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WOODCRAFT SERIES
SIGNS, SIGNALS AND SYMBOLS

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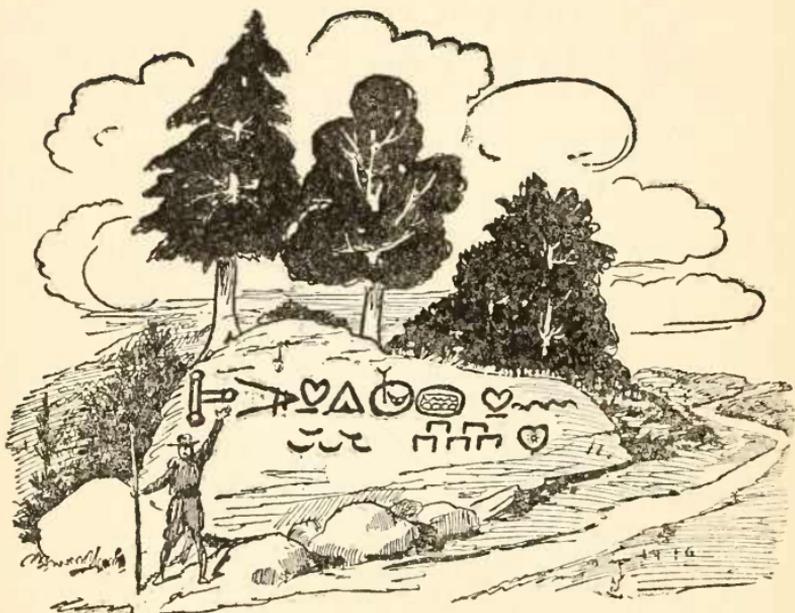
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THE PICTURE ROCK BY THE TRAIL

THESE SYMBOLS SIGNIFY:

Easy two miles to good camp, plenty of food and good water, horses, boats, and a jolly time

WOODCRAFT SERIES

**THE AMERICAN BOYS'
BOOK OF SIGNS,
SIGNALS AND SYMBOLS**

BY
DAN BEARD

FOUNDER OF THE FIRST BOY SCOUTS SOCIETY
AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICAN BOYS' BOOK OF BUGS, BUTTERFLIES
AND BEETLES," ETC.

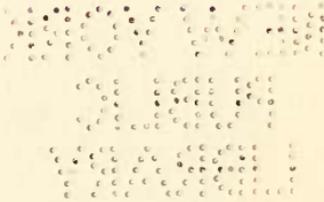
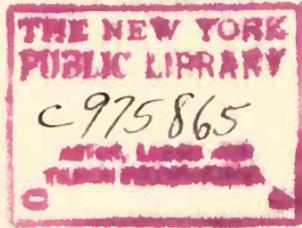
WITH 362 ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



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PREFACE

FOR years the writer has been working on these ideographs, picturegraphs, tramps,' yeggmen's, scouts,' trappers,' gypsies' and Indian signs, symbols and signals, not with the object of writing a cumbersome, more or less accurate, dictionary, but for the purpose of selecting such systems of signs as may be of use to the boys in their games in the open. Especially are these cryptograms, hieroglyphics, cabalistic figures and emblems useful to our youthful army of Boy Scouts and it is for them, particularly that this book was written, although now that war is declared it is hoped that some hints herein may be of service to the fighting men of our country.

The desire to be of help to our great nation in everything he does for boys prompted the author to rewrite and enlarge this whole book after it was in the hands of the publishers. This made it necessary to postpone its publication for a year. Weather signs and animal signs have been added because of the demand for them from the boys themselves.

DANIEL CARTER BEARD

FLUSHING, L. I.
MAY 1, 1918

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SIGNS, SIGNALS AND SYMBOLS

INTRODUCTION

THE Goddess of Liberty is a sign or symbol representing no real person or god, but she does represent the idea of human freedom. Columbia in a like manner represents America as Britannia does Great Britain. The Bear is the totem, or sign, of Russia, the Bald-headed Eagle the totem of United States.

AMERICAN GUMPTION

It takes gumption to really understand these things, and the American boy is supposed to possess a large amount of this article in his make-up; in fact, this is supposed to be also true of the American man. Gumption is a good old-fashioned word which implies a multitude of virtues. Brother Jonathan himself typifies gumption, that is, he stands for and is the sign of gumption. But how many of my readers know who is Brother Jonathan?

Brother Jonathan has been neglected lately and Uncle Sam has usurped his place in our newspaper and magazine cartoons, but the two characters are not one and the same person. Brother Jonathan represents the whole of the American people put through the melting pot and moulded into one person. Brother Jonathan *is the people and not the government*, he is the symbol of democracy.

Uncle Sam represents the machine of the government, or the organized power used to govern our nation.

Of course, here in America where the people govern

themselves, one is apt to mix these two characters. But there is just the same difference between Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan as there is between the King and the people, or the King of England and John Bull. The King may represent the people and may not; for instance, John Bull may discharge the King at any time but the King could never discharge John Bull. Remember that both John Bull and Brother Jonathan represent the peoples of their respective countries, and that Uncle Sam and the crown represent the governments, and all of these imaginary persons are signs and symbols representing ideas.

Pioneers, trappers, surveyors, hunters, fishermen, and boys, as well as all the vagabonds of the road, including the hoboës, tramps, yeggmen, gypsies, and the American Indians, all have a system of trail signs—picturegraphs, ideographs, ciphers and hieroglyphics, with meanings understood by the initiated. Recently the automobilists have added their contribution to the road signs, and the great usefulness of all these signs lies in the fact that if one understands the symbol, one does not need to understand the language of the sign-maker.

For instance, if the traveler sees on a rock by the side of the trail or a fence, or on a barn by the roadside, the sign of danger, no matter what tongue is used by the traveler he knows that he must proceed with caution, for that sign spells danger in every language; it is a symbol representing the idea of danger.

The author has made no attempt to invent a system of signs, for the very good reason that there are signs already in use, some of which have stood the test of centuries, and the collection in this book is made up from such recognized systems and is used either in their original form or in combination with one of the other original systems.

Almost all the trail signs of the open are taken from the American Indian and the American Buckskin men, and also almost all of the signs indicating natural phenomena, such as rain, cloud, water, day, night, month, etc., are taken directly from the Indians.

The poetry of the Indians' minds is displayed in their symbols as well as in their figurative language, which, for instance, has no such word as "merry," but designates that state of mind most beautifully by calling it sunshine in the heart.

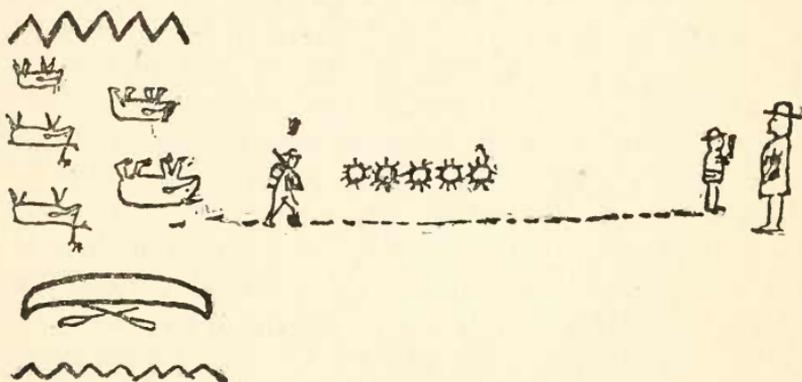
But most of the chalk-signs, such as are used on fences, barns, and sign-posts are cribbed from the "Knights of the Road," in other words from hoboos and tramps, and are more sordid in their meanings than those of the white trappers or red Indians. The signs indicating color are taken from heraldry.

It was no small task to secure the vagabonds' secret symbols and their meaning; they were picked up one by one and verified as the opportunity occurred, for they are especially guarded secrets among the vagabonds and it is hoped that the publishing of them and making them free to all will accomplish two purposes, one in supplying a useful system of road signs to the hunters, fishermen, Boy Scouts and other pedestrians, and the other in defeating the purposes of the underworld by robbing these signs of their secrecy.

A householder, finding the tramp sign of the easy mark on his house, may erase the same and substitute the danger mark, and the Boy Scout, the pedestrian, the hunter and the fisherman may use the easy mark to show the easy trail and the danger mark to show the dangerous trail. Besides which all sorts of useful information may be conveyed by one patrol of scouts to those following by the use of a few

chalk-marks on a board fence or sidewalk. By putting the sign of the past, then the sign of direction, then the sign of noon and the sign of scout drawn across the wavy line of direction, one will see that a Boy Scout passed here at noon. If necessary, a long letter or communication may be written by the use of the signs here given, a letter which will be much shorter than written words.

PICTUREGRAPH LETTER RECEIVED BY THE AUTHOR FROM A HUNTING FRIEND THEN IN THE WILDS OF THE PEACE RIVER COUNTRY



The angular line at the top of the letter represents mountains. The first animal to the left is a goat we know from its straight horns, breeches and peglike feet. Underneath that is a caribou, which we know from the shape of its horns. Underneath that is another caribou. To the right, lying on its back, is a bear. Underneath that is another bear with claws, which must be a grizzly bear. At the bottom the canoe is cached with paddles under it. The man has a pack on his back and a gun on his shoulder and is making tracks toward the right. Over his head is his totem, which tells who he is. There is a dotted line to where the man appears again, saluting another man. In front of the man with the gun are five suns. This would indicate that it will be five days before the man has finished the dotted line. The animals all being on their backs tell us that they are dead and it all reads, "I have been hunting in the mountains. I bagged one rocky mountain goat, two caribou, one black bear, and one grizzly bear. I have cached my canoe and started home. I will see you in five days."

The author has taken the liberty of discarding many signs with the same meaning as that of other signs in the same system and adopting such as seemed to correspond with a general universal system. This must not be understood to mean that but one sign, for instance, for danger, is retained; on the contrary, we give the flag-sign, the chalk-sign, the trail-sign and the wilderness sign for danger, but we do not duplicate these in the same system.

CHAPTER I

SIGNS OF DIRECTION

AS FOUND ON SIGN-POSTS AND AS MARKED WITH PENCIL OR CHALK ON
FENCES, BARNS, SHEDS AND TELEPHONE POLES

The signs of direction may be divided into two general families; the first is composed of painted sign-posts and chalk-marks used in the more settled parts of the community and the second is made up of what might be termed the wilderness signs of direction. In this second family are included trappers,' voyagers,' Indians' and gypsy signs made of the material found in the wilderness, the trails or the road.

Everyone should be familiar enough with these signs to read and use them intelligently. For instance, Fig. 1 is the traffic sign adopted by cities in order to prevent the streets from becoming blockaded; this is simple and explains itself; it is a command for all vehicles to take the direction in which the arrow points. But there are other signs here given, which are understood by few people. For instance, Fig. 6, which is a chalk or pencil sign used by yeggmen and hoboes to warn comrades that they must hit the trail and disappear as quickly as possible. Many a householder might avoid serious inconvenience, if not disaster, by becoming familiar with such signs and using them to their own advantage in place of allowing the underworld and enemies of society to monopolize their use. With boys, these signs suggest all sorts of games of trailing and searching for hidden treasure and open a vast field of new sports.

SIGNS OF DIRECTION

Sign-post and Chalk-signs

Fig. 1. White arrow in parallelogram cutting a circle horizontally. Go this way only. (Traffic sign.)

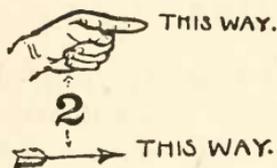


Fig. 2. Hand with index finger pointing, or an arrow. Usually on painted signs and maps indicating that the proper direction is that indicated by the point of the arrow or the pointing finger. (Sign-boards.)

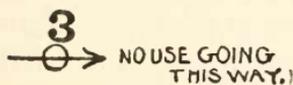


Fig. 3. An arrow with a circle on its shaft means literally "nothing doing" in this direction. (Hobo and wilderness Scout Sign.)

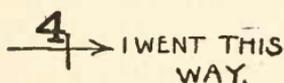


Fig. 4. Arrow with a perpendicular line across the shaft indicates that the leading man, scout or person left the beaten trail at point marked and took the direction indicated by the arrow. Both Figures 3 and 4 are used on explorers' and military maps. (Wilderness Scout Sign.)

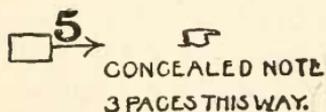


Fig. 5. An arrow with a parallelogram where the feathers should be, tells the reader that a message, a letter, or a document of some kind is concealed three paces from the sign in the direction indicated by the arrow. (English Boy Scout Sign.)

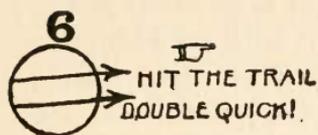


Fig. 6. Circle with two arrows across it is a command to move on quickly. A chalk-sign used by hoboes, yeggmen and vagabonds. Usually a warning that the constable or police are looking for them. (Tramp Sign.)

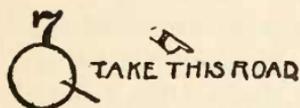


Fig. 7. Circle with dash cutting the circumference. Used at cross-roads. Means take the trail pointed to by the line. (Hobo sign.)



Fig. 8. The letter V placed horizontally is really the outline of an arrow-head with the same meaning as the pointing hand and the arrow. (Fig. 2.) A sign of direction.

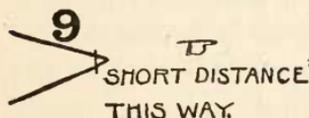


Fig. 9. Is the same as Fig. 8 but you will note it has a short line near its point, or apex. This means that camp or the place of rendezvous is but a short distance ahead in the direction indicated. (Modification of Indian Stick sign.)

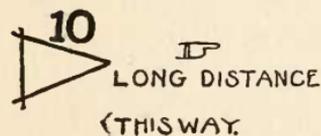


Fig. 10. The same as Figure 9 but in this case the vertical line is at the open wide part of the V in place of at the point. Meaning a long distance to camp. (Adapted from the Indian Trail signs.)