

NATIONAL JAMBOREE

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When in 1918 Lithuania regained her independence, one of the first youth organizations to be founded was the scout movement. Both, boy scouts and girl guides, became active during that same year and have since grown considerably. To commemorate this important date, Lithuanian scouts organize national jamborees every ten years. The first two were held in Lithuania, but since in 1948 the Communist forces were rulers of the land, Lithuanian boy scouts and girl guides gathered in Western Germany to continue the tradition of these jamborees.

Another ten years have once again gone by, and this time the fourth national jamboree took place in the Highland Recreation Area near Detroit, Michigan, where in the latter part of August more than one thousand Lithuanian youngsters enjoyed the pleasures of outdoor camping for a period of two weeks.

The program of the camp was carried out according to well established traditions of Lithuanian scouts. Some of them, such as forest games analogous to true events of Lithuanian history, religious ceremonies, preparation of food by the campers, campfires, during which many folksongs are sung, were immensely enjoyed by those who participated in this jamboree. Play, however, did not constitute the entire atmosphere of the camp; proper discipline, obedience to one's leaders were exercised with the aim to form a better person in the growing individual.

The outward appearance of the camp was traditionally Lithuanian. Each geographical region had its subcamps; in the center of each one of these the visitor could find a cross and a flagpole — the accepted religious and national symbols. In front of each tent a variety of symbolic ornaments, prepared by the scouts with material found in the woods, was visible. Towels, shoes, utensils and similar items were displayed in an orderly fashion in the back of each tent on racks, made by campers. All the decorative elements were competitive; performance in this respect was checked and evaluated every day.

The busy, spirited atmosphere of the camp was immediately evident. Formation and recreation were harmoniously combined to offer those participating the joys of camping without imposing too much strain upon them.

Representative units of native Americans, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Latvians, Polish and other scouts visited the camp, and joined the Lithuanian youngsters by staying for a few days. Thousands of visitors came to the camp. Many famous Lithuanian personalities. The campers participated with the hope that the golden anniversary of their movement, in the form of the fifth national jamboree, will take place on the shores of the Baltic Sea, in the free and independent Lithuania.