
Camp Tamiment Exceeds Promise of Press Agent: That's What the Vacationists Say When They Arrive — Informality is the Spirit of the Place, Good Fellowship and Happiness the Result

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You have heard of Camp Tamiment, and you want to know something about the first attempt of Socialists and working people to make for themselves a place for rest, recreation, and vacationing. There is much to write about this place that the workers have made for themselves.

There is the location of the camp, on the top of a mountain reached by a mountain road through scenery of such grandeur that one wonders that one is within less than 100 miles of New York [City].

There is the beauty of the camp, on the shores of a large lake, a mile long, and its fine equipment.

There is the spirit of the camp, its camaraderie, its joyousness, led by a director of activities who welds all elements together into one enthusiastic whole.

There is the soul of the camp, expressing itself in the lectures on the wooded edge of the lake, with the men and women in picturesque camp costume sitting on benches, with the silvery lake in the background, giving a few moments to discussion.

There is the miracle of the camp, springing up almost overnight in the virgin forest through the magic touch of the enthusiasm, the devotion, the genius of Alexander Hayman, who found nothing but

the forest, and built with the materials Nature placed at his disposal the great structure that is there to greet the guests as they come from the cities to take their vacations.

And it is just as well to begin with the story of Alexander Hayman — Sandy his friends call him — who translated his zeal in the cause of Socialism into energy to make the camp in the woods a fitting resting place for the comrades who mean so much to him.

Hayman was Pioneer.

Hayman is an old Haverhill (Mass.) Socialist, who was campaign manager there in the old days, when John C. Chase and Jim Carey were elected Mayor and Representative. He is a woodsman, and a good one. When the People's Educational Camp Society considered the possibility of starting operations at Tamiment, Bertha H. Maily and others who were old friends of Hayman invited him to look over the grounds and appraise them as an expert woodsman.

The camp is organized by Socialists primarily for Socialists and their friends, and is in every way a cooperative enterprise. It is one way that the Socialists could cooperate and win their well-earned recreation. The idea appealed to Hayman. He asked for a little while to think it over, and then volunteered to do the job.

He installed himself, with a crew of laborers, in an old farmhouse, the only structure on the estate of over 2,000 acres. All else was absolutely untouched. He had nothing to work with other than his naked hands, his ability, and his driving enthusiasm — and with them he set to work shortly after Thanksgiving.

Near the end of the late is a spot that Sandy thought would make a fine sawmill site. He cleared the ground and installed a sawmill. He had coal hauled up to feed the engine, but now what is left of the pile of coal is lying idle. There is enough fuel in wood to keep the machinery going indefinitely.

All Wood from the Grounds.

Then the woodsmen got busy; trees were cut, floated down the lake to the outlet, and dragged to the mill. There they were cut up

and hauled off to the camp site. Then the building began, entirely of the wood that had been cut on the grounds.

Meanwhile, a carpenter shop was established at the sawmill and doors, chairs and tables, window shades were made. And an electric dynamo was hitched on to the engine of the sawmill, generating current for the entire camp, so that today (even if this anticipating a bit) there are electric lights in every bungalow. But that wasn't all.

You can have a camp and ask your guests to go to the lake to wash and shave. You can have a camp without sanitary arrangements. But that didn't suit Sandy. He had a dam built across the outlet of the lake, raising the water 4 or 5 feet, pumped full a 10,000 gallon tank, and now there is spring water in washrooms and kitchens, where there is the very best modern plumbing, hot and cold running water, shower baths, and other things that seem for a moment utterly incongruous in the woods.

The electric wiring was done by Morris H. Schupper, a Socialist electrician, who tied it up with the dynamo which runs the sawmill, which runs on chips of wood and costs the wages of a single attendant.

And so, little by little, the colony was raised, until today there are scores of little bungalows for 2, 4, and 6 persons, solidly and substantially built with surprisingly comfortable beds — solid comfort, roughing it de luxe. There is the fine mess hall, with its broad and spacious porch-like dining room, hardwood floor that is as good for dancing as it is for dining, [its] light and airy kitchen, with its fine open fireplace at one end, with its broad plazas overlooking the lake all around.

There is the beautiful little administration building, planned entirely by Hayman, where Max Schonberg, the busy manager, sleeps and keeps books and takes your mail and sells tobacco and candy and films and postcards. There are the two large washrooms, one for men, the other for women, where you can get hot and cold showers and shave in hot water, even though you are in the midst of virgin forest.

There are the pretty little cottages for the cooks and waiters; there is the fine athletic field, with tennis courts and baseball diamonds. There will shortly be the social hall that, Sandy promises, will put all the rest of the buildings in the shade by comparison.

There is a farm on the grounds, not very much developed as yet, but developed enough to raise cucumbers and tomatoes and corn and potatoes. Within a year or two, Hayman says, the farm will be developed sufficiently not only to supply the whole of Tamiment's needs as to vegetables, milk, and eggs, but also to supply many of the camps in the neighborhood.

All this, and more, was created out of the wilderness by the toil of workingmen, by the genius and the devotion of Sandy Hayman, by the driving power of the idea of cooperation.

Tamiment is a cooperative enterprise of some thousands of men and women who make up the People's Educational Camp Society. That organization was founded less than a year ago by workers who felt that the regular fleecing by summer hotel landlords had to end. They knew that most working people take annual vacations of a week or two; they knew that the usual thing is to go to some mountain slum, where the game is to extort the last penny. They knew that in those mountain resorts there are scores of petty annoyances, from charges for innumerable "extras" and bad and insufficient food, *<line missing in original>* up. And they banded themselves in the PECS to have their very own camp, where they could give themselves the very best by the simple, although revolutionary, device of cooperation.

Camp Tamiment is now open and there are lots of folks there. Most of them are Rand School folks, because the Rand School people are those who make up the PECS. Bertha H. Maily is chairman of the committee of management, Max Schonberg is business manager, and Alexander Hayman is manager of grounds and construction. One thing practically everyone says who comes up there. It is, "Why, we didn't dream that it was as fine as this. We thought that it was all press agent stuff."

Never mind talking about the food. It is good and substantial and plentiful, but that is taken for granted when you go to a workers' cooperative place. At meal times you suddenly hear and loud and un-earthly yell. A table full of guests suddenly yell — "Yea-a-a-a-a! Announcement!"

Then Tom gets up and makes a speech. Tom is Thomas Kinstler, director of camp activities. Sometimes he asks for volunteers for a minstrel show. Sometimes he announces a swimming meet or that he

will teach campers how to paddle their canoes. Sometimes he summons all and sundry to a class where he guarantees to take off the fat of the plump ones and to build up the thin ones. And he does it, too.

He lines up his victims in the athletic field. The dress of the campers is picturesque — to say the least. Anything from bathing suits, up and down. Man and women are put through a drill that leaves you dripping and panting and tired — and feeling that you'd like to go through it again.

Then Tom leads you in swimming and boating and dancing and singing, and he writes songs that he sings, and in general he makes you glad that you came.

That is Tom's job — to unite everyone present into one congenial whole, and, from observation, it takes anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour or two from him to win everyone in sight.

Sunday night there was a minstrel show and Tom was the interlocutor. The place in front of the mess hall was packed with guests, mostly girls. For the Unity Girls of the waistmakers' union were there and they laughed and cheered and sang their own songs, and the whole gang sang the Internationale, and then they danced until the lights went out.

No Dignity to Stand On.

There isn't any dignity to stand upon at Tamiment. Algernon Lee is there now, and Harry Dana and Dr. Goldenweiser, and Margaret Daniels, and Will Durant, and Bertha Maily, and Solon DeLeon, and a lot of other people. It's the usual thing to see Mrs. Maily taking swimming lessons from Tom; to see Harry Dana loafing in a faded blue shirt; to see Goldenweiser play the piano and dance around in approved jazz style.

No, there's no lid on having a good time at Tamiment, and if you want to be reflective for a moment, and think it over, you will realize what a fine thing it is to frolic and play with those comrades who share the burdens of the work with you between vacations.

One said, "No, I'm not going to Tamiment; I've had it all year and I want to get away from it for two weeks."

But it's just the other way around. You work with your fellow party members, and you strike with your fellow union members, and you discuss and quarrel and get into factional fights with them and talk about the Communist International and get purple under the gills, and when you go on a vacation you miss your old folks. You find, much to your surprise, that there's much more fun swimming with your fellow branch members, and playing tennis with them, and loafing and hiking and eating and frolicking, than there is in getting acquainted with a bunch of brand new people, most of whom haven't the outlook on life you have and who will be a beastly bore to you.

Increases Fighting Spirit.

You will find, to your surprise, that there's no fun in finding some point of contact with strangers — and you will either adjust yourself to their different point of view, their lowbrow, or highbrow, or commercialistic, or intellectual, or artistic, or inartistic way of looking at life — or else you will mope and wonder why you came.

But if you go on hikes with your fellow branch members, or play pinochle with them, or dance or go swimming with them, or go to Tamiment with them, you will be surprised how much more fun you can get discussing art and relativity and psychoanalysis of the big prize fight with your fellow party members. You will be surprised how much more fun there is in listening to lectures on Homer and Tolstoy and evolution with your party comrades than there would be in finding some point of contact with total strangers.

And having danced and hiked and gone swimming and loafed with your fellow party workers, or fellow strikers, in your own camp, you will be surprised at the added joy you will have in working with the same men and women in the party when your vacation is over.

That's the philosophy back of the whole camp, that's the philosophy back of the idea of holding lectures in the open air, by the shores of the lake, while on your vacation.

The idea of carrying on lectures in connection with a summer camp seems folly, doesn't it? Well, it didn't to the 60-odd men and women who sat on the grass or perched on benches, listening to Dr. Goldenweiser talk about evolution and engage in a discussion with

him on whether Herbert Spencer was the real thing or whether the Russian Revolution is the application of real Marxism. It didn't to the gathering of rapt listeners who sat at Harry Dana's feet as he talked of the meaning of *The Odyssey* in the world's culture. It didn't to the classes of Margaret Daniels and Algernon Lee. It all seemed to work in with the whole idea of the camp.

There is more to this story than the mere story of a summer camp for tired workers. There are lots of camps in the hills and mountains hereabouts, beginning with tent colonies on the Hudson to the super luxurious "camps" in the Adirondacks for millionaires' wives and their trappers and guides. There is more to it than the resting place for tired-out workers, eager for a respite from the grinding toil of their day's work.

The story of Tamiment is the story of working men and women who saw a vision, and banded themselves together to achieve what they wanted. Their vision was their own vacation place, their own loafing and playing and frolicking place, their own home. They cannot win everything at a single blow, but they could win their camp. And they set out to win it.

Tamiment is a monument to the dynamic power of the ideal of cooperation. It is a demonstration that there is nothing the workers cannot do when they determined to do it.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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