

Personally Speaking

"The Cave Patrol"

Here's a story that has all the makings of a good yarn, including a happy ending. It comes from T. Ben Johnston who has been in Scouting since 1910, the first twelve of those forty years being spent as Scoutmaster, and the last twenty-eight as Scout Executive at Battle Creek, Mich. This is the story of his first Scouting experience; the date, 1910:

Mr. Johnston was the newly appointed principal of a Junior High School in northern Michigan. He hardly had his feet under the desk when he heard stories of a series of thefts in town that had the police baffled. The places being robbed were sporting goods stores, tobacco stores, and fountains.

One day Johnston overheard a snatch of conversation on the school playground. One boy was making a gun trade with another. At first this didn't strike him as unusual, then he started to think about the robberies. He put two and two together, and decided to watch.

That watching took him into the woods where he had seen his boys going many times, and before long he found what he had suspected — a cave in the side of a hill, with a crude door made of slabs of wood.

Inside the door, painted in red, was this motto "Any guy joining this gang must swipe ten dollars worth and bring it here." Stacked in the cave were many of the articles stolen during the past weeks.

Mr. Johnston notified the police, they made a raid that night and the gang was caught. They released all the boys but the leader, whom they took to jail. They decided to send this boy to reform school, but Mr. Johnston begged the judge to give him another chance. The judge finally agreed that if the principal would start a Boy Scout Troop and take this gang in it, he would parole its leader to him.

So T. Ben Johnston organized the gang into a Troop, and he says nothing in his long years of Scouting has given him more happiness than the fact that the gang made good. Its leader is a successful lawyer today.

Hearing this story made me wonder how many other interesting experiences there must be tucked away in men's memories. So the second reason for telling this story of the "Cave Patrol" (the first being that it was a swell story . . .) the second reason, is to use it as "bait" to get you to "chip in" to our stock of human interest stories of Scouting, *your* best one. What's the most exciting experience, or the one that convinced you that what you were doing was worthwhile? What's the funniest thing that ever happened to you and your boys?

You send 'em in, and we'll steal an inch or two of space from the "how-to-do-it" articles here and there, and pass on to an appreciative audience — your fellow Scouters — some of the stories that have come out of this great game.


Managing Editor

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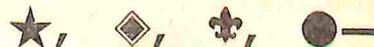
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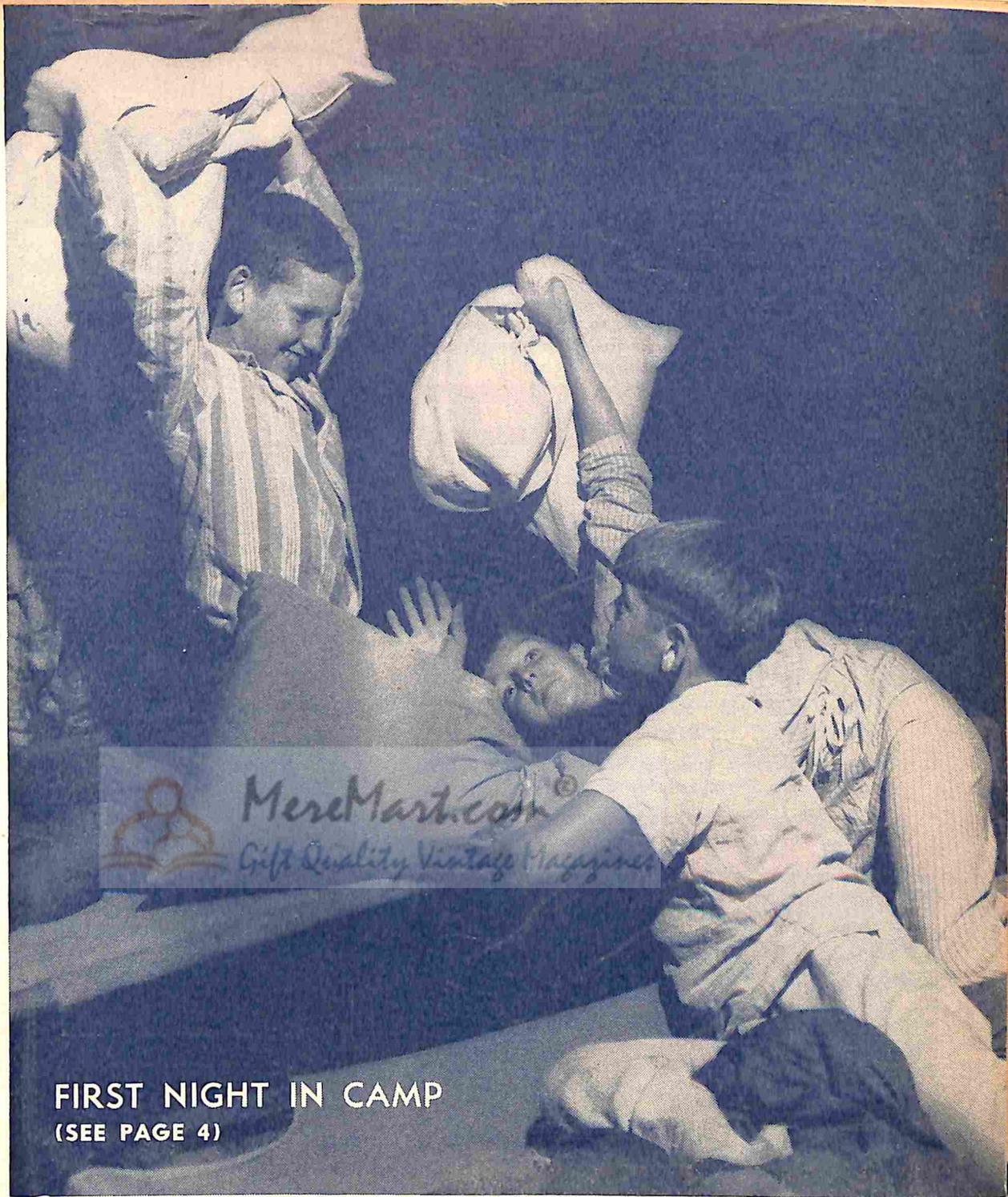
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