

# EASTERN BOYS GOING TO SCHOOL ON A WESTERN RANCH

## EL RANCHO BONITO, IN ARIZONA WHERE BEING A COWBOY IS PART OF THE CURRICULUM

# 19



ROPING AND SEPARATING CATTLE



BRANDING A YEARLING



EL RANCHO BONITO



H. D. EVANS HEAD MASTER



AROUND THE CAMP FIRE

**A** LOFTY, unobstructed brow sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought," or the "shining face, creeping, snail like, unwillingly to school," are no longer the signs manual of those favored young Americans who are pursuing their studies, English fashion, in the open.

While several of the out of door schools, whose aim is to promote vigor of body along with mental growth, have been opened in the last few years in California and Florida, the Evans tent school at El Rancho Bonito, near Mesa City, Ariz., is unique in its methods and has certainly proved its raison d'être.

Its students, drawn from some of the most cultured and wealthy families of Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Washington and other large cities, let loose from the trammels of fine clothes, rich foods, late hours and the various social obligations and customs that seem inseparable from the luxurious refinements of living in the east, have so quickly and joyously fitted into their frontier environment that they have been taken again and again when on cross country runs for genuine cowboy or forest rangers, until their speech of purest Bostonese or Philadelphianisms have betrayed them.

A far cry are these school days, where each young fellow possesses his own tent and horse, and even his own dog, if so inclined, and cares for them himself; where study is punctuated with hunting and camping expeditions, trips to the mountains, mines, Indian reservations, steer tying and branding contests; visits to prehistoric ruins, the big horse ranches, ostrich farms, almond orchards and orange groves that are marked features of the Salt River valley, Arizona; a far cry from the atmosphere of the average city preparatory school, with its crowded classrooms, heavy air and all the artificialities that necessarily encompass the dwellers in or near the great cities. Each boy is furnished with a tent-house, having board floor, shingled roof and canvas sides, which he takes care of himself.

Boys temporarily disabled by overzeal in study or athletics, pale, weak and anemic, yet anxious to keep up their class work, have found in this al fresco school life, where development of brawn keeps pace with that of brain, an attractive and delightful solution of how to get strong and be happy in doing so.

No set curriculum is followed, but endeavor is made to give each boy those studies and the particular training that will best fulfill his physical and intellectual needs.

That this has proved eminently successful is borne out by the fact that the students, without exception, have grown robust and vigorous, with never a call necessary for physician or nurse, and that all who have taken their examinations for Harvard and other universities of like rank have entered without conditions.

The outfit which pupils are advised to bring with them furnishes a clew to the kind of life they are to lead, driving, flannel shirts, tennis shoes, riding clothes and rainproof coat are included in the outfit, and it is suggested that the proper everyday dress for the school ranch is a dark blue serge shirt with corduroy, khaki or blue denim trousers.

H. D. Evans, the head master, is an M. A., and Lupton and Hebbelwhite exhibitor of St. Johns college, Cambridge university, England, and was for several years assistant master at Eton, England, where coaching for the army and navy was a specialty. He is ably assisted by his wife, a New York woman of culture and gracious personality.

The school started in 1902 with three boys from Detroit, Mich., one of them the son of Col. F. J. Hecker, of the isthmian canal commission. During one of several camping trips of the year the boys "worked for their board," driving seventy head of young cattle to Arlington in four days, and very proud of the job they were. In the spring of that year one of the fellows left the ranch with one saddle horse and fell to relate his adventures after a trip of about 2,000 miles. One of the three went to Yale from the ranch and won a scholarship in his freshman year.

The next year there were five boys, one of them the son of Douglas Merriam of Rhinebeck and two others of prominent Boston families, one a Lowell and the other a Beebe. There were more camping trips, with the excite-

ments of duck shooting and coyote hunting to add to the liveliness of the existence. The boys were especially proud of killing five coyotes when the visiting parents and sister of one of the eastern boys rode with them on a midwinter hunt.

Since then the school has been enlarged, but the number of pupils received is still limited, as that is a part of the theory on which its advantages are based. A young Roosevelt from Oyster Bay, a relative of President Roosevelt, is one of the pupils this year, and there are sons of other equally prominent families. In the crib, where the boys record their events of the year, statements like the following appear: "We spent 15 weeks on a 1,500 mile trip to the Grand canyon, Moki snake dance and White mountains during the summer months."

"In the fall we started for Casa Grande, but were interrupted by the



as much facility as he does his banjo, takes unmitigated pride in seeing that his charges grow as broad and fat and strong as his pet pig, Lillie. On the short camping trips the boys manage the frying pan for themselves, but on the long trips Walter goes along to cook for his boys.

There is exceptional opportunity for archaeological research all about Mesa. Prof. J. Walter Fawkes of the bureau of American ethnology, who has charge of the Smithsonian excavations now being made at Casa Grande, near Florence—a favorite camping trip for the students—on a visit to El Rancho Bonito last week, declared that rich as were the archaeological finds at Casa Grande, it was more than possible that excavations in the tumuli near the school would prove the existence of even larger ruins and richer archaeological treasure. Under the guidance of Professor Fawkes the boys and professors measured, paced and proved to their own satisfaction the presence of

be sure." The roads are one for bicycling, and swimming in the cottonwood fringed canal is a frequent diversion. It goes without saying that horseback riding and bronco "busting" furnish the greatest amount of pleasure along varied lines.

From the initial practice on the back of Daisy, the long suffering family cow, who has grown used to scientific bucking, until past master of the saddle they can sweep over the hard desert roads with the dash and aplomb of real cowboys, there is constant and satisfying companionship between master and mount. Each boy names and cares for his own and no Arab sheik takes more pride in the achievements of his thoroughbred than each boy in his horse. It is not long before the boys are adepts at bronco "busting" and polo, can speed the flying lariat with precision, ride cavalry, Cossack, English or Indian fashion and do all the varied stunts that the fertile imagination and ingenuity of a dozen boys can conceive or execute.

The dignified Countess von Pumpinheimer, whose duty it has been these many years to make the wheels go round that pump the water into the great tank, is the only animal on the ranch whose advancing age and unparalleled usefulness have spared her from all the liberties that have been taken with the others.

While the boys find plenty to interest them and an abundance of field work in geology, mineralogy and botany, they are equally alert in studying the various racial types that are found here. In a very short time they can turn a graceful time of day with the Mexicans in their own language, say "How" to the patriarchal Indians who here abound or lend an attentive or unwilling ear to the old lion hunter who lives in a little shack with only his bloodhounds for company, while he tells strange stories of all his adventures with painted Apaches and wily beasts of prey.

Then there is the wild "squam man" with his large family, who leads a nomadic and patriarchal life. Formerly a New York man, he fell in love with the out of door life during the civil war, swore then that never again would he sleep under a roof, and has stuck to his vow.

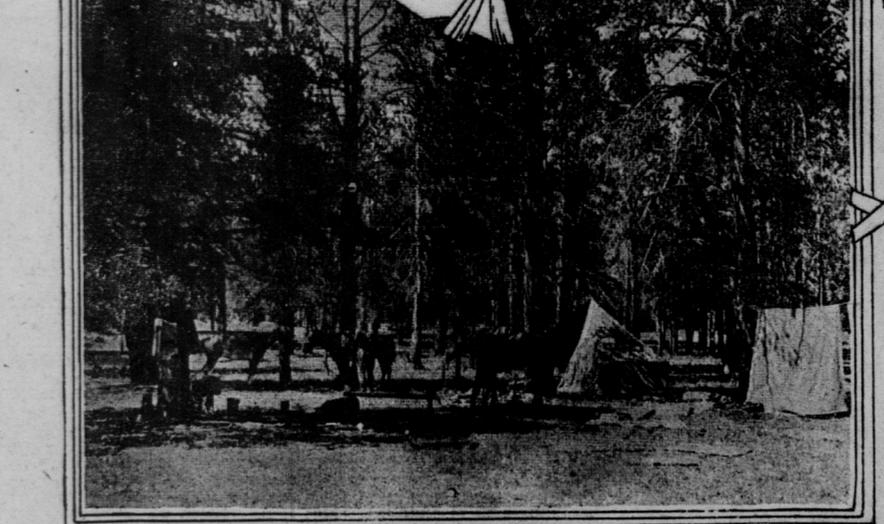
But who would sleep under a roof in Arizona when he can have the sky for a ceiling and the desert for a floor?

In April or early May, when the days get too hot for comfort in the valley, everything is made ready at El Rancho Bonito for the long trek to Mr. Evans'

there, protected from the rain that started late in the evening. A few of the less fortunate stood the rain as long as they could, and then shortly after midnight saddled their horses and rode to Fish Creek, where there was shelter, the rest of the party joining them the next day.

"We went up to Roosevelt the morning after, where, through the courtesy of Chester Smith, the head of the government camp, we were conducted over the lower levels, seeing the coffer dam, a temporary barrier built while the dam itself is under construction, the power house and the cement mill. After eating a hearty luncheon at the government's expense we crossed the river in an iron bucket suspended by cables over a drop of 250 feet, coming back by a wobbly suspension bridge. We got back at the end of eight days, and some were badly in need of a shave and glad to get back in the land of running water and bathtubs."

A coyote roundup, in which all the countryside took part—hunters, ranchmen, cowboys, fat Mormons and lean Gentiles, with even a large contingent of the reservation Indians with their bows and arrows—is one of the popular desert pastimes. Beginning in a large circle all hands gradually draw in, riding recklessly over bumpy clumps of sagebrush and mesquite, through dry arroyos and among the prickly chollas and other cacti, the lines gradually converging until the predatory foxes and coyotes are encircled and held at bay by the dogs until dispatched or lassoed by the hunters. As the excitement deepens the shrill whoops of the Indians, which has always been one of their crowning accomplishments, is almost shadowed by the "roo-fins" of the



A CAMP IN THE TIMBER

boys, for a splendid lung developer is this desert air.

This is the kind of notice that fills the boys' hearts with joy: "There will be a big coyote hunt next Saturday, January 6. Everybody invited. All meet at Chandler's ranch at 10 a. m. Come one and all."

"OSIE BARKLEY, Manager."

In response to this notice the boys tied a light lunch to their saddles and hastened to the appointed place. There they waited for the cow punchers to get together. Every one had brought some kind of a dog, most of them mongrels, but a few good wolfhounds that were capable of tackling any coyote they might come across. The party rode in the form of a half circle, dividing the dogs between the two ends. The riders were about 100 yards apart. After jogging quietly for a short time one of the ends shouted, "We're off." One by one the horses started up until all had joined in the chase to keep up with the leader. Some had seen the coyote and others were trying to keep up with those who had. The dogs were in full cry with the wolfhounds in the lead. As the circle grew smaller the coyote was plainly seen. The dogs were upon him, but he put up a stiff fight. Watching his opportunity one of the men put an end to the struggle by shooting the coyote. This was the first of several other good runs during the day. Sometimes the boys capture a coyote alive by means of a lariat.

The boys are very fond of swimming and a chute the chutes about four miles from the ranch has furnished the best sport in this line. The chute, which is used to conduct the water from an upper canal

BREAKING IN A TENDERFOOT



WALTER'S PET PIG "LILLIE"



FORDING A STREAM

is 100 feet long, with a 30 foot drop. The touch of adventure connected with the leap into the torrent of water at the top and the rapid descent in toward the pool below, with the rolling and tossing in the whirlpool, coming to the surface 50 feet beyond, makes this a thrilling experience, intensified by swimming the horses across a deep canal beyond.

To those wishing to get an insight into ranch work in its various branches, fruit and bee culture, stock raising and irrigation every facility is offered. One of the finest herds of Galloway cattle in the United States is in the immediate neighborhood. Also there is a large ostrich farm. It is not generally known that Salt River valley birds now number three fourths of all the ostriches in the United States, one farmer alone having a flock of over 1,000. The orange groves and melon fields in the vicinity are also a source of great delight to the students, who are not only on the qui vive to see the wonders of agricultural and horticultural growth under the splendid systems of irrigation carried on in the garden spot of the southwest, but are not above testing the fruits thereof—and that to the limit.

Unlike the policy of the Squeezers schools, one of the tenets of this desert school is that growing boys must be well fed, and Walter, the popular cook, well fed, and Walter, the popular cook,

subdivided these old treasure houses of the ancient Aztecs, covered these centuries by the drifting sands of the great American desert.

Short camping trips are often taken to the pictured rocks, Montezuma's well and castle, and other cliff dwellings for which Arizona is famous.

The equable winter climate is well adapted to every form of athletics. A member of his college football team, Mr. Evans is in thorough sympathy with whatever exercise tends to promote physical development. There is a tennis court on the ranch, and baseball and tennis matches are frequently played between the El Rancho Bonito teams and those of the high school or Temple Normal. Running is just now a favorite exercise, and in their track suits the boys may frequently be seen sprinting in most approved form over the hard desert floor or up the shaded ranch lanes. The boys still tell with glee the experience of young Merritt of Rhinebeck, N. Y., who was the first to appear in public in his track suit. While galloping speeding down a country road he heard a great "holloing" from a Mormon ranchman, who in one breath was calling to his hired man to bring him his horse and lariat for "a crazy man from the 'sylum was loose." The hired man was better informed. "Humph!" he ejaculated. "That's another one of them Evans boys, you may