

Backtrack



FAIRGOERS 1913—STYLE

Although the Russell Fair has put to bed for another year, here's proof that it has been a popular local happening for many, many years. These are 1913 fairgoers and, as its plain to see, the event was something to dress up for. From left, Jessie Fitzpatrick, B. Dent, Stan Curry, Margaret MacDonald, Dalton McKeown, Mae MacKerracher. (Photo compliments of Mrs. Ken Hay, Weston).

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The Adventures of Meg

By M. M. McCallum

Camp Cookout was a real honey

Meg reached for the phone once again. She needed more help with her math homework. School had started three weeks ago but Meg was housebound in a wheelchair.

Meg had really done it this time—two broken legs and head and torso swollen by bee bites. All this the result of her last girl guide hiking weekend.

Since it was to be an overnight camp cookout, each girl was to bring the fixings from home for a meal for her patrol. Meg was thrilled when mum offered to show her how sourdough cooked on green sticks was achieved.

Meg tried the recipe on Mary and Dad Friday evening. They pronounced it good but warned her it would take a lot of care to carry several jars of mix.

"Oh, no," said Meg, "there is more to earning my badge than that. I am going to bring the dry mix in a sack and add the water at camp. I know the spot we are going to and I expect to sweeten my offering with some fresh honey."

And thereby hangs the tale.

Saturday simply flowed by. The morning was taken up by the usual housekeeping chores common to all campers. Lunch over, Meg checked the schedule to make sure she was still slated to do supper. She was.

Then she made her first mistake. Forgetting all about the buddy system, she set out alone to find a honey tree. Meg's grandfather had taught her at an early age how to observe the path of flight of the honey bees and, following that lead, to search for decayed trees. It was not too often that a hive would be found in a fallen tree.

After 30 minutes of brisk walking with head craned skyward, Meg heard an ever-increasing drone and hum. She had found her hive but, oh, it was high up.

Meg drew on a pair of gloves and tucked her jean legs into her sock tops. Her eyes searched the tall tree for a path of ascent. A large square of cheesecloth tied firmly over her head and face, plastic bag tucked into her waistband and she was ready.

Up, up, she climbed. Ten feet, 15, 20 and the buzz, buzz, buzz grew greater. Now she could see the opening in the dead tree trunk. Glistening drops of honey ran in thin trickles over the rough bark.

Moving ever so slowly Meg held her open sack in her teeth and carefully slid her cupped hand among the bees. The warm, sticky globs of gold filled her palm and she dropped it into the container. She soon had enough for her purpose and mouthing silent thanks to the accomodating bees, she began her descent.

But wait! A bee headed right

for her nose. Meg forgot herself and swung. She missed and the bee struck. The bag of honey banged back and forth only to be snagged on a protruding branch. Meg dug in her heels. Her full weight brought forth an ominous crack from her supporting branch.

She panicked. Instead of hugging the tree trunk, she edged out farther and farther on the slim branch. Down she went, crashing through limbs and leaves.

Her yelling and flailing aroused the bees which flew frantically around, stinging her at every opportunity. It seemed to Meg that hours passed as she lay awkwardly under the tree. Her legs hurt, her head hurt and her eyes were swollen almost shut.

Blowing the three long, three short distress signal on her guide whistle, she was happy to hear the answering whistle of her rescuers coming closer and closer.

Meg had two broken legs. A few days in hospital and she went home in a wheelchair. She had very mixed feelings as her friends came to call, smacking their lips over the recollections of the honey that they had enjoyed while Meg was on her way to the hospital.

The phone beside her bed rang. Good news, she could return to school. Mr. Colin had built a partial ramp for her and the Grade 8 boys had arranged to take turns carrying her up the other steps. Meg's thoughts flew to the morrow. What should she wear? After all, she had had her eyes on that tall blond on the outside row for some time.

Who knows, maybe her luck was about to take a turn for the better.

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