

Honorable News



August is here which means for many of us here in the US that summer is coming to a rapid close. Schools start up again, cooler weather up ahead, and if you have been paying attention to my past couple of videos, Squirrel Camp! I am really excited about putting this together on October 25-27 and it is my first time organizing an event. If you have ever wanted to camp in the traditional style and experience an old school traditional hunting camp then I hope you can join us at Dave Canterbury's Pathfinder School in SE Ohio. There is a max of 20 attendees and we are already at half so make sure to fill out the form to secure your spot!



“Dad, I’m pretty lucky.”

“*Oh, how so?*”

“Since you were already a Civil War soldier, you already have a lot of what I need to get started and you have the knowledge of what I don’t already have!”

Have You Mapped Out Your Journey?

No, I’m not talking orienteering skills, I’m talking personal journey in skills and gear. The above dialogue happened just last week between my oldest and I. August is my birthday month and it is this time of the year I take some time to reflect. I reflect on my family goals, spiritual goals, career goals, and hobbies and interests. I try to take stock of what I was able to accomplish in my previous trip around the sun and what I’d like to accomplish on the next round. This month I thought I would discuss and share with you where I have been, where I am now, and where I would like to be in the next year in regards to my outdoor adventure lifestyle and I hope it will give you some perspective and prompt you to evaluate your journey.

I started camping with my family starting around 5 years old. My household income was minimal so our local weekend camping trips 1-3 times per year were our grand vacations. Using pots and pans from our kitchen at home, my father's CLASSIC childhood Coleman 200a lantern, sleeping on blankets, and roasting hotdogs, and eating s'mores grounded in me the idea that you do not need an RV or even a 6 foot high 12 man tent to enjoy the outdoors. Simplicity is often the best and it removes over complication, not to say specialized gear isn't desired.

When I got involved in Scouting my family began to transition our blankets into sleeping bags, and my father even got a two burner Coleman stove to cook our meals on! In general the focus still wasn't on equipment or gear though, it was on skills and using what you had. I took an eight pound Sears sleeping bag strapped to a \$25 Odd Lots external frame on our long and overnight hikes. We certainly could not afford a true backpacking tent so I used some clear plastic sheeting to rig up into a shelter or I could roll myself up in it. By the time I earned my Eagle in 1999 my equipment consisted of that external frame pack, a five pound 25 degree sleeping bag, and a Coleman 2 man dome tent all purchased from Kmart or Sears. REI, Galyan's, Cabela's, Bass Pro shops and the like weren't even on my realistic radar to buy from. Galyan's in Columbus was a place my Troop would go to annually to climb their three story rock wall and we made the trip to West Virginia once to visit a Cabela's just for the experience. Abercrombie and Fitch was a clothing store for those kids with "style" and certainly far from outdoor adventure. Between 1999 and 2004 I was saving and spending any extra money on outfitting myself with Civil War reenactment gear and attending events, which was no small expense for a teenager. Upgrading and using lightweight modern gear still wasn't a priority.

I was out of the contemporary outdoor game for almost ten years while I was in college, got married, and started a family. When my oldest got involved in Scouting as a first grader I was reinvigorated to get back to it and much like my own parents we used some things from home but we also had hand me down sleeping bags, my old Coleman tents (and historic canvas ones), my father's trusty Coleman 200a and that two burner stove of his. My oldest is now 14, developing his Eagle project and is at the age of interest in Civil War reenacting, life came full circle. His troop has also been more and more interested in backpacking which brings me to my current state...a reflection of where I am at and where I want to be in knowledge, skills, and equipment.

Classic camping these past four years has helped me refine the skills I had and learn many new ones along the way. It has also helped me with understanding nuances of various pieces of equipment I had never considered before which has helped me narrow down drastically what I like and dislike. With this knowledge and wisdom in hand I have been able to invest in gear that I know will fit me and my needs so I can get the best out of my outdoor adventures. We all have stages and chapters in our lives and I am at a stage of investing for the long haul and for future adventures. I have used the same Eddie Bauer day pack I was gifted since 1999, the same combat boots for all my outdoor adventures since 2004, and I still use my Coleman items from the 1990's and before! Since I am desiring to go backpacking more and I value a good night's sleep so high, these priorities have helped me to outline my gear goals which I offer in the following list:

Boots: this is the foundation of a good hike or camping trip. If your feet are not kept safe, dry, and comfortable you will be limited in what you can accomplish. I lean more towards traditional materials and style and am currently eyeballing Russell Moccasin Co. or Gokey boots...leaning more toward Russell's. My old combat boots from 2004 are finally starting to show some serious wear and they have never been the most comfortable...but they served honorably.

Sleep System: Now the term 'system' implies items working together to achieve a goal so included are shelter and bedding. In my years of camping I have learned that a pack or tent is often like a garage...if you are not intentional about it, you will quickly fill it up with useless things and forget where you put that "thing" you needed. Classic camping has especially made me learn that I like having a place to sit, I like being able to stand to get dressed, and I like being able to sit up in my shelter to read before I go to bed. I also want to cut weight down as much as possible, and the sleep system is where I find most of my weight allowance being consumed. Conflictingly I am also willing to carry extra weight to sleep well so much of my most recent attention has been directed here. I have recently invested in a Haven Hammock tent and have been delighted with the versatility and the comfortable sleep. I have also upgraded a few parts to cut down weight. It's not ultralight by any means but has "the complete package" and checks off all the boxes I wanted.

The next part of the system is the bedding. For the time being I am planning on using one of the various sleeping bags I already own, none of which are considered lightweight by any stretch of the imagination. Currently I have been watching YouTube videos, reading forum posts and website articles to decide what I am going to invest in. I am intrigued by the Zen Bivy bedding system however the extreme cost has made me very apprehensive and the tapered foot box is not something I enjoy. I avoid modern mummy bags in favor of rectangular bags because I am most comfortable without restriction of the legs and feet. My 1950's Woods 3 Star sleeping robe is hands down my favorite cold weather sleeping bag due to warmth and size but at almost 16 pounds is out of the question for any backpacking trip. I also use Slumberjack summer and winter sleeping bags for general camping, which I picked up from my local big box store...again not all that lightweight.

Pack: This one may surprise you or you may staunchly disagree with me on this...I can take or leave upgrading my pack. I have a 1980's Kelty external frame pack that carries things very well for me and is completely comfortable. It weighs less than a pound empty and has more space than I have ever needed in the compartments and pockets. It is leaps and bounds better than my Trapper Nelson/Yucca 574 combo and weighs less than my Assistant Scoutmaster's internal frame pack he bought for \$300 from REI five years ago.

Education: This is something I have been tossing around in my head for close to three years, investing in outdoor courses. On one hand, and it may be arrogance, but I have questioned "what could someone teach me that I don't already know?" I have no desire to challenge myself in an intense survival course just so I can have bragging rights or learn a few things while most of the time I am reviewing things I already know. I also don't want to spend my precious money on learning crafting skills when I learned so much already through my time in Scouts, from a book, or on YouTube. Gatherings however is where my interest has been directed. Small classes A La Carte and camaraderie...now that sounds like a good time.

Odds and Ends: Clothing and accessories are oddly the last thing on my mind and in my opinion, generally the least consequential at my stage. I have been gradually upgrading my socks to Smartwool socks, I recently found some great outdoor pants from Walmart for \$30 a pair, and it is easy to find wool and Chambray shirts second hand that are affordable, and I pick them up as needed or desired which, hasn't been the case for two years. I am certainly traditional in material choice and avoid denim at all cost. I have accumulated containers and foundational odds and ends over my lifetime that anything at this point is collected merely out of desire instead of necessity. Were I a newer or much younger camper then this entire group would be second to boots on my priority as they are generally more affordable to obtain and lean toward safety, skill education and practice. The things in this group can also tend the fire of desire for outdoor adventure.



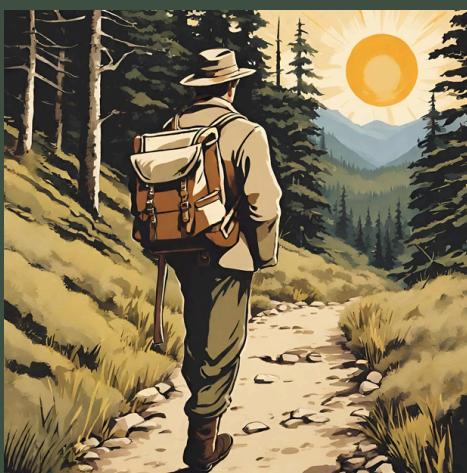
So, where are you on your journey and where do you want to go? Perhaps you have already experienced the contemporary to ultra light camping style and want to learn more of how we got to this point in technology or material culture. Perhaps you are nostalgic of what it was like when you were younger or you are now at a chapter in your life that you can afford what you didn't have or get your modern dream kit. Whatever your situation is, set a path ahead of yourself, set goals, and enjoy your adventure however, whatever, and wherever that looks like. Looking out my window it looks like a good day to set up my Haven in the backyard and take a nap, I think that is where my journey is going to take me today. Until we meet again, take care my friend.



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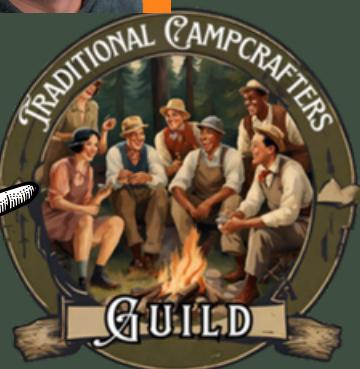
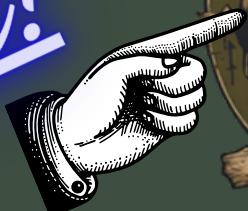
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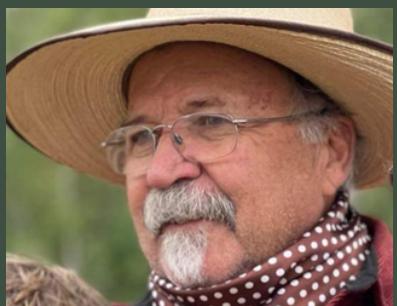
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NIGHT AT 8:15 PM
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DAVE WESCOTT
Author of *Camping in the Old Style*, Owner of Rabbitstick Gathering

Modern Camping Gear I love



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Grayl Purification System



Bahco LAP-KNIFE Laplander Folding Saw and Multi-Purpose Knife Set



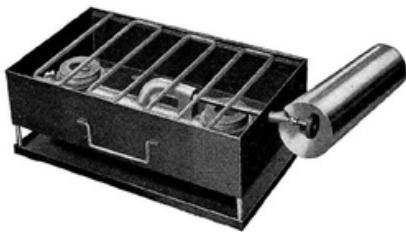
Haven XL Hammock Tent



AGM KampKook Stove

American Gas Machine Company

American Folding Camp Stove No. 3



The American Folding Camp Stove illustrated on this page is without doubt the most practical camp stove on the market today. It is all that a camp stove should be; handy, compact, simple, efficient and dependable.

It is only necessary to generate the first burner. This produces gas for the second burner which may be turned on or off at will.

Gasoline is forced to burner by air pressure producing an intensely hot flame.

When not in use the stove is completely enclosed in the steel case and measures only 14 1/2 x 8 x 3 1/2 inches.



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