

# Philmont Scout Ranch Helps Boys Grow Up

On the High Plains and Piny Peaks of New Mexico, Explorer Groups Meet the Tests of Trail and Saddle and of Youthful Fellowship

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National Geographic Magazine Staff

*With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author*

**T**OUGH as rawhide and quick as mountain cats, the scouts and pioneer explorers of the old West won fame as guides and guardians of the covered-wagon trails. Many of these saddle-bred frontiersmen led caravans through the dust of the Santa Fe Trail as it skirts the peaks and mesas of northeastern New Mexico, where the Great Plains break like a golden wave against the Rocky Mountains.

Today, more than a century later, scouts and explorers in ever greater numbers range this same spacious and rugged area—Explorers of the Boy Scouts of America, who camp, hike, and ride, learn the ways of outdoor living, and relish the zest of outdoor fun on the 127,000 acres of Philmont Scout Ranch.

## An Empire for the Nation's Youth

Lying along the Santa Fe Trail and nurturing the vigorous traditions of that long-abandoned track, Philmont is the largest camp of its kind in the world (map, page 405).

When I went West last summer to spend three weeks with Philmont's Explorers in camp and on the trail, I learned of the happy stroke of fortune by which the Boy Scouts fell heir to this outdoor empire.

In 1922-23 Mr. Waite Phillips, developer of oil properties in the West, bought a third of a million acres in the vicinity of Cimarron, New Mexico, for a cattle ranch. Through the mountainous back country he strung a chain of fishing and hunting camps for himself and his guests.

Later, recognizing scouting as an outstanding boon to the youth of America, Mr. Phillips in two gifts—in 1938 and 1941—gave more than a third of his broad domain to the Boy Scouts. The balance, mostly rangeland, he sold.

As an endowment to help run the ranch Mr. Phillips in 1941 also presented the Philtower Building in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The "Phil" in Philmont and Philtower is, of course, the first syllable of Phillips.

The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America promptly set aside the New Mexico windfall as the national camping area for Explorers, who are the oldest group of Scouts, youths between 14 and 18.

Since 1938 nearly 75,000 boys and young men have profited from Philmont's training-by-doing programs. At the same time they have enjoyed a rare experience of western high adventure.

Philmont remains even today an operating ranch, with 1,000 Hereford cattle, and some 1,100 acres of cultivated land under irrigation.

But most of the property is lofty and rough—a wild land of mountain and mesa, here stark and arid, there lush and verdant with moss-draped evergreen forests, banks of fern, and dense brush cover.

Cold brawling streams lace the hills, and the air is aromatic with sage and pine. Unsullied skies arch high and blue in the still mornings and mount black turbulent thunderheads in dramatic panoply during the windy afternoons.

Summer storms send flash floods racing down streams in the thinly vegetated northern sector of the ranch. Of Ponil Creek I heard a Scout say, "After a rain the crick gets so silted up the fish swim backwards to keep the mud out of their eyes."

## To Reach Hudson Bay, Climb a Mile

Philmont's western boundary follows the backbone of the Cimarron and Agua Fria Mountains, offshoots of the Sangre de Cristo range. Here Clear Creek Mountain, highest on the ranch, humps up to 11,600 feet.

"You can walk out of Camping Headquarters in the morning," Felix Knauth, a Philmont program counselor, told me, "and reach the subarctic regions by late afternoon. You simply go a mile up instead of thousands of miles north. Clear Creek Mountain's plant and animal life are similar to Hudson Bay's."

On almost any summer day as many as



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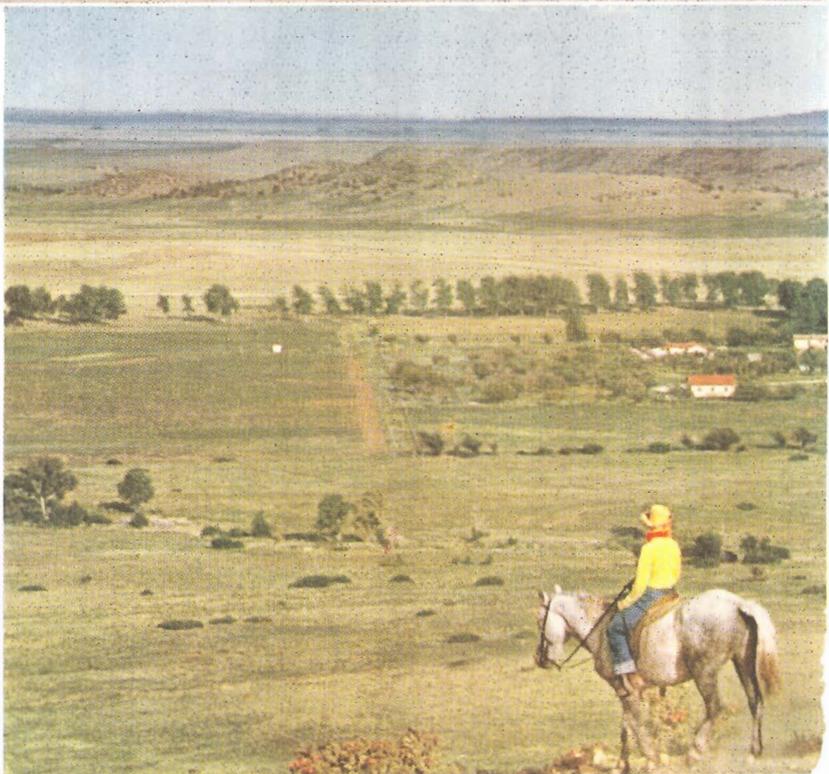
### "Welcome to Philmont!" Boy Scouts Enter a Gateway to Adventure

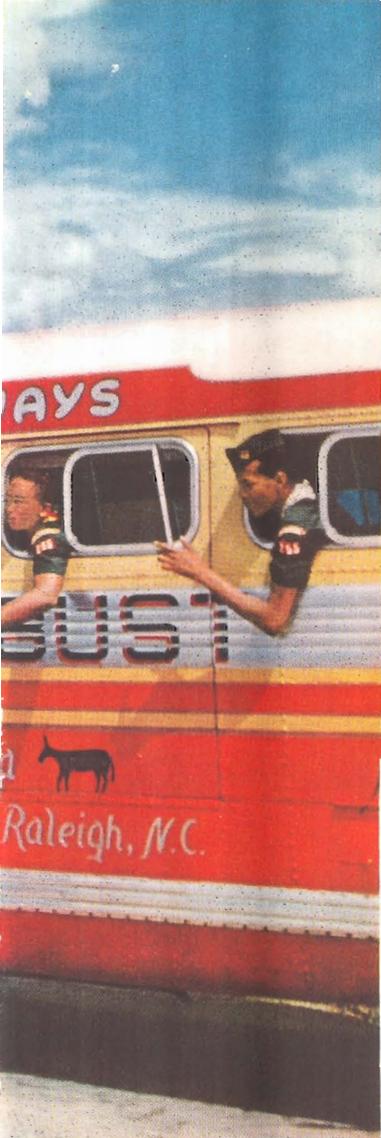
Philmont Scout Ranch, nestled in the Rockies near Cimarron, New Mexico, is a boy's dream of the Wild West come true.

Its eastern fringe cut by the historic Santa Fe Trail, the 127,000-acre ranch is rich in the lore of Indians, conquistadors, and frontiersmen. Buffalo, elk, and deer roam the plains. Mountain lions prowl lonely canyons. Trout abound in crystal streams.

Nearly 8,000 Explorer Scouts, aged 14 to 18, roll in to this largest Scout camp in the world each summer from all parts of the Nation. Hiking, riding, and sleeping under the stars, they taste the thrill of outdoor living. Cost for a 12-day stay is \$38.

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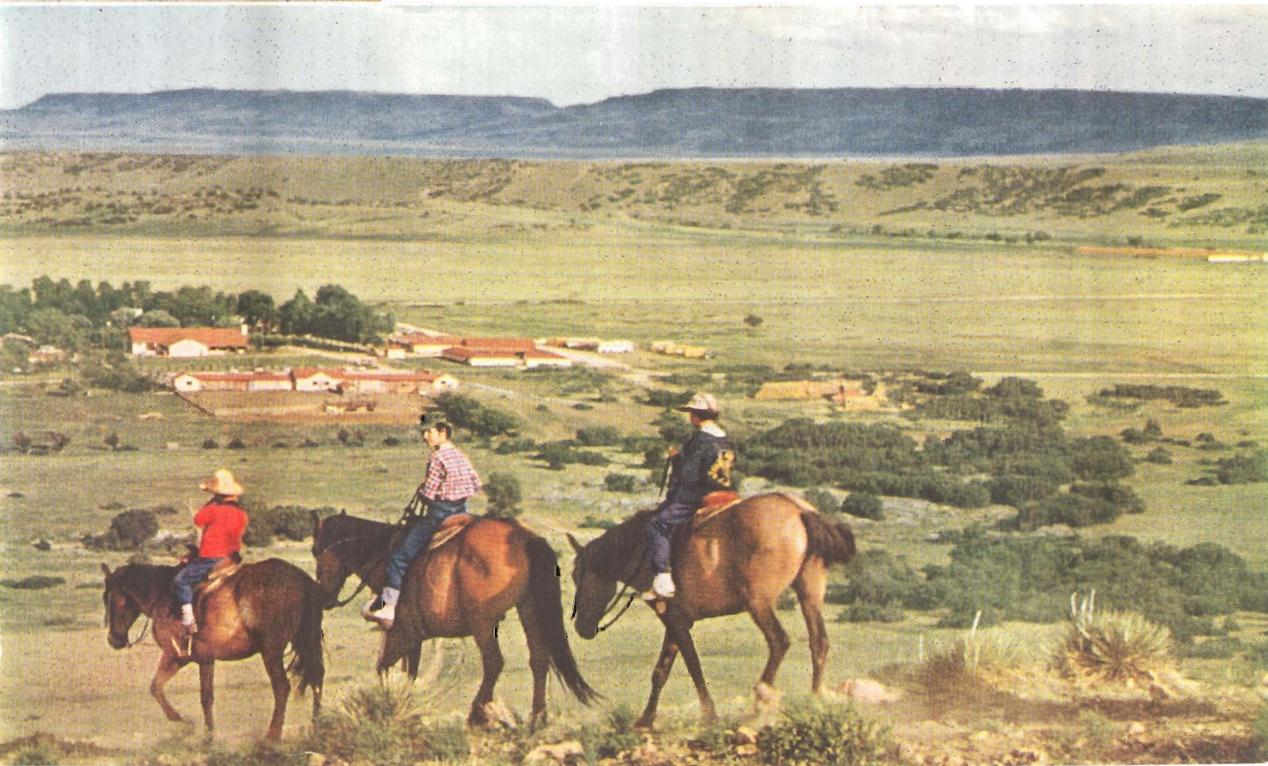
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#### ↑ European "Cowboys" Saddle Up for a 5-Day, 80-mile Trip

Guests of the Boy Scouts of America, 16 Scouts from eight European countries camped at Philmont in July, 1955. Eager to be taken for western wranglers, they adopted blue jeans and wide-brimmed hats. Here Klaus Weinert (left), a Senior Scout from Germany, swaps impressions with Spyros Amourgis, a Greek Sea Scout.

↓ Philmont, a vacation mecca for Scouts, is also an operating ranch with some 1,000 Hereford cattle, 300 saddle horses, 250 burros, and more than 1,100 acres under cultivation. It takes its name from donor Waite Phillips, an Oklahoma oilman.

Wives and daughters of Scout leaders make up this riding party. Cottonwoods and grasslands flank the Camping Headquarters, a onetime ranch house and its outbuildings. Urraca Mesa rises across the valley.



1,800 to 2,000 boys and leaders may be scattered throughout the ranch, populating a network of trails and camps that blend unobtrusively into the rumpled landscape.

Last year Philmont received 7,900 Explorers, the largest season's total yet. From the National Capital Area Council of Washington, D. C., alone came 231 boys, more than from any other single council in the United States. To accommodate this legion of Explorers, more than 1,000 tents are erected in June and struck in September.

### Tenderfeet Whistle for Long-eared Bellhops

Philmont maintains the largest remuda of saddle horses—nearly 300—of any ranch in New Mexico. And a pack string of 250 burros (locally, "Rocky Mountain canaries") carries the duffel on many trips.

Such facilities give some lads the wrong idea. Jack Rhea, director of camping, frequently has had to disabuse boys of the mistaken notion that Philmont offers resort-type services.

"Why, some of these fellows," he says, "seem to think we're running a chain of canvas motels with long-eared bellhops galloping back and forth between."

The morning after I reached Philmont I stood in the sun-baked parking area and watched the buses roll into Camping Headquarters. The big highway Pullmans, silver, red, and blue, came in from New York and California, from Georgia and Idaho, from Mississippi and Minnesota. Out of them tumbled excited boys, bowed under bedrolls and pack sacks (page 400).

The buses unloaded Explorer groups of 10 to 35 boys from Scout councils in every section of the United States. Each busload was shepherded by two or three adult leaders: Scoutmasters or simply men interested enough in youth to sign up as Explorer advisors.

Perhaps a little shy at first, the boys of different groups quickly became acquainted—white and colored, Chinese and German, Spanish and Scottish, *Mayflower* descendants and first-generation immigrants. Working and playing together, and imbued with the common purpose of living up to the Scout oath and law, the boys would quickly overcome barriers of false distinction. At Philmont the emphasis is on what a boy is and does.

Any Explorer who can meet the basic requirements of health and adaptability can sign up with his local council for a Philmont

trip. The cost is nominal; in the past it has averaged one to three dollars a day, depending on the schedule selected. This year each 12-day program unit cost \$38. That sum paid all expenses except personal equipment and transportation to and from the ranch.

Even from most points on the east coast \$150 paid an Explorer's round-trip bus fare, all his fees at Philmont, and left a few dollars for souvenirs and gifts.

At Camping Headquarters or Carson-Maxwell Base Camp, each newly arrived group gets a medical recheck and visits the quartermaster to draw tentage and other trail gear. Then they board a bus for the short haul to whichever base camp is the jump-off point for their chosen Philmont adventure.

Newcomers receive primary instruction in axmanship, foot care, fire building, and Dutch oven cooking; in map and compass, burro loading, throwing the diamond hitch, and back-packing (opposite). At last the group is knit and ready for the hills.

Before riders set out from the corrals, however, veteran wranglers explain how to saddle, mount, and control a horse, to some city-bred boys a creature familiar only from television and movie screens.

### How to Tell a Horse's North End

"Always walk round the north end of a horse," I heard John Stokes, the head wrangler, say. "And ef yuh don't know which the north end is, jist remember it's allus the end futherest away from them hair-trigger hind laigs."

While waiting to move out from Camping Headquarters, or at the end of trail trips, boys frequently must spend a night or two in the hollow-square adobe lean-tos called Rocky Mountain shelters.

I watched a group from Ohio flop down on the double-deck bunks (each shelter holds 50 of them) and lie silent a few minutes. The place sized up, the youths eased into the typical dialogue of away-from-home teenagers: a curious blend of insult, bragging, experimental man-talk, comic-book slang, and loyal tribute to mom and pop.

Standing in shadow, talking to their leader, I overheard two boys sprawled on a near-by bunk playing a game that started with one or the other giving clues to an imaginary identity and ending up with the question, "Who am I?"

After they had been successfully spotted



**“Keep It Light and Pack It Tight. You’re the One Who’s Going to Carry It, Brother”**

A compact back-pack holds 18 to 20 pounds. Felix Knauth, Philmont program counselor, gives parting advice to these trail-bound Scouts. This year uniforms will replace informal garb on the trail.



### Hay Rewards Philmont's Hard-working Burros at Trail's End

in turn as Ted Williams and John Wayne, one boy began a new round, particularizing: "I'm five foot two, a redhead, weigh 112 pounds, stretch the tape at 36, 23, 34, and have gray eyes and dimples. Who am I?"

"Who cares?" came back the other with a sigh. "Kiss me."

With 81 miles of main trail, 23 trail camps, and hundreds of miles of side paths, the trips that consume most of an Explorer's time at Philmont offer varied experiences, afoot and on horseback. But everywhere is the same intimacy with the great outdoors, the same challenge of teamwork, and the same revelation of nature's big and little wonders.

Any hour of any day can be memorable where new trees and flowers and animals are continually discovered.

Philmont maintains a herd of pronghorn antelope that share pasture with 50 shaggy,

broad-shouldered buffalo (American bison). Mountain lion and bear lurk in the hills. Wild turkey and grouse abound. Beavers build dams, and rainbow trout swirl saucily in many streams.

But it is the mule deer that catch every eye; they graze as thick as cows when the light of dawn or dusk slants across the meadows. The Philmont census counts 3,000; near some camps the deer are almost tame enough to chuck under the chin.

At Ponil Base Camp one evening a score of boys and wranglers spread out across a hillside to drive several runaway burros down to the corral. When at last the animals were rounded up, there were seven burros—and five deer.

The long list of lesser mammals found on the ranch includes nine species of squirrels, a dozen of mice, and 16 of bats. No one

Explorer, of course, is likely to see more than a fraction of these creatures, or of the 29 different snakes and 177 birds known to frequent this wildlife paradise.

Philmont's buffalo herd, apart from its value as a picturesque reminder of the old days, serves a practical purpose, too. One or two buffalo are killed each week to furnish steaks for banquets, festive occasions that climax the Philmont experience for certain Explorer groups.

Jack Rhea, when new at the ranch, rode along one day with Bob Lee, the staff buffalo hunter, as he drove his pickup truck into the pasture to "crop" one of the herd.

Bob pushed his truck among the burly animals, which always come a-running because he baits them to draw them in. He himself stayed behind the wheel to let the buffalo, which are dangerous because unpredictable, get used to the human intruders.

But Jack jumped out and found a big bull so close that he could almost reach out and stroke his beard. Seeing some menace in the animal's cold and steady stare, Jack called out, "Say, Bob, is this buffalo safe?"

"He's a durned sight safer than you are!" Bob replied.

At Philmont history speaks to anyone who listens with even half an ear.

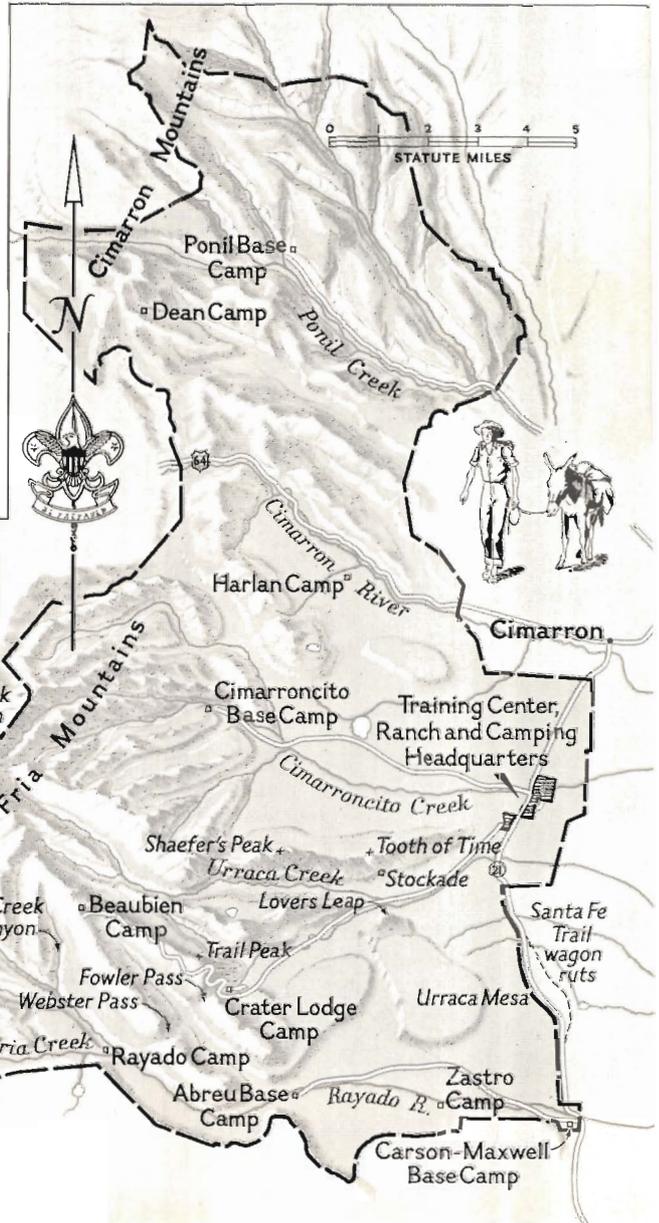
At the Carson-Maxwell Base Camp, in the southeast corner of the ranch, I visited two landmarks that Explorers and casual visitors continually seek out: the old homes of pioneer mountain man Lucien B. Maxwell and

of that hero of so many boyhoods, the frontier scout and guide, trapper, trader, and marksman, Christopher ("Kit") Carson.

Early last century the Mexican Government awarded two fur traders, Charles Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda, a vast land grant that included all of present-day Philmont. Maxwell married one of the Beaubien daughters and eventually came into possession of the land grant.

About 1849 he and Kit Carson built homes where the Santa Fe Trail crossed the Rayado River, established a trading post there, and took up farming.

After this part of the Southwest became a territory of the United States in 1850, surveyors and land-grant recorders rode in to



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Drawn by Gilbert H. Emerson and Victor J. Kelley





check the ownership of Maxwell's property.

The men asked Maxwell how much land he had.

"Well, I have the old Beaubien-Miranda grant," Mr. Maxwell replied, as the story has it, "which was supposed to be 96,000 acres, according to the old Spanish records, but I know I have more land than that. If you want to put me down for a couple of hundred thousand acres, that should be pretty close to it."

When a survey team finally staked out the Maxwell land grant in detail, they found it measured more than 1,714,000 acres. From that time on Lucien Maxwell was called the Baron of the Old West.

Of the home that Maxwell built on the Rayado, two wings remain. Their wide porches and yellow adobe walls recall the gracious era when riders from all over the West found hospitable refuge at this ranch.

#### Kit Carson Slept Here

Kit Carson's home is an adobe building of the Spanish type, the outfacing walls almost devoid of openings, but with many thickset windows looking inward on the flower-bright patio. A loopholed watchtower rises at one corner.

Today's visitors find Carson's home intact, but except for one portion it is a restoration faithfully executed in 1949 (a century after its original construction) by the Boy Scouts of America. Groups of Explorers helped, even to making adobe brick.

Men who rode with Kit Carson declared that he never let himself be seen in the glare of a campfire. The only time he could be picked out of the shadows was when he lit his pipe. Indians kept their distance from Carson, who was a dead shot and the only white man they knew who, riding at full speed, could reach down and pick a silver dollar off the ground.

Carson's home is now a museum. The big double bed, bought for Carson and his third wife, proved too luxurious for a man of his Spartan tastes. He allegedly slept in it only twice, then moved to a hard adobe couch in the corner, which he spread with buffalo robes.

I saw, hung on a wall, Carson's ramrod-type rifle. Into the butt and forestock Kit, according to legend, stuck a brass tack for every man, white or Indian, he killed. I counted 87 tacks.

Other relics included a 16-pound hand

pressing iron. Then there was a curled-tip branding iron called a "running iron," or "rustler's delight." It was used by cattle thieves to alter brands on stolen cattle; a man caught possessing one of these pieces of hardware was likely to be hanged at once, and no questions asked.

By good luck, my time at Philmont coincided with the visit of a delegation of European Senior Scouts. This was the continuation of an annual transatlantic exchange of selected older Scouts (page 401).

Two boys had come from each of eight countries—Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Great Britain, Sweden, Germany, and Finland. The Senior leader was Robert S. Thomas from England.

Bob Thomas pointed up the difficulties they faced in adapting to the States by telling a story on himself.

Soon after he reached New Mexico, he said, he was drawn into a conversation, completely puzzling to him, in which the central subject was some person or creature identified by two low-pitched syllables somewhat explosively issued through pursed lips.

He never had heard the word before, but at last he narrowed it down to something that sounded like "burro," but it still was some time before he grasped what the talk was all about.

The other foreign Scout leader, Edouard Mazé from France, described the group's Americanization: "Las' night, some of the leaders laid on for us real United States food—hot tamales, watermelon, and Coca-Cola."

One of the Greek boys, Spyros Amourgis, said to me, "Today we 'av—what you call eet?—a 'nose-bag' lawunch: meat from a tin, bread, cheese, and choc-o-late bars."

#### European Scouts "Hit the Leather"

The boys were eager to be mistaken for cowboys. Many wore wide-brimmed hats, blue jeans, and loud shirts. They all spoke English and were not averse to displaying their special talents: Kilted troop leader William Donald of Aberdeen, Scotland, was the group's whipcracking song master and its most dashing dancer. Lyly Teppo of Finland played the piano with a professional flourish. Each one was a colorful, alert, and friendly junior ambassador from his homeland.

It was with the foreign Scouts that I first explored the back country of Philmont. We rode a truck to Beaubien Camp, which is



### "Watch That Saw—It's Buckling!" Scouts Turned Lumberjacks Fell a Diseased Pine

Campers learn modern methods of conservation. Some of these Scouts are delegates from Europe. The boy at left wields a crosscut saw for the first time. "Don't push, just pull," his partner urges.

cradled in a grassy hollow fenced with evergreens high in the rugged southwest sector of the ranch.

When we "hit the leather," Jack Rhea was mounted on Doughbelly. Ray Bryan, director of Philmont properties, rode Hungry. Ed Mazé sat astride Red Cap, Bob Thomas straddled Little Beaver, and I perched precariously on Farm Colt, which fortunately turned out to be a very docile beast. I had not been on a horse for 18 years.

We stumbled and slipped down wet Apache Creek canyon to Rayado Camp and a hot lunch. Afternoon sunlight filtered through the aspens along the rippling Rayado River as we left the valley for the steep climb to Webster and Fowler Passes.

The foreign Scouts let loose with familiar American songs that echoed with strange accents from the wooded heights. "Dah-vee, Dah-vee Craw-kit, keeng of de wa-a-ld frawnteer!" was followed with gay abandon and not too scrupulous adherence to the original by "The eyes of Ta-ax-as are abo-o-ve you, all de livelong da-ay...."

Our little cavalcade pitched steeply downhill over the shoulder of Trail Peak to Crater Lodge Camp beside its round blue pond. As evening came on, five, seven, a dozen deer emerged from cover, cautiously drifting down to slake their thirst.

The lads from overseas pulled up at Crater for the night; the rest of us clopped on down between Urraca Mesa and Shaefer's Peak, past the vertical cliff of Lovers Leap to Philmont's best-known landmark, the white shaft of the Tooth of Time (page 415).

At the foot of this gleaming crag lies the camp called the Stockade. I had heard Francis ("Ben") Bennett, in charge there, rout out his campers early one morning with this jovial bellow:

"Okay, you cactus cowboys, take these kitchen brushes and run up there and scrub the Tooth of Time. Grab up a bucket of Tide for toothpaste!"

Back at Camping Headquarters and pried loose from Farm Colt, I had for several hours a very professional, stiff-jointed, bowlegged cowboy swagger. But by morning, fortu-



nately, my running gear had sprung back into amateur position.

At the nightly campfires, even along the roughest trails, wherever boys feel the need for companionship, song is the Explorer's common denominator.

Staying at Beaubien, I went to my tent one night while the glow from the hot embers of several fires still tinted the dark trees. A soft breeze fanned the loose tent flaps, and desultory snatches of song hung on the night air as I drowsed off:

We're tenting tonight on the old campground,  
Give us a song to cheer  
Our weary hearts, a song of home  
And friends we love so dear...

Muffled by distance came the response of another outfit, lines from the Philmont Hymn:

Silver on the sage  
Starlit skies above  
Aspen covered hills  
Country that I love  
Philmont, here's to thee...

Then, reverently but clear, from a cluster of tents close by:

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our feverish ways...  
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee  
The silence of eternity  
Interpreted by love.

My alarm clock next morning was a medley of the rustling of squirrels in the pine needles, a loud groan from the next tent in answer to "Hey, grab your socks, sack rat!" and the smell of frying bacon. Getting breakfast at three separate campsites, I ate hot cakes cooked by boys from Pennsylvania, downed eggs fried by a red-haired Californian, and gulped coffee brewed by a Negro lad from Alabama.

Philmont helps boys grow up. On the stony trails of the ranch they strengthen wind and muscles, build initiative, independence, and self-respect. Important, too, are the social

discipline and sense of comradeship they learn. Habits of personal and group responsibility become ingrained.

Adult supervision is never relaxed, with the result that crises seldom develop. But minor emergencies breed the little acts of heroism that instill confidence and help boys over the often troublous threshold from youth to manhood.

#### Camp's Goal: Boy Meets Challenge

In 1954 the first mixed group of white and Negro Explorers went to Philmont from Washington, D. C.

One of the colored boys was 14-year-old Arthur Weiseger, nicknamed "Pill" because he carried a kit of home remedies and prescribed for the real and fancied ills of his pals.

The trail between the camps at Harlan and Dean is steep and rough. Pill twisted a leg. The other boys took turns helping him uphill to Dean.

After a 24-hour rest, his leg seemed fully restored, and the group set out for Ponil Base Camp over a washboard trail. Suddenly the leg gave out completely; Pill was unable to put weight on it.

Spontaneously, without direction, five boys formed a team to take turns carrying him pickaback. While one boy shouldered Pill, two others doubled their loads with his pack and that of the lad who was portaging the casualty. The team switched loads from time to time.

Climbing down the clifflike bluff into Ponil, the injured boy rode his friends' backs without a slip. Reported the group's leader: "It was a fine display of the unselfishness, initiative, and consideration for others that Philmont strives to instill. Those boys showed citizenship at its best."

At every base camp Explorers enjoy tests of skill that provide a welcome change from trail routine. There are rifle and Moskeet ranges, the latter a form of skeet using lightweight clay pigeons and 22-caliber rifles that fire pellet-loaded cartridges. The boys practice fly casting and play Skish, a game that calls for casting a hookless plug into target rings laid on the ground.

A favorite after-hours pastime is trading shoulder patches. These colorful devices, woven in silk of many hues, identify Scout troops, jamborees, individual councils, and Scout training camps.

"How many Scout patches?" Patch-banker



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↑ **Happy Scouts Fill  
the Campfire-lit  
Night with Song**

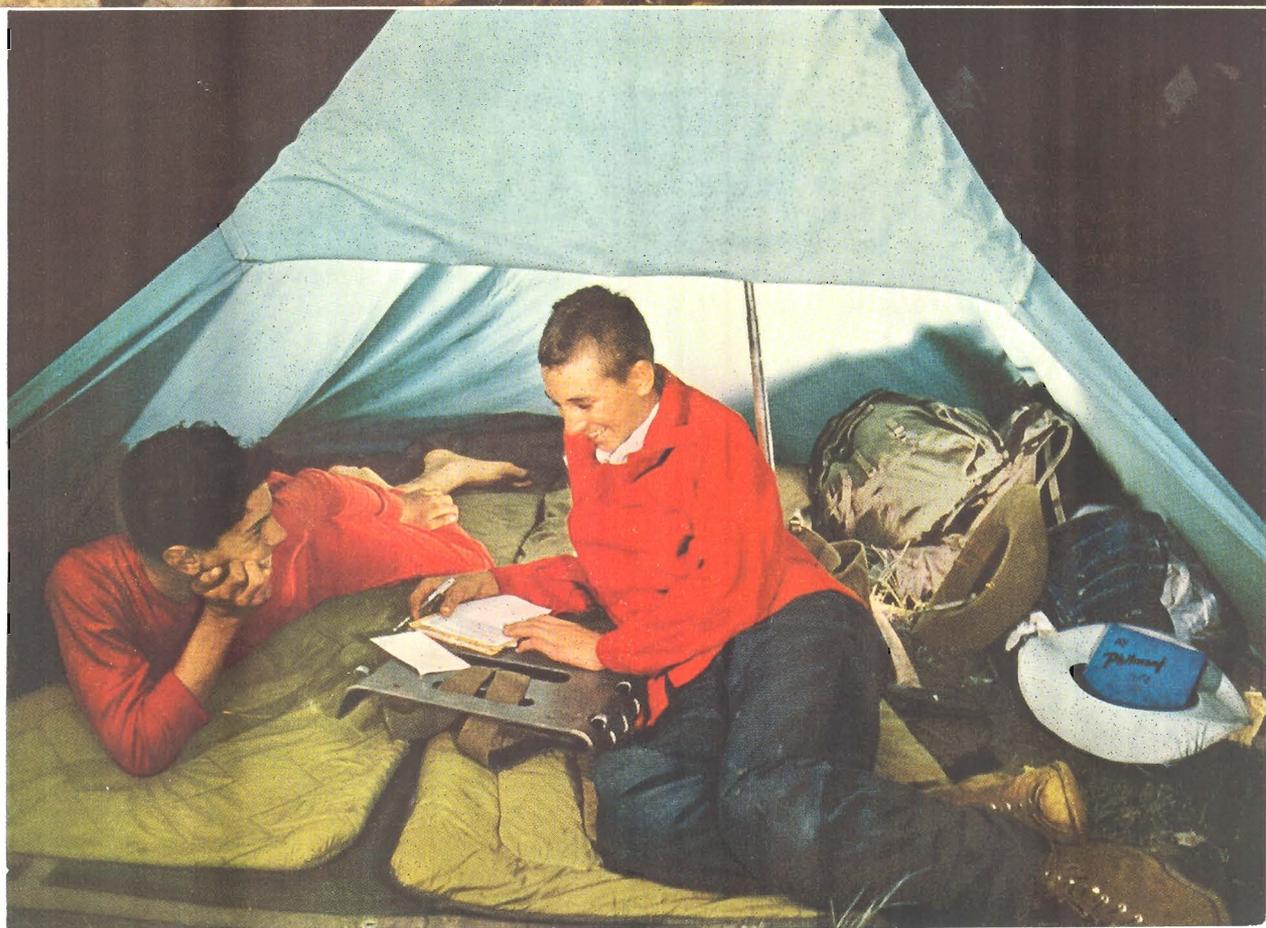
At the ranch or on the trail, no day is complete at Philmont without the traditional campfire.

Jokes and skits enliven the evening festivities at Cimarroncito. Then someone unleashes a guitar, and strong young voices send ballads and hymns rolling out across the piny hills.

With the singing of taps or Scout vespers, followed by a benediction, the boys head quietly for their tents. Tomorrow will bring new sights, new adventures.

→ Page 413. An Explorer tries to ignore the banter of his red-flanneled tentmate as he writes a letter home. Heavyweight muslin tent is waterproof.

← Explorers make ready for breakfast beside the narrow, fast-flowing Cimarron River. Pines and blue spruces edge the stream.



Sam Kelsall repeated my question. "Hundreds. One boy I know has a long coat completely covered, front and back, with patches."

A single extra-special patch, Sam explained, may be worth six or eight common, garden-variety ones.

Boys prepare elaborate skits to amuse their buddies around the evening campfire (page 413). One night, at the conclusion of a mock mystery play, I heard the youthful master of ceremonies enjoin the audience: "Let's give 'em our seal of approval." Whereupon all present grunted in unison in imitation of a seal's bark.

### Scouts Learn to Live off Land

Outstanding in Philmont's teaching effort is the Junior Leader Training program. Dedicated to perfection of scouting skills, this project prepares selected young men to train boys for leadership back in their home councils.

A high point of Junior Leader Training is the survival course.\* Along Agua Fria Creek, near Rayado Camp, leaders instruct each JLT group in making fire with flint and steel and in recognizing edible and poisonous plants. They teach how to improvise snares for trapping rabbits, squirrels, and chipmunks, and they show the youths the proper way to build a shelter.

Split up in teams of three, the boys scatter through the hills. Each team is allowed one ax, half a cup of sugar, and a third of a cup of salt. Each member may wear his usual trail clothes, plus a jacket. He also may retain his pocket knife and belt, but no other equipment or supplies—no matches, no fishing tackle, no tent, no food, no cooking gear, not even a canteen.

I followed along with a team—Bill, Jim, and Paul—that speedily demonstrated how ingenuity abets instruction in meeting the test. The boys first built a shelter of stones and boughs. Using dry moss and the fibrous inner bark from a dead aspen for tinder, and striking sparks from flints that lay about, they got a fire going—after nearly an hour of frustrated attempts.

### Thorn on Yucca Line Hooks Trout

Bill then split the fibers of a yucca plant, twisting them together for a fishing line. For a hook he bound a thorn to a twig. Minutes later he was knee-deep in Agua Fria Creek, snaking out fat rainbow trout with bait of

grasshoppers and grubs he found in the brush.

Paul and Jim, meanwhile, chopped out a chunk of green log and hollowed one side. They filled the hollow with water, then heated several fist-size stones in the fire. The hot stones were popped in the water, which boiled almost instantly. Into it Jim tossed some root bulbs he had cleaned.

Bill grilled his catch of rainbow trout on a flat rock tilted toward the flames.

Soon the triumphant threesome was happily enjoying the frugal meal, finding it especially satisfying, I felt sure, for having been scraped together by a little knowledge powered by wit.

I crossed a spur and joined another team. One boy had skinned a squirrel and was impaling the morsel of meat on a forked stick. But his teammates still were striking futile steel on stubborn flint.

"Hurry up, you guys!" the successful hunter taunted his pals. "Meat's ready. Where's the fire?"

As I roamed the hillside, I met leaders who were keeping unobtrusive watch on the young men to be sure that none suffered from exposure and that no team got panicked by the frustrations inherent in this rigorous two-day discipline.

### Some Prefer Broiled Rattlesnake

Explorers "on survival" have driven trout into traps of stones in shallow water. Teams have made fishing lines from shredded bark and from unraveled web belts. One, unsuccessful in fire making, lived solely on gooseberries, thistle blossoms, and dandelion plants. Roast porcupine and broiled rattlesnake have sustained many a trainee.

A story persists of a Philmont leader who took his boys by a lengthy detour around a bull pasture on the way to a survival training area. He was afraid of what the bull might do to the youngsters. On the hungry return march from survival, two days later, the leader again avoided the grazing bull—this time for fear of what the boys might do to the bull.

"Survival is the one achievement the boys are proudest of," Felix Knauth told me. "That experience sticks with them vividly when other memories fade."

Work projects develop interest in conservation. Everywhere on the ranch I saw gullies

\* See "School for Survival," by Curtis E. LeMay, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, May, 1953.



**Tooth of Time, Philmont's Best-known Landmark, Juts Above the Stockade Camp**

Practical jokers sometimes hand out brushes and tell campers to "run up there and scrub the shaft." Stockade's pine-log walls and blockhouses re-create the atmosphere of frontier days.

stoppered with check dams made of brush, stones, and logs, built to slow down rushing rainwater and hold the topsoil. In an area near Cimarroncito Base Camp, Ray Sadler of Mississippi had constructed shelters for birds. Sadler in 1955 received the Hornaday Award, highest honor in scouting for work in conservation and wildlife.

### Food for Half a Million Meals

Philmont's main commissary—food lockers, butcher shop, and chill rooms—would serve a large town.

"We distribute about \$200,000 worth of food a season," Dale Olsen, assistant director, told me. "Daily shipments of perishables go to all base camps. The trucks are loading right now."

Out on the platform boys were stowing cartons and bags of staples, topping off with wire baskets brimful of tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, cabbages, oranges, and grapefruit.

"Every day except Sunday," Mr. Olsen said, "we send out about four tons of food to five base camps for their use and for further distribution by jeep and truck along the trail. Over the whole season we'll use 70,000 to 80,000 loaves of bread, 80,000 half pints and 8,000 quarts of milk.

"We'll have to supply food for half a million meals and for as many as 1,000 meals in a single dining hall in one day."

Apart from its programs for boys, Philmont offers adult instruction in all aspects of Scout leadership. I attended a number of the classes, which are held in the handsome Villa Philmonte, Waite Phillips's onetime home.

Most men trainees bring along their wives and children, often combining a tour of the West with a training course at Philmont. Families are accommodated in tents close to cafeteria, assembly hall, and classrooms. Supervised play for children releases mothers to study handicrafts, ride horseback, and tour the ranch (page 401).

Two miles south of Philmont Camping Headquarters, ruts of the Santa Fe Trail still are visible in thick turf beside the road. I parked my car there one moonlit night and got out to marvel, as I had before, at that durable autograph of times past. I called to mind what I knew of its history.\*

Long before there was any trail here, Coronado and his conquistadors passed this way. Then came the fur traders. The wagons started to roll over the Santa Fe Trail after

1822, coming west from Missouri by way of Fort Bent and Raton Pass.

The mountain men—Bridger, Maxwell, Wootton, Fitzpatrick—watched over the route, and later on Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell built their trading post four miles south of this spot.

Suddenly the glare of headlights broke into my musings. A Philmont bus swept around the curve behind me, rolled down the grade, and pulled off at a wide place near by.

The driver flicked off the headlights and a somewhat travel-worn gang of Explorers stumbled out and clustered around their two adult leaders.

"What're we getting out for?" one asked. "I'm ready for the sack."

"I thought the trip was over," said another. "What is there to see here?"

"I know you're tired," one of the leaders said. "It's been a hard 10 days, and we're late getting back to Camping Headquarters. But the road crosses the old Santa Fe Trail here. We thought you'd like to see it. Look down the hillside there."

The boys fell silent and peered intently over the wire cattle fence. Light of the full moon silvered the slope. Insect noises stitched together the star-sequined veil of night.

"See those long shadows in the grass? Those are ruts made more than a hundred years ago by covered wagons bound West to Santa Fe and the Pacific."

### Whips Crack Again on Santa Fe Trail

Eyes on the historic tracks, the boys soaked up the meaning of what they saw. I had no doubt most of them were attuned to the same ghostly presences that crowded in on me—the thud of hoofs and the creaking of wheels and harness as drivers urged their teams up the slope, a child's sob of fright when a coyote screamed close by, the muted birdcall warning of an Indian sentry far up the ridge.

As the leaders herded their charges back into the bus, I heard a boy's voice, anxious for reassurance, ask, "Are those *really* the old ruts the covered wagons made?"

"Yes."

"Goll-ee!"

In his delight and his awe, I think he spoke for all of us.

\* See "Santa Fe Trail, Path to Empire," by Fredrick Simpich, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, August, 1929.