8-1-1948

History and development of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, with emphasis on the 1947 program

Carrie E. Watts
Atlanta University

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This study is an attempt to give the historical background of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher with emphasis on the present program. The data is limited to the camping period of 1947.

The writer wishes to thank Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher for her kindness and helpfulness in making it possible for her to collect data on the camp. She also wishes to thank Miss Phyllis Dews, the Director of Negro Girl Scouts, Atlanta, Georgia; Mr. Joseph Paul Jones, Birmingham, Alabama, who was responsible for the diagram of Camp Fletcher; and Mrs. Mildred Johnson and other directors of agencies using the camp, for their cooperation.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to discover the factors responsible for the origin and development of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and its facilities and to show the service which it is rendering to Negroes of Alabama.

Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama and the agencies utilizing the facilities there. The agencies are (1) the Girl Scouts, (2) the Baptist Women's State Convention jointly with the State Missionary Union (white) (sponsoring a Religious Training Camp for Negro boys and girls, (3) the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, (4) the 4-H Club, (5) the Young Women's Christian Association (sponsoring a Y-Teen Camp), and (6) the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel (sponsoring the Southeastern Bible School).

This study is limited to the program offered in 1947. The method of procedure has been such that program evaluation has been impossible.

Method of Procedure

The material for this study was collected by brief visits to the camp, interviews with the director and founder, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, and with individual camp directors, with the chairman of the camp committee, and published and unpublished documents.

Historical Development of Camping

Camping as we know it today is a relatively modern character building agency which received its impetus from the coming of the automobile.

In the 80's when Nessmuck wrote his little book 'Woodcraft' he treated camping and 'roughing it' as synonymous terms. Camping at that time was the sport of the hunter, the fisherman, or the hardy lover of the open endured to discomfort. Rarely did the family, as
a whole venture forth to vacation under the canvas. The journey to any secluded or attractive camping ground could only be made in horse drawn vehicles. Roads were muddy or filled with ruts, and to travel upon them was a slow tedious experience....

In 1861, Mr. Ernest Balch established 'Camp Chicorna' for well-to-do boys. In 1885, Mr. Summer F. Dudley, a business man who was interested in the work of the Young Men's Christian Association, took a small group of boys to Orange Lake near Newburgh, New York, for a short camping period....

These were the pioneers of the general camping movement that has since taken place both in organized camping and in family or individual camping. During this time many parents believed that night air was poisonous and that to get wet was dangerous. But the boys who went to camp came back to their homes brown, healthy and filled with vigor and enthusiasm. These examples caused other parents to venture to allow their boys to go to camp in succeeding seasons.1

Many a person has gone into the woods tired, discouraged, and weary of the strenuous life which society demands of him, remained there a few weeks in the fresh air and solitude to return to his home a more calm and serene person, ready to laugh at the discouragements which a few weeks before had made him feel that life was not worthwhile.

The dearth of recreational facilities for the Negro boys and girls of Alabama and the recognized need for a place where they, too, might be free to enjoy the sunshine, fresh air, and open spaces which are so desirable, led in 1926, to the founding of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAMP PAULINE BRAY FLETCHER

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher was established in 1926 by the Nurses Association of Birmingham, Alabama, in cooperation with a group of club women motivated by the desire to provide for the Negro Youth a healthful recreational camp within the reach of the humblest child.¹

This organization was incorporated, under the name "Girls Service League," as a tax-free social agency. Responsibility for this work goes to the prominent Negro leader, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, who came to Birmingham in 1906 to assume charge of the Children's Home for Negroes Hospital of that city. In 1919, Mrs. Fletcher was employed by the Anti-Tuberculosis Association as County Nurse, under Miss Bertha G. Clement, a white woman. It was through this association with Miss Clement, who, at that time, was directing the work of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association and also founder of a "Kiddie Camp" on Shades Mountain, that Mrs. Fletcher became convinced of the imperative need of a camp for underprivileged Negro children.²

As there were no camps for Negroes in Alabama, Mrs. Fletcher became active in trying to interest the citizenry of Birmingham, Alabama in sponsoring a camp for Negro Youth. In 1926, she visited Camp Elwema in New York, and while there she became friendly with Miss Elizabeth W. Martin, Director of Elwema, who bequeathed to Mrs. Fletcher the name Girls' Service League. While on this trip, Mrs. Fletcher attended the meeting of the Graduate Nurses Association, which was convening at Buckrow Beach, Virginia. Upon the recommendations made by the nurses at this convention, Mrs. Fletcher, on her return to Birmingham, made a report of her findings, which further revealed to the nurses of Birmingham the need for a camp, and it was this report that inspired


²Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, Camp Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, March 3, 1948.
the nurses to undertake the establishment of a camp.\footnote{Letter from T. L. Hale, Assistant Director, Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, April 7, 1948.}

Sites were surveyed in all sections of Jefferson County until, in 1925, the present location, in Shades Valley, was found, and 57\(\frac{1}{2}\) acres of rolling wooded land were purchased. A committee of the Girls' Service League launched a financial drive, with all members participating, and the sum of $750.00 was raised as part of the purchase price of $2,000.00 for the site. Contributions from friends and organizations were responsible for the remainder of the $2,000.00.

Camp Fletcher is located twelve miles southeast of Bessemer, Alabama, in Shades Valley. It consists at the time of this study of 137 acres of beautiful rolling, wooded country. Additional acreage was acquired by bartering timber taken off the original 57\(\frac{1}{2}\) acres.\footnote{Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, \textit{op. cit.}}

The physical surroundings of the camp include a variety of trees, birds and flowers indigenous to the area. There are tall, tapering pine trees with pine cones the size of pineapples, so spaced as to intersperse sunshine and shade in just the proper proportions. Big Shade Creek, with its rock strewn bed and its natural three depth levels of three feet, five feet and eight feet.

There are at Camp Fletcher six well constructed, neat, clean and well-screened huts, donated by friends of the camp. In 1926, Mrs. Fletcher personally solicited lumber from every lumber yard in Jefferson County with which to begin the construction of the huts, and that year marks the beginning of Camp Margaret Murray Washington, as it was then called in honor of Mrs. Margaret Murray Washington, wife of Booker T. Washington, and an outstanding worker in the Colored Women's Clubs. However, in 1942 the Service
League decided to change the name of the camp to Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher because of the sacrifices which Mrs. Fletcher had made in making the camp possible.¹

Living Quarters

The Rose Windham Hut.—A hut 60' by 30' which includes the quarters of the caretaker in addition to housing twelve girls and one staff member, was donated by the late Mr. T. G. Windham as a memorial to his daughter Rose. With the completion of the hut, July 22, 1926, the camp was opened for operation.²

The Oaks.—In 1927, Mrs. Fletcher mortgaged her own property, which she subsequently lost during the depression, to finance the building of "The Oaks," a five-room hut. This hut affords sleeping quarters for campers and the head-cook.³

Pine Crest.—In 1929, the principals and teachers of Birmingham's Negro schools financed the building of Pine Crest, which affords sleeping accommodations for 36 campers and four staff members.⁴

The Juliette Bradford Memorial Lodge.—In 1935, the Birmingham Federation of Negro Women's Clubs financed the building of the Juliette Bradford Memorial Lodge in honor of the late Juliette Bradford, a teacher and a civic worker of Birmingham. In this lodge is adequate room for a large kitchen, pantry, living quarters for the assistant director, who is always a man, and a spacious dining-room.

The Acipco Hut.—In 1939, the employees of the American Cast Iron and

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
Pipe Company donated the Acipco Hut. This hut accommodates 36 campers and four counselors.

The Stockham Lodge.—In 1947, Lieutenant Richard Stockham, U.S.A., gave $2,714.00 which is being used to build a log cabin with a rock foundation as combinedly, a permanent home for Mrs. Fletcher and Administration Hall. The front and back porches will be used as sleeping quarters when needed. This lodge has not been completed.

Water Supply.—As has been previously mentioned, Big Shades Creek, flowing through the middle of the camp site among the beautiful pines, makes a most delightful place for swimming, wading, and boating. Because it is a continually running stream, it is said by health inspectors not to need purifying. However, as an extra precaution, this water is chlorinated at the beginning of each camping season.¹

Water for drinking purposes is pumped from three wells. The first of these wells was donated in 1928 by Professor A. H. Parker and the faculty of Parker High School. This well is 90 feet deep and is located near the Rose Windham Hut. The second well was donated in 1937 by the County Teachers' Association of Jefferson County, of which Professor B. M. Montgomery was president. It is 106 feet deep and is located just outside the kitchen door. The third well was drilled in 1948 and paid for with money which was accumulated by the Girls' Service League. It is 131 feet deep and is located between Acipco Hut and Pine Crest.²

The camp boasts an improvised shower system. This consists of an enclosure made of up-ended six feet logs. A five-gallon sprinkler is fastened to the top of the logs. The water for the shower comes out of a fifty gallon can heated over an open fire near the enclosure.³

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Latrines.—There are eight deep-pit latrines scattered in groups of two's at convenient places over the camp site. They are kept sanitary and fly-proof by keeping the seats tightly covered, by using a chemical preparation, and by scrubbing the floors daily.¹

Outside each latrine are placed soap, paper towels, and a four gallon drum of water.²

Lighting facilities.—There is no modern facility for lighting the camp. Three huge kerosene lanterns hang from the ceiling of the dining hall, and a lighted lantern is hung at each latrine. Lanterns are also used for lighting the cabins.³

Kitchen.—The kitchen of Camp Fletcher is as modern and well equipped as it can be without the use of electricity or gas. A large range is used for cooking. Flour, lard and such foods are kept in metal containers in a large pantry. Meats and perishable foods are kept in an ice-box which holds six-hundred pounds of ice.⁴

Dining Room.—The dining-room is a spacious room, so built as to be used for other activities when necessary. It has low overhanging eaves, and the sides are made of weather-board high enough so that it is protected in rainy weather. This room has a capacity for seating 110 campers. Each table may be set to accommodate as many as ten campers at a single meal.⁵

Garbage Disposal.—Wire baskets are used as incinerators in disposing

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
of burnable garbage. Tin cans are flattened and buried.¹

Fire Prevention.—Modern fire extinguishers, buckets of sand and water, and a long pole at the end of which is attached a jute sack are placed near each hut to be used in case of fire.²

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
CHAPTER III
ADMINISTRATION

The machinery of administration is set up in all of its detail before the campers arrive at camp. The goal of those staff members responsible for carrying out the administration should be to have the operation so smooth that it never at any point overshadows the camp program or becomes so rigid that it limits the program. This kind of administration never "just happens," it is the result of careful planning, much unobtrusive hand work, and strong conviction on the part of all staff and committee members that the camp exists for the campers.

The plans for the first day of each encampment are made in full detail, so that when the campers arrive they feel welcome and know that their camping is to begin at once.1

The following criteria might be used by the administration in preparing for the camp's program:

Is a youth safe? Are the health requirements for campers, counselors, cooks and the whole personnel of the camp adequate? Has the camp adequate provisions to prevent or to care for possible illness and accidents? Is the physical environment and equipment adequate? Is the camp program aiding in developing hygienic habits of living? Does the camp enable the boy or girl to keep well?

Does the camp furnish favorable opportunity for developing, through satisfying practice, the equalities of a good citizen? Are the camps providing opportunities for initiative, obedience to authority?

Is courteous consideration of the rights and obligations of others a part of everyday living? Is there a kind of high joyous seriousness in the spirit of the camp? Are the counselors genuine? What kind of talk goes on in camp when campers and counselors are just talking? Is the program of activities well planned? Does the camp provide for individual differences of interests? Is there well-regulated freedom and attractive activity free from hurry, strain, worry and envy? Can the camper get satisfaction out of worthwhile activity well done, rather than by surpassing somebody? Does the camp provide new or supplementary outdoor experiences? Does the camper have new experiences with flowers, birds, bugs, trees, and open sky? Are these experiences guided enough but not too much? Do the campers develop a larger repertory of sports in which they can participate with increasing skill and satisfaction? Is the camper helped to get out of the 'dub' class and into some activity? Does the camp foster the mental and emotional attitude of seeking, knowing and understanding the beautiful? This beauty may be in generous, courteous, helpful acts, in music, dramatics, in the rising sun.

What is the spiritual attitude of the camp? Is it free from cynicism? Is there a reverence for the true, the beautiful and the good?

Is there serious guidance in helping the camper to think through the problems that confront him? Is the camp a happy place? Is there wholesome conradeship free from sentimentality? Is there one specific person in camp responsible for the camper, asleep or awake, and who is that person?

Using these criteria as the basis for judging the effectiveness of a camp program, this study will try to describe the program of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and show just how nearly it meets these criteria.

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher is sponsored by the Girls' Service League, Incorporated, which comprises fifty of the leading Negro men and women of Birmingham, Alabama. This body is governed by a Constitution and By-Laws, as follows:

Constitution

Section I. The Girls Service League, Incorporated, realizing the necessity of regulated operation of its camp, proposes the following Constitution and By-Laws for the purpose of maintaining the camp at its highest point of efficiency.

Section II. The camp shall be opened during camping season to all school children and adults of our group who may wish to take advantage of its accommodations for the purpose of picnics and camping.

Section III. The facilities of the camp shall be especially offered for the accommodations for club groups of both girls and boys who will follow the camp schedule that will be published each year by the camp director.

Section IV. Whenever the camp schedule will permit churches, Sunday schools and other organizational and institutional groups may give picnics at the camp provided these groups will consult the camp director far enough in advance to prohibit too much congestion on the grounds at one time.

Section V. Since the camp is owned and controlled by the Girls' Service League, Incorporated and is also a Community Chest Agency, the main purpose of the camp shall be to provide wholesome environment for the development of physical, moral, religious, and emotional well being of

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By-Laws

Article I. Name

Section I. The name of the camp shall always be 'Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher' in honor of its founder and organizer. And she shall be the camp director as long as she is active and after which time she shall be Camp Director Emeritus.

Article II. Special Days

Section I. Ample provisions are to be made for the celebration of the following days during each year:

a. Annual Camp Day..................A Sunday in April
b. Camp Opening Day..................June 1st
c. National Flag Day.................June 11th
d. Founders Day.......................June 22nd
e. City and County Principals Day in August
f. Visitors Day for White Friends in August.

Article III. Camp Fees

Section I. A regular camp fee will be charged for all campers.

Section II. Since the camp is a Community Chest Agency, reduction may be made in the weekly charge to underprivileged children sent out by the Community Chest or recommended by any other Chest agencies.

Section III. Board and lodging may be counted as payment in part of the salaries of the workers at the camp during camping seasons.

The planning of the camp program for the camping season is done by the Camp Committee in collaboration with the Camp Director and sponsoring agencies. The president of the League appoints different members to serve at various times on committees responsible for a special phase of the camp program. These committees are usually discharged as soon as the specified work on hand has been completed. This serves to guarantee that every member, at some time, will have charge of some piece of work which he is particularly equipped to do, thus being afforded an opportunity to get first hand information about the administration of the camp. While Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher

1Constitution and By-Laws of Girls' Service League, Incorporated, n.d.

2Ibid.
has its overall Camp Committee, each organization using the facilities at the camp brings with it its own camp committee, camp director, camp counselors, and program.

**Records.**—The Campers' records as permanently filed on the scene have not been studied over a period of years, nor have facilities been provided for making particular use of them. Each agency, however, keeps its own records, which are taken away at the close of its camping season.

**Health and safety measures.**—A room at Rose Windham Hut is used to isolate campers who become ill during their stay at Camp Fletcher. The matron is a registered nurse and visitation arrangements are made with a doctor nearby whose home is in Bessemer. The Campers and staff alike are required to present a certificate of recent physical examination before arrival at camp.

The water-front director is an expert swimmer, has been graduated from an aquatic school, and has her Red Cross Life Saving Certificate.

A qualified dietitian prepares the menu. At the head of each table is a counselor, who serves the meals and seeks to develop proper table manners.

The following serves as an example of the menu served at Camp Fletcher:

**Menu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rolls</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Sausage</td>
<td>Grits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Sauce</td>
<td>Coffee or Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dinner:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fricasseeed Chicken</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Vegetable Salad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans and Potatoes</td>
<td>Corn Bread</td>
<td>Iced Tea</td>
<td>Dessert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supper:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weiners</td>
<td>Mustard and Kraut</td>
<td>Potato Salad</td>
<td>Lemonade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Letter from Mildred Johnson, Field Director, Girl Scouts Council, Birmingham, Alabama, April 7, 1948.
Maintenance Staff.—This staff is furnished by Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and serves all agencies using the camp. The staff consists of the over-all director, the assistant director, the dietitian, the water-front director, nurse, cooks and caretaker.

Finances.—The regular fee at the camp is $7.00 per week for each camper. However, since this is a Community Chest Agency, reductions may be made in the weekly charge to underprivileged children referred by any other Chest Agency.
CHAPTER IV

AGENCIES USING CAMP PAULINE BRAY FLETCHER AND THEIR PROGRAMS

The agencies using Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher realize that group work is of the essence in all phases of camp life.

Slavson's chapter on "Group Work in Camp Life" expresses the ideals towards which the camp professes to strive.

Of particular importance to healthy character development is the group life in camp. Here, more than anywhere outside of the immediate family, the child has an opportunity for an intimate living situation with children and adults. He makes adaptations within himself so as to meet group requirements. He learns through necessity to curb himself in his indulgence. If he fails in this the group exerts pressures and imposes standards of behavior in a direct but natural way. Because of this, and because of the satisfactions he gets from a total camp situation, the child's aggressions and antagonisms can be redirected and sublimated in everyday work and living. He does not feel hemmed in. A good camp program gives each camper the satisfaction of achievement, recognition and status, as a result of which he adopts constructive ways of behaving and modifies his attitudes along socially acceptable patterns.

Democratic control of camp routines is a part of good camping. Camps can be training grounds for democratic participation, responsibility, and cooperation. Camping, being a combination of living and recreation, should not be too difficult or too involved.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the free camp life is the unrestricted communication among the campers and with the staff. In camp it is possible to have freedom of verbal expression without annoyance to adults and other campers. Summer camping is more than fresh air and sunshine. It balances children's organisms by giving them expression in areas that are ordinarily inhibited.

It widens horizons, for here they experience an altogether different type of environment as contrasted with city life. It provides experiences in social living and an education through group relationships. In these and other ways, character can be permanently affected.

Girl Scouts

The first social agency to use Camp Fletcher was the Girl Scouts.

Girl Scouting has, as its fundamental aim, the development of girls along physical, mental, emotional, moral, and spiritual lines, to the end that there may result not only personally enriched individuals, but also intelligently participating citizens in a democratic social order.

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This purpose is carried out for the most part by the use of small groups called troops. These troops use as meeting places natural centers of activity such as schools, churches, and housing projects. Leadership is supplied on a volunteer basis and usually found in the particular neighborhood in which the troop meets. Training of this leadership is the responsibility of the Girl Scout Staff. These training opportunities are provided at both local and national levels.  

The program peculiar to Girl Scouts is based on the natural needs and interests of girls aged seven to seventeen. Activities include homemaking, arts and crafts, community service, vocational exploration, out-of-door living, literature, and dramatics.  

The Negro Girl Scout organization of Alabama believes that camping is one of the most effective means of accomplishing its objectives. It therefore aims to provide an inexpensive type of camping for as many Girl Scouts as possible. In order to do this, it has developed five different types of Girl Scout camps and emphasizes simple outdoor living as a camping program.  

The camping program for the Girl Scouts of Alabama began the first week in June at Camp Fletcher.  

The Girl Scout Camp Committee functions as Fletcher's Camp Committee during the month of June when Girl Scouts use the camp. The committee opens camp, orders the food for most of the summer, inspects the site in pre-camp inspection, checks the equipment and recommends the replacements and repairs for each season. All this is done so that the camp may meet Girl Scout standards under which they must operate.  

The Girl Scout Camp Committee for 1947 consisted of five adult Girl Scouts. This committee had four sessions of two hours each in training for their job.  

The first week of the camping period, from June 4 to June 11, 1947, was used as Leadership Training Week. Twenty-five adult leaders from several southern communities enrolled in this course. They were trained by the local, regional, and national Girl Scout Staff, in procedure of the Girl Scout Camping Program.  

The camp period for the troops was from June 11 to July 1. Seventy-one

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1 Interview with Phyllis Dews, Field Director, Girl Scouts Council, Atlanta, Georgia, June 28, 1948.
2 Ibid.
3 Girl Scouts, _op. cit._, p. 17.
4 Letter from Mildred Johnson, _op. cit._, April 7, 1948.
girls enjoyed this camping experience. "A Court of Honor" composed of representatives from each unit, assisted in the planning of the program. The girls were divided into living units according to their ages, Girl Scout classification (Brownie, Girl Scouts and Senior Girl Scouts), and their interests. Each unit consisted of ten girls under a counselor who had been trained in the particular interest represented.

A Typical Day at Pauline Bray Fletcher's Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Rising whistle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15 - 6:45</td>
<td>Morning dip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45 - 7:30</td>
<td>Rooms cleaned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 - 8:30</td>
<td>Breakfast and cleaning of dining room and grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 10:00</td>
<td>Supervised handicraft, folk dancing or games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 11:00</td>
<td>Hiking and nature study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 2:00</td>
<td>Dinner, dish washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:00</td>
<td>Rest period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 - 4:00</td>
<td>Reading, story-telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 - 5:00</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 6:00</td>
<td>Sports, baseball, crochet, volley ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 - 7:00</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 - 9:00</td>
<td>Various programs: hiking with lanterns, dances, weiner roasts, camp fire, dramatics, variety shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Taps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religious Training Camp

From July 1 to July 14, the camp was used as a Religious Training Camp for young Negro teen-agers. The expense was defrayed by the Women's Missionary Union (white) and the Baptist Women's State Convention (Negro) of Alabama. During the second week, the "Crusaders," a group of boys. In no instance could a camper be a married man or woman.

During the 1947 camping season, 107 girls and 73 boys attended camp.

1 Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, *op. cit.*, March 6, 1948.
A printed folder of this group shows the following aim:

Our aim is to unite the young women of Baptist Churches in an enduring Missionary Enterprise through which they shall show forth the beauty of holiness.

'That in all things He might have the preeminence.' Col. 1:8.

One of their daily schedules reads as follows:

6:30. . . 'Say, time to open your eyes.'
7:00. . . Good Housekeeping
7:30. . . Morning Watch, 'Abiding in Him Through Prayer,'

Mary Frances Jennings, Anniston, Alabama.

8:00. . . Breakfast
9:00. . . Preparation through Study
1. 'Stewardship in the Life of Youth' . . Miss Brooks
2. 'Negro Baptists and Foreign Missions' . . Miss Maree Morse
3. 'Helping Others to Become Christians' . . Mrs. A. W. Wilson
4. 'What Baptists Believe'

10:00. . . Recreation
11:15. . . Let us Sing

Presiding, Mrs. Minnie Russ
From God's Word . . Beatrice Fuller, Athens, Georgia

Announcements
'Disciples in Africa' . . Mrs. Eugene Jordan, President,
Ruhama W.M.S.; Mrs. John Hall Jones Community Missions Chair-
man, Alabama W.M.U.

12:15. . . Prayer
1:00. . . Dinner

Afternoon

1:15. . . Rest and Quiet
2:45. . . Recreation . . Swimming, games, handwork
5:00. . . Discussion Groups
1. Choice of Life's Work . . Jean Stallworth,
Selma; Mrs. Annie L. Varner
2. Use of My Time . . Mary Johnson, Birmingham;
Miss Maree Morse
3. Volunteers for Definite Service . . Dorothy Turner,
Attalla, Alabama, Jewell Morrissette

6:00. . . Supper
7:00. . . Vespers . . 'I Would Be Pure.' Mrs. Alice Adams, presiding.
8:00. . . 'God's Gift to Me, My Gift to God' . . Mission Band Howard
College
9:00. . . Fun and Fellowship
10:00. . . Good Night All.

The girls were divided into groups according to their ages and achievements in missionary work. Their counselors were members of the Senior

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1Report of Baptist Young Woman's Camp, Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher,
Missionary Society and were selected by the Senior Missionary Group. They had been trained in the work of the Baptist Women State Convention and before coming to camp had received the following bulletin of instructions for camp procedures:

For Camp Counselors

We are happy to have you at camp. We trust your stay will be profitable and we thank you in advance for your fine spirit of cooperation. You have an unusual privilege of knowing and helping your girls personally. Encourage each girl to enter into the spirit of the camp. If you have any difficulties, talk with the camp hostess or camp director. They will assist you in any way possible.

1. Dinner each day will be at 6:00 p.m. Supper the first evening will be at 6:00. Be ready to go into the dining room early and select a table at which you will serve as the hostess during the entire time. If there are more counselors than tables, then two or three may sit at the same table. Girls may change tables as they desire.

2. See that the girls whom you are chaperoning get to all meetings on time. Quiet after light bell at night and until rising bell is necessary. A busy day requires rest. We are using an honor point card this year. Have girls mark their points at the end of each day.

3. No one is to leave the camp without permission from the hostess or director. No one will be allowed to leave the camp during sessions. When leaving at any time, a chaperone must go along.

4. Morning inspection of rooms will be an important event. First and second places will be recognized.

5. Listen carefully to announcements concerning dressing for swimming.

6. Carry purses and valuables with you. Do not leave them in room. Instruct your girls.

7. If a girl is sick — call the nurse — quick! — Mrs. Fletcher.

8. Do not come to meetings until your girls are all there. See that they are properly dressed — slacks and shorts for recreation only. At all white state camps girls wear dresses to all meetings. We have asked the girls to do so at Fletcher.

9. Encourage the girls to take notes. They will want to report on return home.

10. Let us pray for a great spiritual blessing during these days together.

11. Pray definitely for any who are not Christians. Tactfully try to win them.

12. Listen for announcements regarding counselor's meetings.

In the light of the foregoing program, it would seem that the camp program of this organization tends to be authoritarian and thus hardly in line with

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the best thinking and practices in the area of progressive camping.

Boys' Club

From July 14 to July 27 the Camp was used by the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, which is a member agency of Boys' Clubs of America.

The purpose of this club is to furnish recreation and religious training for boys. It offers a year-round program of club activities in the club house at 112 North 16th Street.

Six camp counselors for this group were chosen from the older group of club members. Two of the counselors were high school graduates, the others were high school students. The age of the campers ranged from nine to sixteen years.1

One hundred and ten boys attended the camp session of 1947. This session was divided into two periods, one week each. The director planned the program and took as much equipment as possible to camp so that camp-life would be set up along lines similar to the club program back in Birmingham. The director, also, guided the counselors and helped with the behavior problems of the boys while at camp. Behavior problems were dealt with through conferences, counseling, and the inevitable group pressure.2

A Typical Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6:30 - 7:45 a.m. | A. Rising  
B. Cleaning  
C. Setting-Up Exercise  
D. Wash Up  
E. Morning Prayer |
| 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. | A. Breakfast  
B. Announcements |
| 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. | A. Group Activities  
B. Free Period  
C. Handicraft |
| 11:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | A. Prepare for Swimming  
B. Swimming  
C. Free Period |

1 Interview with G. G. McGregor, Director, Boys' Club of Birmingham, Alabama, July 5, 1948.

2 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>A. Activity</th>
<th>B. Activity</th>
<th>C. Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00 - 2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 - 3:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 - 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Special Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 - 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 - 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Get Together</td>
<td>Games (Quiet)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Digging in</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
<td>Lights Out - All Quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A criticism against this program would be that the camping program should have been different from that which the agency operates in the city so that the children would have been given new experiences, which are impossible for them to enjoy within the city. The program should have been so planned as to have made use of the natural setting rather than to have imported equipment used back at the agency.

Another criticism against this program was too much planning for the boys instead of planning with the boys.

**U-H Club**

July 28, 29, and 30, 1947 the camp was used by the U-H club, which was a group of thirty-one campers between the ages of fourteen and twenty years, for a conference on agriculture. The counselors for this group were two men and one woman, who were agricultural experts and county demonstrators. These conferences included lectures and round table discussions on types of farm improvements such as soil conservation, planting of seeds, and rotation of crops.2

There is a dearth of material on this group because the director of the U-H Club could not be contacted.

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1 Ibid.
2 Interview with Nora Martin, Matron, Camp Fletcher, July 4, 1948.
Y-Teens

The Y-Teen group is the younger group of the Young Women's Christian Association, which includes girls aged twelve through eighteen.

The educational aim of the camp program is for the joyous freedom of the campers; that the chief consideration is their health, of body, mind and spirit; and that they are encouraged to think, to judge, and to make plans and carry them out. The camp committee is seeking to establish a camp where girls may experience 'joyous freedom' and at the same time be given opportunity 'to judge, make plans, and carry them out,' it will realize that the campers must have the chance to think through, unhampered by traditional rules and regulation, all the problems that have to do with living together.

In order that this might be accomplished, activities such as dramatics, crafts, music, health, religious education and recreation are planned by the Y.W.C.A. camp committee to be carried out by the counselors.

From August 4 to August 11, 1947, there were sixty-two campers from Birmingham, Florence, and Sheffield, ranging in age from eleven to eighteen years, and grouped according to their interests and ages.

There were four counselors for this group. These counselors worked with the girls and camp committee in helping to formulate their program, which was planned in advance of the camping season.

Y-Teen Daily Camp Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Get up morning exercise, clean cabins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 - 9:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:30</td>
<td>Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>Clean latrines, cabins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 - 11:00</td>
<td>Inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 1:00</td>
<td>Program activities handicraft, swimming, religious education, dramatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:00</td>
<td>Rest Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 - 5:00</td>
<td>Water front activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 Interview with Julia Vann, Branch Secretary, Y.W.C.A., Birmingham, Alabama, July 14, 1948.

1 Ibid.
5:00 - 6:00. . . . . . . Supper
7:00 - 8:30. . . . . . . Night program—pajama party, talent night, vespers, world-fellowship, stunt night, weiner roast, Sunday Vespers.¹

Advanced planning is good, but the program should be flexible enough so that changes can be made to meet the needs and interest of the campers at a particular time.

Miscellaneous Camp Period

From August 11, to August 18, 1947, Camp Fletcher functioned as a camp for "miscellaneous campers," consisting of individual families who come to the camp to spend the week in the fresh air and quiet of the woods. During this period also, there were picnic groups sponsored by several churches and clubs of Birmingham.

There was no record of the number who attended the picnics, but there were thirty-three campers who stayed for the week.²

Health requirements for admittance of the campers who spent the week were the same as when the organized groups attended, and a day's schedule was so arranged by the staff in consultation with the campers as to meet the interests of the campers.³

Counselors for this group consisted of teachers (of Birmingham) and some of the older campers.⁴

Southeastern Bible School

August 18-25, 1947, the camp was used by the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel as the Southeastern Bible School for boys and girls aged eight to eighteen years. This group was first organized in 1938. Its avowed purpose

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
was the building of character through instruction in the Bible.  

The enrollment at camp for the 1947 season was twenty-six girls and nineteen boys, who were divided into groups according to ages, sex, and achievements.

Counselors for the groups were three women and one man, who were trained by the organization to carry out its aims and ideals.

A Day At Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Rise and dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Morning Bible reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Clean dining hall, cabins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Morning assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Group Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Rest hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>Crafts or surprise hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Evening service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Go to cabins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Prayer time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This program like the program of the "Religious Training" camp is not in line with modern camp objectives, it must be borne in mind that Camp Fletcher makes its facilities available to different types of organizations—social as well as religious—and that these organizations have set up their own objectives in line with their stated purposes and functions.

1 Interview with William Fudolph, Director of the Bible Training School, Birmingham, Alabama, July 4, 1947.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher tried to meet established standards as to site, sanitation, program, health and safety. Likewise, principles of group work were kept conscientiously in sight at least by the over-all camp directorate. However, the implementation of these principles could hardly be realized independent of the various agencies utilizing the camp's facilities. Accordingly, it was found in practice that the soundness of the program at a given moment varied with the soundness of the group work philosophy of the utilizing agency.

Organized camping as we know it today is a relatively modern character building agency which received its impetus with the coming of the automobile and better roads.

Upon recognizing the needs for a camp site where the Negro Youth of Alabama might enjoy the sunshine and fresh air so necessary for health and happiness, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, in 1919, became interested in establishing a camp and encouraged the nurses of Birmingham to incorporate for this purpose under the name of the Girls' Service League.

Camp Fletcher is twelve miles southeast of Bessemer, Alabama. Here, camp activities are carried on for the benefit of organized groups serving the youth of Alabama.

Group work agencies that utilized the facilities of the camp during 1917 were (1) the Girl Scouts, (2) the Baptist Women's State Convention jointly with the State Missionary Union (white) (sponsoring a Religious Training Camp for Negro boys and girls), (3) the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, (4) the U-H Club, (5) the Young Women's Christian Association (sponsoring a Y-Teen camp), and (6) the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel (sponsoring the Southeastern Bible School).
Each of these organizations had its own program and professional staff who carried out the purpose of the sponsors. However, they all had in common such professed aims as the building of character, making provision for the health of mind, body and spirit, and teaching the democratic way of life.

As has already been indicated, the program was not in every instance in accord with established group work objectives.

The first week of the camping period, starting June 4, was used by the Negro Girl Scouts of Alabama as Leadership Training Week. Twenty-five adult leaders from several southern communities enrolled in this course. They were trained by representatives from the local, regional, and national Girl Scout Staff in procedures of the Girl Scout Camping Program.

The camp period for the various Girl Scout troops was from June 11 to July 1. Seventy-one girls enjoyed this camping experience. A "Court of Honor," composed of representatives from each unit, planned the program, which was based on the natural needs and interests of girls aged seven to seventeen.

From July 1 to July 14, the camp was used as a Religious Training Camp for Negro youth. During this period 107 girls and 73 boys attended camp. The organizations sponsoring this session used Camp Fletcher to teach the principles of Baptist Missionary Work.

From July 14 to July 27, the camp was used by the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, which is a member agency of the Boys' Clubs of America. During this period, 110 boys attended the camp session, which was divided into two periods of one week each. This program was planned by the director and set up to resemble the club house in the city. This is hardly in keeping with modern trends in camping, which are to allow the campers to help plan their own program and make the program as different from the one in the city as possible.

July 28, 29, and 30, the camp was used by the Young Women's Christian Association for their Y-Teen group. There were sixty-two campers, ranging in
age from eleven to eighteen years, and grouped according to their interests and ages. The program for this group was planned in advance of the camping season by the Y.W.C.A. Camp Committee, the camp counselors, and the campers.

From August 11 to August 18, the camp was used for Miscellaneous Campers and picnic groups. The days' schedules were so arranged by the staff in consultation with the campers as to meet the interests of the groups.

From August 18 to August 25, the camp was used by the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel as the Southeastern Bible School, for boys and girls aged eight to eighteen years. In this group there were twenty-six girls and nineteen boys, who were divided into groups according to their ages, sex, and achievements. This organization, like the organizations sponsoring the Religious Training Camp, used Camp Fletcher to teach its religious beliefs.

Camp Fletcher served over 800 campers during the year of 1947.
APPENDIX A

Map of Camp Fletcher
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Give name of sponsoring agency

2. What is the purpose of the agency?

3. Give the following qualifications of the clientele served:
   Age
   Sex
   History

4. What are your Health Requirements?

5. Give the following information about your counselors:
   Are they trained counselors?
   Give their qualification
   How many campers per counselor?
   How do counselors report on campers?

6. Give the following information about your camp committee:
   How is the camp committee chosen?
   When does it meet?
   What are its duties

7. To what extent do campers participate in the program?

8. What living arrangements do you have at camp?

9. Give the average number of campers per week.

10. Enclose a copy of the program of a typical day at camp.

11. Enclose a copy of a menu for a day.

12. Do you keep case records of each camper? If so, are they available?

13. What behavior controls, rules or restrictions have you?

14. What agency follow-up between camp services have you?
APPENDIX G

A Visit of the Ku Klux Klan

Plans had been made for a bigger and better camping season for 1948 than was enjoyed in 1947. The season had opened and the agencies were preparing for their periods with much enthusiasm when on the night of June 10, 1948 a large number of automobiles bearing men dressed in the robes of the Ku Klux Klan visited the camp and ordered two white women instructors for the Girl Scout Leadership Training course to leave within twenty-four hours.

Headlines of the Birmingham News of Saturday, June 12, 1948 reported:

Hooded Band Reported Warning Instructors At Girl Scout Camp
White Women Tell of Orders to Leave Town
Pair Were Teaching Young Negro Leaders in Unit at Bessemer

An investigation was being conducted by county officers today of reports that two white women instructors were roused from their beds at a Negro Girl Scout Camp near Bessemer Thursday night by a band of robed hooded men. The men reportedly ordered the two women, Miss Katrine Nickels, 30, Birmingham, and Miss Elizabeth Ijams, 39, Knoxville, Tenn., to get out in 24 hours.

Last night Chief Deputy Sheriff Clyde Morris of the Bessemer Cutoff said his office would investigate the case thoroughly and vigorously.

The Chief Deputy said he talked this morning with some Negro residents in the camp vicinity, but 'they didn't know anything except that some cars had shown up Thursday night.' The Chief Deputy said he asked if anybody took down the license number of any of the autos. The reply was 'No sir, we didn't want to take down anything.'

Chief Morris said the camp was closed and he didn't see much possibility of developing any additional information although he was still investigating and intended to keep on trying to find who participated in the disturbance.

Howard Sullinger, circuit solicitor for the Bessemer Cutoff, said last night he was informed that an estimated 100 men wearing robes and hoods arrived at the camp, known as Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher.

Solicitor Sullinger said he had some men looking into the case today. He said he talked with Miss Nickels last night.

Possibility was seen that the federal government might enter the case. Sources close to the U. S. district attorney's office here said the federal statute relating to conspiracy to deprive a citizen of civil rights appeared to be involved in the incident.

Six or eight men entered the tent where the two women were sleeping and aroused them, they said. A spokesman for the hooded intruders said it was 'not proper' for white women to be within boundaries of a camp with Negro women. After searching their baggage and brocketbooks, the women said, the men told them to get out within 24 hours. They were not otherwise molested.

The course was being held under the auspices of the Memphis Regional Girl Scout Office. They were unaware of the incident until told of it late yesterday when a training was canceled.

As the defenseless women were roused from their beds by flash lights pointed at them by the hooded intruders, one of the robed men asked:
"Where's your card?"

Miss Ijams replied: 'I don't have that kind of a card.'

Apparently the question was implying the holding of a Communist Party Card.

'Don't you think you are going back on your rearing?' another man asked Miss Nickel.

'No, I don't,' she replied.

The men ransacked the girls' pocketbooks and baggage, finally took their names off the drivers' licenses in their pocketbooks.

Miss Nickels said she thought the men were in the tents about fifteen minutes. No one touched her or Miss Ijams, she said.

About 21 young Negro women were attending a special course at the camp which opened June 2. They were unaware of the incident until told of it late yesterday, when a training course was cancelled. 1

Mrs. L. E. Grothegan, Girl Scout Commissioner of Jefferson County, made the following comment:

The students in this group were all young Negro women being trained to act as camp directors and counselors for Negro Girl Scout camps throughout the South.

It is necessary to have white instructors because there are as yet no Negro workers qualified to act as instructors in this region. However, the white instructors were living in quarters to themselves, fully 100 yards from quarters of Negro groups. We feel that they were not violating southern principles and deplore this lawlessness against a group of people who were trying to help train Negro leaders to work within their own group.2

Many influential persons and organizations have been loud in their denunciation of the actions taken by this group. Among them:

The Council of Girl Scouts of Jefferson County, Inc., demanded that Sheriff Holt A. McDowell investigate the incident. The council also demanded that constituted authorities furnish protection of the Girl Scout training program in the future. 3

Addressing the state convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Birmingham, Speaker Beck denounced the group's action as un-American and as a blow from within against our way of life.

As a result of Speaker Beck's address, a resolution urging cooperation by all V. F. W. posts with law enforcement officers in the arrest and conviction of the guilty persons was drawn for action today. 4

1 The Birmingham News (Saturday, June 12, 1943).
2 The Birmingham News-Age Herald (Sunday, June 13, 1943).
3 The Birmingham News (June 14, 1943).
4 The Birmingham Age-Herald (June 15, 1943).
Other groups and individuals who drew up resolutions were the Birmingham Methodist Pastors Association, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, the Community Chest, and the Young Men's Business Club. Mrs. Paul Rittenhouse, New York, National Girl Scout Director, appealed to United States Attorney Tom Clark, that the members of the Masked and white-robed group be identified and brought to justice. Chief Morris said that they were investigating but to date nothing has been found out.¹

As a result of this incident, the Girl Scouts cancelled its camping period, and the number of campers for the Religious Training period was greatly decreased because parents feared that the children would not be protected. In spite of this incident, sixty-two campers of the Religious Training groups have enjoyed a week there. The directors are hoping to continue the program through the summer without any further trouble.

¹Ibid.
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