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Guy Munger

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Negro Farm Youths Launch Recreation Season This Week

BY GUY MUNGER
Daily News Staff Writer

MONDAY MORNING 200 Negro farm youths will move into a camp at Hammocks Beach in Onslow County and find out what fish fries and wiener roasts have to do with democracy.

It will be the opening of the third annual camping program of North Carolina New Farmers of America.

The camps will continue through the week of July 14 with a different group of campers arriving each week as their farm chores permit.

There'll be the usual summer camp activities—swimming, boating, craft work. But more than recreation is involved at the NFA camp.

Introduction To Democracy

S. B. Simmons of A&T College, state NFA adviser, says the camp program is set up to give the boys, future North Carolina farm leaders, an introduction to democracy in action.

Simmons puts it this way:

"The main function of the camp is to provide leadership training. Leadership training has been interpreted to cover all activities in which a farm boy might participate and which will help him to develop a well-rounded personality and character.

"American leadership is based on democracy. This philosophy is the basic philosophy of the camp."

The training program begins the moment the boys arrive in camp. Boys and counselors are assigned to camp chapters. And there are no cliques. Every effort is made to divide local chapter groups, give the campers an opportunity to meet boys from other parts of the state.

Each Group Elects Officers

Generally a camp chapter includes not more than 18 or 20 boys and two teacher-counselors. And the way they operate is democracy in action.

Each chapter elects its own officers and plans its own program which is reviewed by the camp director.

The program begins in the morning with flag-raising ceremonies, camp clean-up and breakfast. Then come four hours of educational activities—practice in planning and conducting meetings, budget-making, extemporaneous speaking, and experience in just meeting and getting along

of camp work which has inspired them most and suggest improvements. They also get a bulletin reviewing the week's program which they can take back to their local NFA chapters.

Began In 1926-27

The history of NFA camping in North Carolina dates back to 1926-27 when the association was formed. The first camp, really a weekend outing for about 35 boys, was held at the Pitt County Training School at Grimesland.

In 1932, the NFA held its first full-fledged state camp, at Kittrell College in Vance County. A. H. Peeler, now principal of Price High School in Greensboro, was a director of that pioneering effort.

Two district camps followed, at Chowan Beach near Winton and at a Boy Scout camp near Kings Mountain. Then just as the NFA was about to develop a permanent camp site at Chowan Beach, World War II came along and the plans were temporarily abandoned.

Gets Deed To 4,500 Acres

The delay had a happy effect. In 1949 Dr. William Sharp of New York City deeded 4,500 acres of rolling land on Queen's Creek in Onslow County to the Hammocks Beach Corporation, which represents Negro teachers, their families and other educational groups including the NFA.

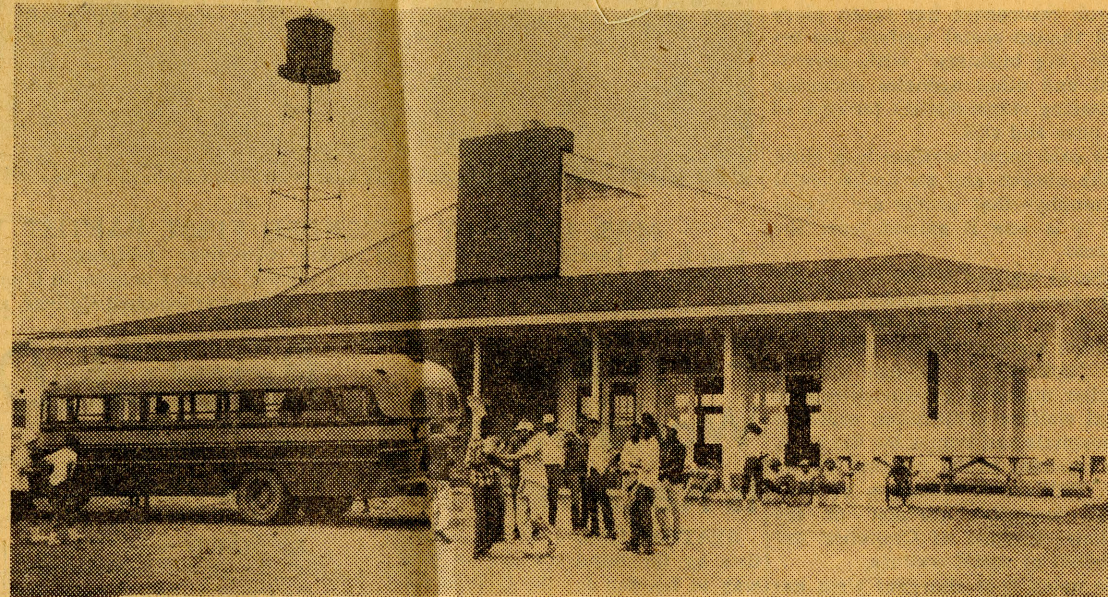
Work moved forward rapidly, and in 1953 Dr. Harold L. Noakes of Cornell University came down to Hammocks Beach and helped select a camp site.

He followed up with a camping workshop for 115 Negro teachers of vocational agriculture. Dr. Noakes' reasons for organizing the workshop were simple: "The effectiveness of any camp in meeting the needs of its campers is dependent largely upon the counselors. A camp can be no better than its counselors."

Dr. Noakes' work in training



THE MAIN BUILDING AT HAMMOCKS BEACH



GROUP FROM R. L. VANN HIGH SCHOOL, AHOSKIE, FIRST AT CAMP IN 1953

counselors paid off and gradually the camp has built up its physical equipment. Permanent buildings now include an assembly hall, office, lodge for camp officials and guests and a bath house which will accommodate 250 persons.

At present, tents are used for barracks but they are to be replaced by cement block buildings as soon as possible. Camp officials also hope that soon they will have a well-equipped shop for craft activities.

Other expansion plans include a swimming and fishing raft to be built this summer in Queen's Creek and a boat house near the camp.

Since NFA campers can travel to Hammocks Beach only during dull seasons on the farm, the camp will also be used by other groups, the New Homemakers (Negro girls studying vocational home economics), Boy Scouts, PTA groups and handicapped children.

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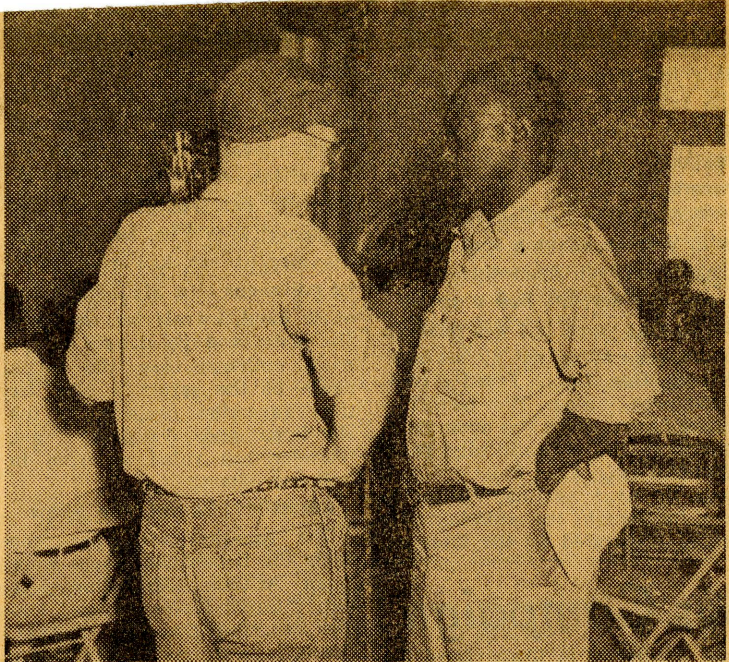
with people.

After lunch campers take part in two hours of elective activities, recreation or craft work. And each day campers learn that good citizenship means work by giving an hour of labor to a camp improvement project. Usually it's a group activity such as conservation practices or timber improvement and the boys get a bonus of experience that will be useful when they return to their farms.

Good Time For All

Flag-lowering, vespers and a campfire program close the day's formal activities but campers usually manage to stretch out the day to include fish fry or wiener roast. And the socializing isn't the least important part of the day from the educational standpoint. It's a good time for the farm youth from the coastal plains to get acquainted with his opposite number from the Piedmont, a time to find out about his life and problems and dreams.

The camp week closes Friday morning with a special assembly when the boys report on the phase



DR. HAROLD L. NOAKES, left, of Cornell University, who helped select the Hammocks Beach camp site, is shown here with John Harst, caretaker for the Dr. William Sharp property for 40 years. Dr. Sharp, from New York City, deeded 4,500 acres to the beach corporation.



VESPERS HELD EACH EVENING, RAIN OR SHINE



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