

It was many years ago when a young disabled boy sat on the sidelines at a YMCA camp. He cheered his friends on, always wearing a smile and shared all he had to give -- his Christian (God-like) ideals and happy way of looking at everything -- with everyone.

On the last night of camp, a bandanna was tied around his neck as a humble symbol from the campers to recognize his Christ (God)-like way of living. From this small beginning comes the tradition of a little "rag" of cloth, today called the Rag. The Rag represents the desire of its wearer to follow the examples Christ (God) set for us all.

What does the Rag signify? The Rag is an outward symbol of an inner challenge you wish to accept. It is a piece of cloth to remind us of the challenge we accept at camp and continue to carry out while we are away from camp. The Rag is a personal and voluntary way of challenging yourself to improve your way of life. Your promise of improvement is between you and God. The responsibility to live up to this challenge is yours. God will see your success in fulfilling this desire to live a better life; your family, friends, and anyone you meet should see it too.

Now yours to share is the experience of coming close to God through the dedication to become more God-like in your thinking and acting.

Read this book further to decide whether YOU want to become a Ragger and live such a life.

THE RAG

As stated previously, the Rag is an outward symbol of the acceptance of an inner challenge for growth. Its symbolism is God-centered, sacred, and personal. The decision to become a Ragger must rest with you.

Each color has a specific meaning. Linked to the meaning of a particular rag is your personal challenge for growth.

THE BLUE RAG

1. Loyalty to God
2. Loyalty to country
3. Loyalty to one's best self
4. Loyalty to the Ragers' Creed

LOYALTY

(Four Square Life)

THE SILVER RAG

Respect and appreciation for:

1. The principles that Christ gave to the world
2. My country
3. My fellow man
4. Myself

RESPECT & APPRECIATION

(Christian Decision)

THE BROWN RAG

1. Serve God
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

SERVICE

(Service to Others)

THE GOLD RAG

1. Understanding of others
2. Concern for others

BENEVOLENCE

(Understanding Others)

THE RED RAG

1. Sacrifice of time
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

SACRIFICE

(Leadership and Humility)

THE PURPLE RAG

HIGH AND NOBLE LIVING

(Noble Life)

THE WHITE RAG

DEDICATION TO A LIFE OF

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

(Life Service)

RAG TIER'S WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:

RAG ACCEPTED BY:

MY RAG WAS TIED BY:

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

MY GUIDE (IF DIFFERENT FROM TIER):

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

THE MEANING OF THE RAG

We refer to our rags as rags because that is exactly what they are --- worthless pieces of cloth. You couldn't sell your rag; it isn't worth much money. Your rag has only the meaning YOU give it. The Rag program is open to people of all religious faiths.

THE RAG IS NOT

THE RAG IS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. A decoration | 1. A symbol |
| 2. An award for achievement | 2. A challenge for growth |
| 3. A reward | 3. A responsibility |
| 4. A "pat " on the back | 4. A "push" forward |
| 5. Measuring myself by others | 5. Measuring myself by God |
| 6. "I AM FIRST" | 6. "I AM THIRD" |
| 7. Self-centered | 7. God-centered |
| 8. I am good, or being good | 8. I want to be better |
| 9. Knowing about God, talking about God | 9. Knowing God, talking to God |
| 10. Sight (seeing things as they are) | 10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be) |
| 11. A status symbol | 11. A personal calling to humility |

THE BROWN RAG

Acceptance of the Brown Rag is an acceptance to be of service to God and one's fellowman.

When you became a Silver Ragger you challenged yourself to respect and appreciate the Christian way of life. Do you feel you measured up to your challenge? In what way(s) was it most difficult?

The Purple Rag was conceived as a new step for 18-year olds and over. It was an advancement and challenge to the good life for those men who were not going into full time Christian service.

The Rag has had a long and eventful life of 35 years. It has changed in many ways, but it is still an instrument to aid in the building of Christian character at YMCA summer camps. The real test of the Rag is in how its members conduct themselves in the year round program of the YMCA, and in their home, school, church and community.

Homer Gould of the Los Angeles YMCA tried changes involving campers in the selection of Raggars.

Sheldon Swenson, Conley Davis and others proposed that the rag should be a challenge available to every camper who sincerely accepted it. Acceptance required sharing with a counselor the meaning associated with a specific color rag and how it tied into the candidate's personal needs.

Over a period of fifty years the Rag has been and continues to be a challenging symbol of strength and Christian character, leadership and service. It is the key to the spirit of Christian fellowship at Camp Arbolado.

THE RAGGERS' CREED

I would be true, for there are those who trust me,
I would be pure, for there are those who care,
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer,
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

I would be friend to all, the foe, the friendless,
I would be giving and forget the gift,
I would be humble, for I know my weakness,
I would look up and laugh, and love and lift.

THE HISTORY OF THE RAG

In the summer of 1914, Tom Caldwell, Boy's Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, presented the first Blue Rags to boys living up to certain standards in camp. He conceived the idea of giving a blue bandanna as an award for character attributes such as good health habits, morals, helpfulness, cheerfulness, promptness and dependability. This idea contrasted with the San Francisco 'Y' policy of presenting an athletic award for achievement in certain specified athletic activities. All campers could be recognized socially for constructive attitudes and cooperation.

In the same year, two outstanding boys received Red Rags as advanced recognition. Most of the other boys received Blue Rags. They were called out at campfire and bandannas tied around their necks.

In 1915, the story of King Arthur and his Knights suggested a ceremony of "Knighting" the boys with Rags, and Tom Caldwell was called the "King" of Ragers. Ray Ogden, Associate Boys, Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, suggested "I would be true" as the Ragers' Creed and it was adopted. The ceremony was given on a mountain peak near camp. D.F. Ewings and C.F. Martin wrote a Red Rag ceremony in 1916.

In 1918, Ralph Cole, State Secretary, visited the Oakland the 'Y' camp, recognized the values in the system and suggested the plan to other camps. There were five young men planning to go into YMCA work including Louis Meillette, Bob Hutchison, and Roland Ure. Tom Caldwell wrote a White Rag ceremony for them. Its use was generally restricted to those going into Christian work. Later at a special ceremony in Los Angeles, Louis Meillette presented Tom Caldwell with a White Rag as "King of Ragers" in November 1924.

In 1932, the Los Angeles YMCA under Homer Gould, suggested a new method of telling the boy his selection for membership. Up to that time, boys were called out at campfire and given a list of requirements to learn for a ceremony the following day or so. The new idea was to have all the Ragers called together by the Director and the list read to them. Volunteers were to look up the individuals chosen and bring them to the ceremonial spot without having to learn any material.

The Gold Rag was conceived as a step for 15-year olds and over. The idea was to encourage study of a concern for the economic and social order, to emphasize the inclusive gospel of all races and creeds, and economic groups. The World Service Program of the YMCA was tied in with this ceremony.

"FOUR THINGS" (Henry Van Dyke)

Four things a person must learn to do
If he(he) would make his(her) record true:
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his(her) fellowman sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

1. Why are these four things important to keep in mind?

PHIL 4:8

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

2. How can you more fully develop a Christian character?

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 4-8

“Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

3. What does friendship mean?

A RAG IS THE OUTWARD SYMBOL OF AN INNER CHALLENGE YOU WANT TO ACCEPT. YOUR RAG CHALLENGE SHOULD AFFECT YOUR LIFE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT YOU CAN FEEL A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WITHIN YOURSELF AND OTHERS CAN EXPERIENCE THIS CHANGE.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

What personal goal do I want to strive for as a Brown Ragger?

How do I plan to do this?

"NOT TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE"

O Lord, I pray, that from this day
No love of ease nor pride prevent my good intent
Not to be pleased, but to please.

This, too, I pray, that from this day
I may not swerve by foot or hand from thy command
Not to be served, but to serve.

**WHENEVER WE LIFT UP ANOTHER PERSON'S BURDEN, WE
GAIN MORE STRENGTH TO CARRY OUR OWN**

"THE FORGOTTEN PERSON" (CONTD)

Let us remember all his(her) tragic lot ---
Remember, or else be ourselves forgot!
All honor to the one that in this hour
Cries to the world as from a lighted tower ---
Cries for the Man(Woman) Forgotten. Honor the one
Who asks for him(her) a glad place in the sun.
He(she) is a voice for the voiceless. Now, indeed,
We have a tongue that cries the mortal need.

8. What does this poem teach us about:

a. Humility?

b. Serving God and your fellow man?

c. Becoming more aware of your fellow man?

4. Are other people better for having known you? How can you serve God through your friendships?

5. Are your friendships:

a. Natural or do you put up a false front?

b. Making you selfish or unselfish?

c. Making you truthful or lie to others?

d. Developing your personality or dwarfing it?

"THE GATE OF THE YEAR"

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,
"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown."

He said to me,

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. It shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way."

6. You can only serve God and your fellowman by growing in understanding and having a closer fellowship with God. How can you do this at camp?

7. How can you do this when you get home?

"THE FORGOTTEN PERSON" (Edwin Markham)

Not on our golden fortunes builded high ---
Not on our boasts that soar the sky ---
Not upon these is resting this hour
The fate of the future; but upon the power
Of him(her) who is forgotten --- yes, on him(her)
Rest all our hopes reaching from rim to rim.
In him(her) we see all of earth's toiling bands,
With crooked backs, scarred faces, shattered hands.

He(she) seeks no office and he(she) asks no praise
For all the patient labor of his(her) days.
He(she) is the one supporting the huge weight;
He(she) is the one guarding the country's gate.
He(she) bears the burdens of these earthly ways:
We pile the debts, he(she) is the one who pays.
He(she) is the one who holds the solid power
To steady nations in their trembling hour.
Behold him(her) as he(she) silently goes by.
For it is at his(her) word that nations die.

Shattered with loss and lack,
He(she) is the one who holds upon his(her) back
The continent and all its mighty loads ---
This toiler makes possible the roads
On which the gilded thousands travel free ---
Makes possible our feasts, our roaring boards,
Our poms, our easy days, our golden hoards.
He(she) gives stability to nations:
He(she) makes possible our nation, sea to sea.
His(her) strength makes possible our college walls ---
Makes possible our legislative halls ---
Makes possible our churches soaring high
With spires, the fingers pointing to the sky.

Shalt then this man(woman) go hungry, here in lands
Blest by his(her) honor, builded by his(her) hands?
Do something for him(her): let him(her) never be
Forgotten: let him(her) have his(her) daily bread:
He(she) who has fed us, let him(her) now be fed.