

## For the Honor of the Tribe

by Thornton W. Burgess

All of Woodcraft who could get afloat were on the water, and those not so fortunate were ranged on points of vantage along the pier and on the shore. Dr. and Mother Merriam, with some of the guests of the camp, parents of the boys in for the annual field day, occupied the end of the pier, which commanded the whole course and was directly on the finish line. Among the most interested of the onlookers were Mr. Harrison and Mr. Upton, who had arrived that morning, taking their sons by surprise.

The shore events had been run off in the forenoon, with honors well distributed. The Algonquins, under Chief Seaforth, had won the rifle match. Chief Woodhull had scored heavily for the Delawares by winning the trail finding contest, the stalking event and the mile cross-country "hike" without compass or trail. The relay race, high and broad jumps had gone to the Hurons, while the Senecas had taken the hundred yard and two hundred and twenty yard dashes. The points for the best individual work during the summer in the various branches of nature study had been awarded, and the total score in the contest between the two wigwams for the deer's head offered for the highest total was Wigwam No. 1—1,460 points; Wigwam No. 2—1,450 points.

For tribal honors the Delawares had a safe margin, but the championship banner would go to the winning tribe in the successful wigwam. Excitement was at fever pitch, for on the outcome of the afternoon events hung the honors of the whole season. It was generally conceded that the Hurons would take the swimming events handily, unless the Delawares developed a dark horse. The Senecas were strong in the canoe work, and they vowed that if the Hurons tied the score with the swimming events they would win the canoe events.

The swimming races were called first. Before the first event Chief Woodhull called the Delawares together. "I haven't much to say," he said as he looked into the eager faces of his tribe, "only this: I expect every Delaware to do his best, not for his personal glory, but for the honor of his tribe and the honor of his wigwam. It is a great thing to win for yourself, but it is a greater thing to win for your fellows. When you reach the point where it seems as if you hadn't another ounce left just remember that the loss is not yours alone, but of the tribe who are pinning their faith to you. Another thing; fight for second and third places just as hard as for first. It's the small points that are going to win that banner, and it's up to you individually to get every point you can. And," he added with a smile, "don't forget to cheer the other fellows when they win. If we must lose let's be good losers, but—*don't lose!* That's all."

The conditions were perfect for the afternoon's sport. The lake lay like a huge mirror, not a ripple breaking its glassy surface. Clustered about the finish line were the camp canoes and boats and several launches filled with guests from the hotels at the other end of the lake. Several batteaux filled with lumber-jacks from the Durant camp lined the course.

"Gee, ain't it great?" said Tug Benson as he and Walter paddled out to the raft from which the swimming races were to start.

"You bet!" replied Walter enthusiastically. "How you feeling?"

“Fine and dandy!” responded Tug. “I’m goin’ to take that hundred yards if I never swim another stroke!”

“Wish I felt as sure of a place in my event,” said Walter.

“Look a-here, you’re goin’ to get more than place—you’re goin’ to win that event! You’ve got to! What do you s’pose I’ve been coachin’ you for all summer?” said Tug savagely as he glared at his companion.

They were to the raft by this time and as they hopped out and made their canoe fast they heard the starter announcing the first event, which was the hundred yard race. In all events for the afternoon first would count ten points, second five points and third three points.

There were eight entries for this event, three Hurons, two Delawares, two Senecas and one Algonquin.

“Are you ready?” Bang! There was one splash as the eight boys took the water. At the very first Tug took the lead. The distance was too short to take any chances. He was using the crawl stroke, and his powerful muscles drove him through the water like a fish. But he had need of every bit of strength and skill he possessed. Two of the Hurons were pressing him close, and ten yards from the finish one of them forged up until the two boys were neck and neck. Tug glanced ahead to locate the finish line, and gulped his lungs full of air. Then, burying his face, he tore through the water like some strange amphibian, putting every last ounce of reserve strength into a supreme effort.

Bang! It was the finish gun, and the wild whoop of the Delawares told him he had won, but he had hardly filled his strained lungs when the second and third guns told him by how narrow a margin he had snatched the victory.

“Two points to the good, anyway,” he said grimly as Woodhull helped him into a boat.

This made the wigwam score 1,470 to 1,458 and the Delawares and Algonquins whooped deliriously. But their triumph was short lived. The two hundred and twenty yard event gave the Hurons first and second and the Senecas third. It was now the turn of the Hurons and Senecas to break loose, and they made the most of it, for this gave Wigwam No. 2 a lead of six points.

“It’s up to you now,” growled Tug in Walter’s ear as they stood side by side awaiting the starting gun in the quarter mile event. “I haven’t a look-in, for that hundred killed me. But I’m goin’ to set the pace for the first half, and you stick right to me. Don’t you pay any attention to the rest of ’em, but stick right to me. When I give the word you dig out, and win. Remember, this is no sprintin’ match!”

The starting gun banged. When Walter had shaken the water from his eyes and looked around he found Tug at his side, swimming easily with a powerful overhand stroke. Off to the right two of the Hurons were using the crawl and were rapidly forging ahead. Already they had a lead that gave Walter a panicky feeling. Tug looked at him and grinned. “Water’s fine,” he grunted, for all the world as if this was nothing more than a pleasure swim. “Get your back into that stroke.”

Tug was still swimming easily, but he was putting more power into his strokes. Walter followed his example and kept neck and neck with him. They were now the last of the field. The sprint of the

two Hurons had given them a good lead, and this had had its effect on the other swimmers, all of whom were putting forth every effort to overhaul the leaders. Walter found that it took every bit of will power he possessed not to do the same. The pace was beginning to tell on those in front, but Tug never varied his strong easy stroke and presently Walter noticed that they were slowly but surely closing up the gap between them and the nearest competitors.

They had now covered a third of the course and the leaders were still a long way ahead. Would Tug never hit it up? What was he waiting so long for? Perhaps he was, as he had said, "all in," and couldn't go any faster. Ought he to stay back as Tug had told him to? If he should lose out for place the blame would be laid to him, not to Tug. Ha! Tug had quickened the stroke a bit! It was not much, but there was a perceptible gain with each swing of the arms and kick of the legs.

The half-way mark, and still Tug did not give the word. What was the matter with him? He glanced at him anxiously, but the grin on that astute young gentleman's face revealed nothing, certainly not anxiety. Two or three of the swimmers had begun to splash badly, notably the two Hurons in the lead. Walter had his second wind, and he found that he was holding Tug with less effort than at first. He could hear the shrill yells of the Hurons and Senecas at the finish line as they urged on their braves, and there was an unmistakable note of triumph in every yell. It gave him a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"Now go!" screamed a voice almost in his ear. Dimly he realized that Tug had given him the word. Quickening his stroke he put in every ounce of reserve strength, and at once the result began to show. One after another he overtook and passed the other swimmers until there was only one between him and the finish line. The two Hurons who had led so long were splashing in manifest distress. They were behind him now, their bolt shot, but still struggling gamely. But the swimmer ahead was a Huron who had come up strongly in the last quarter.

The pace was beginning to tell. Every muscle in his body ached, and his straining lungs seemed to gasp in no air at all. He was neck and neck with the leader now, but his tortured muscles seemed on the point of refusing to act altogether. If he could only rest them just a second! Ha, what was that? "Whoop! Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! Whoop! Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! Whoop! Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! Upton!"

It was the long rolling yell of the Delawares. It seemed to put new life into him. They were calling on him now for the honor of the tribe! He was almost there. Could he make it? He would make it! He gulped his lungs full of air, buried his face in the water and swung into the crawl, and then it seemed to him that his movements were wholly automatic. "For the honor of the tribe. For the honor of the tribe. For the honor of the tribe." Over and over his brain hammered that one phrase.

The bang of the finish gun crashed into it, but for a minute he did not sense what it meant. "For the honor of the tribe," he murmured, weakly paddling the water with his hands.

"And the honor of the boy!" cried a hearty voice, as strong hands caught the slack of his jersey and pulled him into a boat.

He looked up in a daze into the face of Woodhull. "Did I win?" he gasped.

"You sure did!" was the prompt response.

“No, I didn’t; Tug did it,” muttered Walter to himself as he saw his coach wearily finish at the tail end.

Second place had gone to the Hurons and third to the Algonquins. The score now stood Wigwam No. 1—1,483; Wigwam No. 2—1,481, and the excitement of the visitors was hardly less than that of the tribes as they waited for the canoe events.

The fours were called first. There were four entries, one crew from each tribe, four brawny boys in each canoe, captained by the four chiefs. The distance was half a mile with a turn, start and finish being opposite the pier. A pretty sight they made as they lined up for the start, each boy on one knee, leaning well over the side of the canoe, blade poised just over the water at his utmost reach.

Almost with the flash of the gun the sixteen blades hit the water and, amid a wild tumult of yells, the canoes shot away like greyhounds from a leash.

“Did you get on to that start of the Hurons—one long stroke, then five short ones and then the regular long stroke!” yelled Billy Buxby, whose sharp eyes seldom missed anything new.

As a matter of fact this little trick had given the Hurons the best of the start, the quick short strokes getting their boat under full headway before the others. But their advantage was short-lived, and it could be seen that as the turning buoys were approached they were last.

“Wonder if they’ll spring something new on the turn,” muttered Billy, leaning forward until he threatened to upset his canoe. “Ah, I thought so!”

The Delawares had reached the turn first with the Senecas a close second and the Algonquins third, but the leaders had not fairly straightened out for home when the Hurons turned their buoy as if on a pivot and actually had the lead.

In silence the spectators watched the flashing blades draw up the course. It was anybody’s race, a “heart-breaker,” as Spud Ely expressed it. Like clockwork the blades rose and fell. The Algonquins were using a long body swing. The Senecas swung their shoulders only, and their stroke was shorter and faster. The Hurons had dropped a little behind, but between the three leaders there was little to choose.

“It’s quite primeval, isn’t it?” said Mr. Upton as he returned the binoculars which Mr. Harrison had loaned him.

“That just expresses it,” replied the latter as pandemonium broke loose in shrill yells from the four tribes urging on their crews. “The forest setting, the Indian craft—it’s all like a picture out of early history.”

The voices of the captains could now be heard calling for the final spurt. The stroke in all four boats became terrific as, with heads bent, hanging far over the sides, the paddlers drove their blades through the water, recovered and drove them again, almost faster than the eye could follow. Ten yards from the finish the Senecas, paddling in perfect form, seemed fairly to lift their boat from the water. It was magnificent, and as they shot over the line, winners by a scant quarter length, all four tribes joined in giving them the Woodcraft yell.

The Algonquins were second, beating the Delawares by a scant half length. The score was tied.

The single event was next, and in this both Walter and Hal Harrison were entered. It was an eighth of a mile straight away. This event was confined to the younger boys, and Walter felt that he had an even chance for place, though Tobey of the Hurons was generally picked to win. Harrison was a dark horse. No one knew much about his paddling save his chief, who had coached him in private, and was very chary of his opinion to anxious inquirers.

"I'm going to beat you, Walt," said Hal, as they paddled down to the starting line.

"Not if I can help it," replied Walter with a good-natured laugh, "but if I'm going to be beaten there is no one I should rather have win than you, Hal. But the Delawares need those points, and I'm going to get 'em if I can."

It was Hal's first race, his novice event, and he was plainly nervous at the start, so that he got away poorly. But he soon recovered and settled down to his work in a way that brought a smile of satisfaction to the lips of Chief Avery watching from the finish line.

Hal had not told his father that he was entered for any of the events. Mr. Harrison had been talking with Dr. Merriam when the race was called, and had paid no attention to the boys going down to the start. It was not until the race was half over that he focussed his glasses on the canoes.

"Bless me, that looks like my boy out there!" he exclaimed, wiping his glasses to be sure that he saw clearly. Then to the delight of the spectators the man of millions showed that he was wholly human after all. He whooped and shouted like an overgrown boy. "Come on, Hal! Come on, boy!" he bellowed at the top of his lungs. "He's winning! He's winning! Come on, Hal! Hit her up! Hit her up!" And all the time he was pounding the man in front of him, quite oblivious of the fact that it was Dr. Merriam himself.

Hal was hitting it up. After the first few minutes of dumb surprise the Senecas had rallied to the support of their new champion, and as the boy heard his name over and over again at the end of the Seneca yell he ground his teeth and redoubled his efforts. Little by little he forged ahead.

Walter was putting up a game struggle, but he found that his grueling swim earlier in the afternoon was telling now, and in spite of all he could do open water was showing between his canoe and Hal's. "I'll get second, anyway," he muttered, and then as before the old slogan, "For the honor of the tribe. For the honor of the tribe," began hammering in his brain.

It was Hal's race, with Walter second, Buxby third, and Tobey, the expected winner, a poor fourth. Wigwam No. 2 was two points to the good.

The suspense had become almost unbearable as the last event for the afternoon was called. This was a "pack and carry" race, a novelty to most of the spectators, and in some respects the most interesting of all. Four canoes were placed side by side on the ground in front of headquarters. Beside each was spread a shelter tent, blankets and cooking outfit. The four chiefs took their places, each beside one of the outfits. At the signal gun each began to pack his outfit. As soon as he had finished he picked up his canoe, inverted it over his head and carried it to the lake. Returning for his pack he placed it in his canoe, paddled out around a buoy, back to shore, and carried canoe and pack to the starting point.

Woodhull won handily, but big Bob Seaforth, who got a good start and was counted on for second at least, broke a paddle and was put hopelessly out of it. This gave the Senecas and Hurons second and third respectively. The score was once more tied.

It was incredible! Never in the history of the camp had there been anything like it. The field sports over and the championship undecided! And now it hung on the outcome of a little woodcraft test that hitherto had been simply a pleasant part of the ceremony of lighting the last camp-fire—the test of the fire sticks. It was agreed that the winner should not only have the usual honor of lighting the fire, but that he should score five points for his tribe and wigwam, and that second and third should not count.

Evening mess was a hurried affair. There was too much excitement for eating. Promptly at eight o'clock Dr. Merriam appeared with the other members of the camp force and a few guests who had remained, and the tribes gathered in a circle around the huge pile of fire-wood in front of headquarters. Each chief selected five of his followers to represent his tribe. These squatted in four groups with their fire sticks before them on the ground. Behind each group stood an umpire to announce the first bona fide flame.

The silence was almost painful as Dr. Merriam raised his arm for the starting shot. There was a momentary stir as the boys hastily reached for their sticks, and then no sound save an occasional long breath and the whirr of the fire drills. Twenty seconds, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-three—"Buxby's fire!" cried a voice sharply, and then a mighty yell arose from the Delawares and Algonquins as Billy leaped forward and thrust his tiny blaze into the tinder of the dark pile before him. Wigwam No. 1 had won!

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