Summer Opportunities Complete Brown’s Vision

Each summer, after a few days of unnatural silence following graduation, campus regains a sense of activity. Summer classes begin, construction and maintenance projects pick up their pace, and a series of summer camps invade campus. Ranging from camps hosted by John Brown varsity athletes and staff to church gatherings or even the Arkansas Special Olympics, each midsummer week sees a new group of people enjoying the school’s resources.

The school’s levels of summer activity are hardly a recent development. JBU has been hosting summer classes since the 1920s, when high school graduates, college students, and teachers looking to advance their education were all able to take summer classes at JBU. For example, the 1928 “Summer Session,” lasted from the 28th of May through August 24 and offered 4 hours of credit for a $40 fee. Course options included algebra, Arkansas history, and license-renewal options.

Camps have been part of John Brown summers for over half a century. In the mid-1900s, all of the Brown properties played host to innumerable retreats and gatherings. For instance, in June of 1968, the Siloam campus hosted the Arkansas-Oklahoma Y-Teen Conference. Mayfield sheltered 81 high school girls and 15 leaders during their week-long course of classes and activities focused on leadership development and ethnic reconciliation. Four weeks later, JBU welcomed Benton County’s 168 members and leaders of 4-H clubs to campus. As it had in previous summers, JBU offered the chance for 4-H participants to spend two days hashing out the details of 20th century rural life through project evaluations, classroom instruction, and entertainment.

JBU’s role in the summer camp industry hasn’t been limited to hosting events. Neither has the Brown camp legacy been limited to the JBU campus until recent years. When there were five John Brown schools nationwide, each school would host a camp program during summer vacation. In the Californian gender-specific schools, camps were offered only to whatever sex normally attended the school. For instance, Brown Military Academy offered a camp for boys aged 4-18 through the summer, while the neighboring Brown School for Girls ran a program known as Camp Cielito. The exception to this rule was Camp Buddy, a co-ed program located on the Sulphur Springs campus and named after the nickname for the young John Brown, Jr. All camps, no matter what the location or the target group, were designed to keep their attendees outside as much as possible, and swimming lessons were almost always mandatory.

If these options weren’t enough, there were always other possibilities. Select high school students and graduates from both the Ozarkian and Californian schools were offered what became known as “A Summer School & Camp on Wheels.” Students

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ECHOES OF THE PAST

An excerpt from the April 19, 1991 edition of the Threefold Advocate

A sick skunk stumped the physical plant Monday, April 8, when the unwelcome guest was found staggering around the Health Complex.

The city pound was called, and a pound employee, who thought the skunk was acting strangely, solemnly did his duty. Its life and smell were snuffed out by the shot of a .22 rifle.

According to Everett Easley, director of the physical plant Monday, the skunk was not known to be rabid, as some have said. He said the head would have to be sent to Little Rock for tests to be sure.

Biology professor Dr. Larry Seward said it is quite unusual for a skunk to be out during the day, and this alone gave the skunk a shadow of suspicion.

According to Easley, skunks were a problem last year in the Duplex area and around the Health Complex. One even crawled inside the walls of the recreation center and died. Panels had to be removed to find the source of the horrendous smell.

Insights

From the works of John Brown, Sr.

It is common knowledge that JBU’s founder was a skilled orator and evangelist. However, an intrinsic part of such talents is the capability of entertaining an audience. Following are some examples of the proverbs and quips which spiced up Brown’s sermons and kept his listeners engaged.

- Personally, I would like to see the day come when every sword would be pounded into a pruning hook, and every jazz band into oblivion.
- The only way to avoid criticism as an evangelist is to do nothing, and then people will criticize you for that.
- If a boy wants to go to hell, he doesn’t have to advertise for an opening.
- [Just] because men “know books” is no sure evidence that they are really educated, or headed that way.
- From the sermons that some preachers preach, it must have been “windy weather” in the space where thoughts are made.
- You might as well try to reason with an adult cyclone as with a person in love, and the older the fool, the bigger the fool.
- This is an age of brevity – in music, speech, manners, and dress.
- Flattery is the meanest, nastiest sort of slander. If there is any person on earth I have to pray like sixty to keep on loving it is those old slobbering soap sticks. Everything is “beautiful” and “best” and “most correct” – slobber, slobber, slobber! I would rather be criticized by people with sense than slobbered over by old soap sticks.
- A lot of dear saints see the ladder alright, and their ladder sticks up into heaven, but never does get to “earth.”
- You might as well ask God to powder your nose as to pray for something you can do for yourself.
- Some people think they are the whetstones on which all bright minds sharpen.
- “Passing the buck” is the great year-round sport.
- When men get puffed up with egotism, there is always danger of a blow-out or a blow-up.
- Some wonder workers have the faith alright, if they can just get the other fellow to provide the cash.
- Because some men refuse to be “jellyfish” floating on the tide, they are branded by the brainless as “old fogies.”

Above: A 1954 brochure for a summer program at Brown Military Academy

Costs for the trip west were $300, but any Californians who took the bus east merely had to pay $200 in consideration for the cheaper cost of living, less attractive side trips, and rustic accommodations. Costs for the entire venture were kept even lower through the involvement of college students in the process. For instance, the advertising brochures for the camps were printed in the JBU print shop by students fulfilling their vocational requirements. In addition, the camps served as a means of procuring future income: the Ozarkian camp “on wheels” was admittedly designed in part to give high school students a chance to test whether they would enjoy the vocational schooling of the John Brown University or Academy campuses.