We may as well say straight out that this article deals with an unfortunate juxtaposition of two phrases in many of our dictionaries: Camp Fire Girl and Camp Follower. We have put considerable thought on the wisdom of writing this piece, for the subject of Camp Followers may be somewhat taboo in certain quarters, if not actually X-rated. But the fact remains: Camp Follower does follow Camp Fire Girl in a number of dictionaries, and in the ones in which it does not, another questionable phrase may be inserted which does little to help the matter.

But whether Camp Followers and Camp Following is suitable subject matter or not, it is extremely interesting, and research quickly projects one into the dim history of ancient Asia Minor and the conquests of Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, and of course, the Greeks. We read in Xenophon of the cumbersome, mile-long baggage trains creaking their weary, interminable way to the far confines of the then-known world, and its conquest; of how Cyrus placed his cavalry in the van of the marching order, and behind it the baggage -- long columns of waggons and beasts of burden, with the main body of the army behind them so that 'if any of the baggage train fell back, the officers would see they did not lose their places in the march'. The importance of their supply to the army as a whole is pointed up in this passage. Later history records the servants -- half-soldier, half-sutler -- attending the needs of the Byzantine cavalry-men of the Eighth Century, and our contemporary, General Montgomery, referring to them in his study of warfare, notes that ease and creature comforts need not necessarily detract from the efficiency of a fighting man. In the Seventeenth Century, the greatly increased size of European armies tended to lead to complete exhaustion of the areas on which the victors were quartered, and made the capture of such lands valueless to them. Gustavus Adolphus, the great Swedish king and general, turned his genius to the reorganization and improvement of the army commissariat along much the same lines as those used by the Romans with their system of depots.

Whether or not sutling is a proper subject for a logological article may be uncertain, but who can read without some emotion of the ill-fated Spanish galleons of the great Armada which set sail so bravely in the Summer of 1588 to bring England to her knees; or of the few vessels (or, Fleet Followers) which, filled only with females, followed the heavily-armed ships. As Hakluyt tells it, 'It was not lawful of any man under grievous penaltie, to carry any woman ... in the Fleete; for which cause the women hired certain shippes, wherein they sailed after the Navie: some of which being driven by tempest upon the coast of
France. Or again, can one forget the tragic description of the 7th Cavalry, under the command of General Custer, for the Little Big Horn -- recalled for us by the General's widow in her memoirs -- and of how the long column of troopers and supply-wagons wound its way out of the garrison, past the cabins of the laundresses and their children, who waved handkerchiefs and wept for their departing friends as though in anticipation of the terrible events to come? A sombre and touching picture indeed and one which seems to beg for inclusion in our piece.

Here, the reader may well question the reason for this brief and necessarily incomplete excursion into a subject so far removed from our way of life; and we must explain that our interest and concern stems from feelings for our daughter, who not long ago joined that splendid organization, the Camp Fire Girls. It can be easily verified that the phrase Camp Fire Girls more often than not immediately precedes Camp Follower in English dictionaries (as mentioned above) and we feel this to be an unfortunate juxtaposition of phrases. For readers whose daughters may have joined the Girl Guides (who have no like problem), or perhaps do not have daughters at all, it should be said that the Camp Fire Girls was founded in or around 1910 by Luther Gulick, 'to perpetuate the spiritual ideas of the home and to develop health and character -- further, the girls of each Camp Fire, or local chapter, are of three ranks: the Wood Gatherers, Fire Makers, and Torch Bearers. Advancement from one order to the next higher being contingent upon the performance of certain useful tasks, and the attainment of honors in homemaking, healthcraft, campercraft, handicraft, naturecraft, business, and citizenship'. One can hardly compare these lofty aims with those of the logistically-oriented groups bent on revitelling an army.

It is an embarrassment to find one group following so closely on the heels of the other, as it were. An answer to the problem presents itself: the coinage of words to insert between our uneasy neighbors, hence widening the gap between them. True, it might take a little while before our neologisms took on sufficient status to warrant inclusion in a dictionary, but we can wait, and the wait may turn out to have been worthwhile.

An inspection of Camp Fire and Camp Follower shows that we must search for an interpolation after the 'f' of Fire, somewhere between 'i' and 'o', inclusive -- 'i', 'k', 'l', 'm' and 'n' being at our disposal. A few possible coinages present themselves and I am sure that readers will be quick to notice others: C. Flocculation and C. Floozie are discarded as being unsuitable. C. Finicky is a possibility, defined as 'the mental pattern of a person who learns the rules of an overly-scrupulous organization so well that it has had a lasting effect on his life, persisting long after leaving the organization'. Another possibility is C. Fixation, a hitherto-unnoted state of mind (1) of a child who cannot wait for Summer to come so that he can return to his Camp, or (2) of a person whose life has been devoted to running summer camps. Another possibility for insertion, which I frankly like, is C. Fizzle, defined as 'the traumatic experiences of an unsuccessful young camper, so devastating as to necessitate his withdrawal from the camp'.

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In coming, including placed words: BC bocaccio, BD bedaut, BF bouffe, BG bugaboos, BH hubbubs, BJ biajalit, BK Kaibab, BL Bellab, BM amoebas, BN Anabas, BP (Little) BQ aquabills, BR bearbills, BS babysills, BT autobills, BV above, BW bawbe, BX Bayeux, BZ abboz, CD Cycads, CF cofeco, CG coccag, CH Chihuah, CJ Caça, CK cocker, CL celio, CM Eucon, CN unino.