me, and as you say, he certainly did the trick very cleverly. The thing that pleases me, however, is the fact that he was observing enough to notice them. I don't believe that there is another soul in camp beside myself who had discovered them. Jim, that boy has got the right kind of stuff in him. We've got to take him in hand and develop his bump of caution and sense of responsibility."

"If he could run with young Upton for a while---" began the guide.

"The very thing I had in mind," interrupted the doctor. "When Buxby's period of probation is over I think we'll have to plan a trip for you with those two youngsters, one that will put them on their mettle. It will be an interesting experiment. What do you think about opening that bee tree?"

The guide grinned. "A little honey would kind o' sweeten things up some," he ventured.

"All right," replied the doctor. "Be prepared to take a small party in to get it day after tomorrow."

Big Jim's "honey party" as he called it, was drawn wholly from the Delawares, in honor of the tree having been discovered by members of that tribe. It included Woodhull, Tug Benson, Upton and Chip Harley. Billy and Spud were denied the privilege of going out of bounds, so could go no farther than the edge of the old clearing. Spud announced that he had had enough of bees anyhow, and chose to stay in camp. But Billy was heartbroken. However, he was fair minded enough to admit to himself that he deserved all that was coming to him, and hiding his chagrin led the expedition to the old clearing and gave the guide the line from the stump on the upper edge.

He watched the others disappear into the woods in single file and then sat down to possess himself in such patience as he could until they should return. He had no doubt of their success in locating the tree and as Big Jim was no novice at cutting bee trees, he anticipated no trouble on that score. All the party wore gloves and carried mosquito netting to protect faces and necks from the maddened bees. In fact both Tug and Chip had their veils on when they entered the woods. The guide carried an axe, as did Woodhull, while Walter and Tug each carried a galvanized iron water pail for the expected honey. Billy knew that

the guide would run no risk of having his charges badly stung and would undoubtedly smoke the hive well before laying it open.

The minutes passed on leaden wings. What was the matter? Why didn't Jim whoop when he found the tree as he had agreed to do? Could he have overrun it? A slight rustle in the bushes on the edge of the clearing some thirty yards to the right caught Billy's attention. Something was moving there. To kill time he started to investigate. "Probably a porcupine," he muttered to himself, as he softly stole forward.

Creeping on hands and knees to the shelter of a fallen tree trunk he cautiously raised his head and peeped over. Instead of the expected porcupine he saw a little brown furry animal vainly trying to pull over an old log, and emitting funny little discontented whines as it tugged. At first glance it looked something like a clumsy puppy, and then the truth flashed across Billy and made his eyes pop out. It was a bear cub, a very little fellow at that.

With impulsive Billy to act first and think afterward was ever the governing principle. It was so now. Quietly dropping down behind the tree trunk he hastily slipped off his jacket. Then rising to his feet he reached forward and threw it over the head of the unsuspecting little animal, recklessly throwing himself after it. For a few minutes there was a desperate struggle accompanied by muffled squeals. Then Billy succeeded in getting the wildly clawing forepaws smothered in the folds of the jacket and, pinning down the stout little hind-legs, he had his victim helpless.

"Boy, now I've got him what'll I do with him?" he panted. A sudden inspiration came to him. He remembered noticing a huge hollow stump in the middle of the clearing. If he could get him over to that and drop him into it he could be held prisoner until the bee hunters returned. Wrapping the enveloping jacket still tighter around the imprisoned head and forepaws Billy gathered the struggling bundle in his arms and started for the stump.

Just before he reached it pandemonium broke loose in the woods behind him. There were wild yells in all keys from Big Jim's deep base to Chip Harley's shrill falsetto. Billy chuckled. "Must have stirred them bees up something awful," he muttered. "Funny I didn't hear 'em choppin'. There, you little fiend!" He dropped the cub into the hollow and spread the jacket over the top. Then for the first time he realized that a baby as small as his captive must have a mother at no great

distance. His face went a trifle pale under its coat of tan. "I wish them fellers would quit fightin' bees and come out," he muttered.

Almost with the thought his wish was gratified. Chip came first. The bee veil was still over his head and he was not looking at where he was going. He floundered out of the brush, caught a heedless toe under a stick and fell headlong. He was up in a flash, blindly struggled through a raspberry tangle that he might have gone around, bumped into a half-hidden stump and went down again with a little moan. Then he was on his feet again and passed Billy as if he was trying to break the hundred yard sprint record.

Tug was a good second, and he had little advantage over Chip in the method of his coming. He seemed to have some pressing engagement back at camp, and was "going strong" when he passed Billy.

Walter and Woodhull appeared next, but as they were unencumbered by veils they picked their footing with more discretion, and Louis stopped as soon as he reached the open, Walter following his example halfway to Billy. Lastly appeared Big Jim, who came out of the woods leisurely, his axe still in his hand. Jim was grinning. It was clear to Billy that something had happened, but that whatever it was the guide considered the danger past now.

Something had happened. Following the guide in single file they had proceeded some distance when they became aware of a humming sound which steadily increased in volume as they advanced. Suddenly Big Jim abruptly halted and held up a warning hand. There was a puzzled look on the guide's face.

"Somethin' has made them bees plumb mad fer certain" he whispered.

The volume of sound increased. It was as if off in the tree tops beyond a huge top was spinning. The brush was still too thick for them to see the tree itself. Then into the steady hum of the bees there broke a new note, half growl, half whine, followed by the ripping sound of rent wood.

The guide's face cleared. "You boys are goin' t' see somethin' in a minute yer won't likely ever see agin. Now come on, and be mighty careful about not makin' no noise," he whispered.

A few feet further on the thick young growth opened up and they came in full view of Billy's bee tree. What they saw drew a startled exclamation from the three

younger boys, at once silenced by a warning hiss from Big Jim. There, fifty feet from the ground, gripping the tree with hind legs and one huge forearm, was an immense black bear. The long claws of the paw that was free had been hooked into the entrance hole and a long strip the length of the crack which had led to Billy's undoing a few days previous had been torn out, exposing the hollow packed with comb. The bear was then occupied in scooping out great pieces of comb dripping with honey and transferring them to her mouth, whining and growling and stopping every other second to slap at the bees clustered in an angry cloud about her head.

What no one did see, because all eyes were turned up instead of on the ground, were two little brown bundles of fur that scurried for the shelter of a windfall.

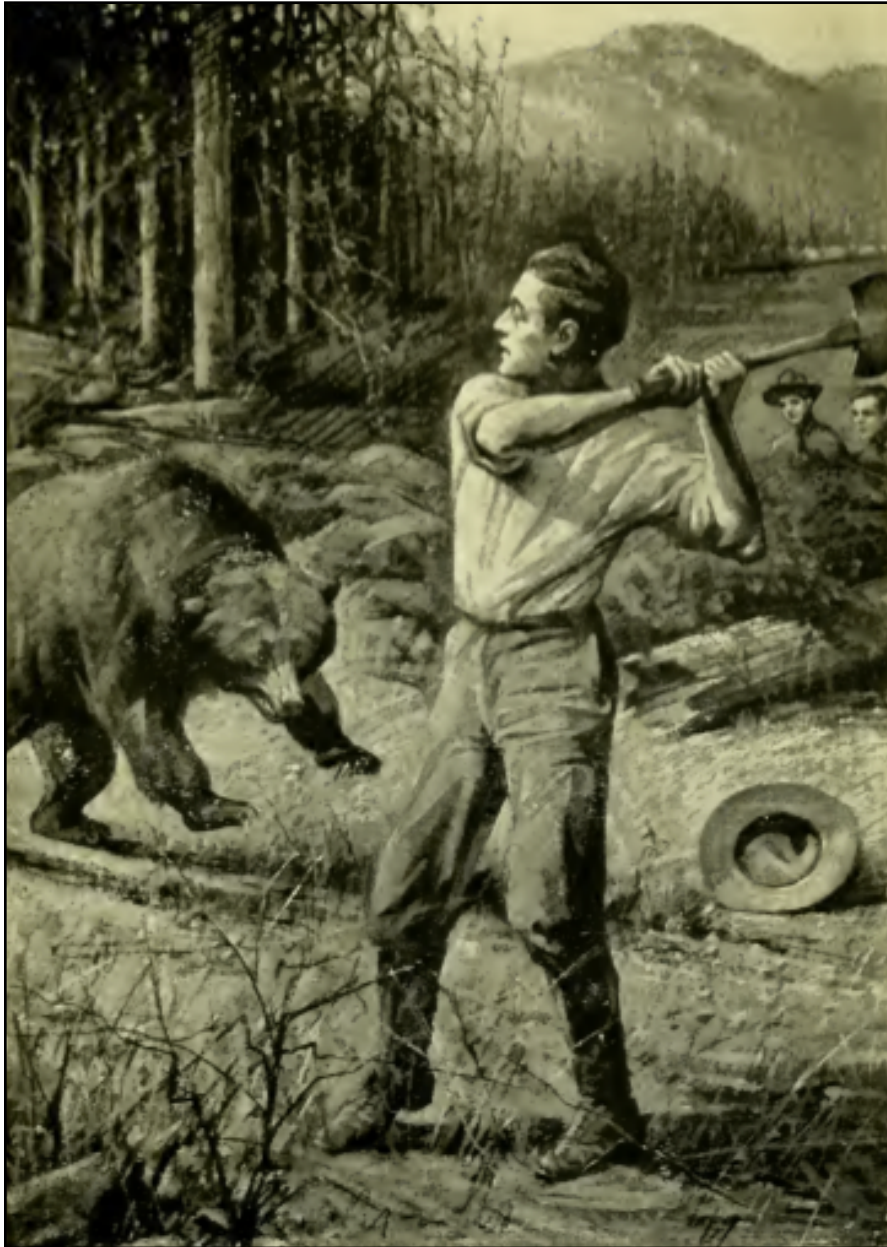
"Ain't a mite o' danger," whispered the guide, noting the panicky look on some of the faces. "In 'bout a minute you'll see th' worst scared bear in the North Woods. Now don't run when she comes down if yer don't want th' whole camp laughin' at yer," he warned, seeing Chip and Tug already beginning to edge away.

Had Jim been aware of the presence of the two cubs he would have adopted a very different course of action. He was counting on the fact that despite its great size and immense strength the black bear is one of the most timid of all wild animals in the presence of man unless wounded, cornered or called upon to protect its young. Perhaps timidity is not quite a fair indictment. Let us say rather that of all wild animals none has come to have a more wholesome respect for man, and it is a well-known fact that not even a deer will bolt quicker at man's approach than will this black comedian of the big woods.

It was with this fact in mind that the guide advanced a few steps and suddenly sent forth an earsplitting whoop. Things happened then with a rapidity that left no time for thought. Walter stoutly maintains to this day that the bear neither slid nor climbed down---that she simply let go and dropped. Certain it is that the echo of Jim's wild yell was still ringing in the woods when she landed with a thump that brought forth a grunt. Then, instead of the mad flight on which the guide had counted, she reared on her haunches with her back to the tree, growling savagely, her little pig eyes red with rage.

Big Jim took in the situation at a glance. "Run!" he yelled, himself holding his ground and swinging aloft his double-edged axe.

Even as he uttered the warning the bear charged. Walter, who stood a little to one side, unconscious of what he was doing, hurled the pail he was holding full at the angry beast and turned to run. This proved the salvation of Big Jim. The rolling clattering object distracted the bear's attention for an instant. She paused long enough to give the pail a vicious blow which by chance sent it clattering noisily into the old windfall behind which the cubs had taken refuge. There was a frightened squeal followed by the sound of scurrying feet among dead leaves.



“RUN!” HE YELLED

Big Jim heard the squeal and understood. "Cubs, by gum!" he exclaimed.

The bear heard too. She stopped, irresolute, half turned toward the windfall, then faced the guide and reared, growling savagely. There was another faint squeal from beyond the windfall. The bear dropped to all fours and slowly retreated in the direction of her cubs, pausing every few steps to turn and growl threateningly over her shoulder.

It was the guide's opportunity to retire in good order and he made haste to avail himself of it, reaching the clearing just in time to see Chip and Tug disappear down the home trail on the far side.

Now that the danger was over the humor of the situation tickled him immensely and as he with Walter and Woodhull approached Billy all three were finding relief in a hearty laugh.

All at once they became aware that there was something unusual about Billy. He was dancing around the old stump like a lunatic, "I've got him, Jim! I've got him!" He was without his jacket and his shirt was in tatters. His face and arms were bleeding from deep scratches.

The guide gaped at him open mouthed. "Great smoke, sonny," he drawled, "yer look as if yer was th' one that had met a bear, not us."

"I have, Jim, I have! It's in there!" yelled Billy.

The guide peeped into the hollow, and a long drawn whistle of astonishment escaped him. Then abruptly his face sobered and he cast an apprehensive glance back at the forest.

"Must have been three cubs," he said, reaching in and catching the whimpering little bear by the scruff of the neck. "Bears don't generally have but two, but I've heerd say that sometimes they has three. This little chap must have strayed off while his mother was a-clawin' fer that honey. I reckon we better be movin' right along. It ain't goin' t' be no ways healthy round these parts when Mrs. Bear misses this little chap."

Wrapping the cub in Billy's jacket once more, Big Jim set the pace for camp at a rate that kept the smaller boys on a dog trot, not without many a fearful glance behind them.

Camp was reached safely, where the news of Billy's capture spread like wildfire, and for once he found himself the hero he had so often pictured himself; wherever he went he was the center of an admiring group.

The doctor was petitioned in a round robin signed by every member of the camp for permission to keep the cub as a pet. This was granted, and "Honey," as he was called, soon became one of the most important members of Woodcraft, where his droll antics were a constant source of amusement.

The Delawares were jubilant, for Billy's prize scored them fifty points, and when a few days later the second bee tree was successfully lined out and this time the honey obtained without adventure, Billy's popularity was secure for all time, for this also added fifty points, as he had foreseen it would.

"He was a harum-scarum before, and this sure will be the ruin of him," Woodhull bewailed to his chum, Seaforth.

But Woodhull was wrong. There was a change in Billy. He was the same lovable, lighthearted boy as before, but the careless, reckless spirit that had so often led him into mischief was lacking. For the first time he seemed to have a serious purpose in' life. And it dated back to the morning after the lonely night in the forest. Billy was finding himself.

"I reckon he did hear a bear that night," said Big Jim to the doctor as they discussed Billy's episode with the cub. And Billy knows he did.



