METHODISM IN AMERICA

Have you never beheld, reader, such a scene as the following, at a Methodist camp meeting in “God's first temple,” the solemn forest? We have, and have felt the influence of the place itself to become almost religion:

‘Hail sacred grove! Hail, sylvan-mercy seat
With cherubim of beech and oak o’er hung:
From barky pillars springs aloft a roof
Of broidered azure; here is sumptuousness
Of furniture, an altar cloth of ferns
And berried vines, a downy couch of moss:
In cloven trunks of those old chestnuts stand
The effigies of ages dead and gone.
Curtains of living foliage conceal
Our feathered choir.
There falls a light,
Dim, soft, like sheen of Hesperus on banks of snow:
In this same temple of the winds and trees
He chiefly prayed - He who our sins did bear.'
As a religion, Methodism represents a branch of Protestant Christianity that was founded by John Wesley and his efforts to bring revival to the Church of England in the early 18th century. Under Wesley’s direction, the Methodist religion became a popular Evangelical Protestant movement that encouraged individuals to experience Jesus Christ on a personal level, while emphasizing the ideals of conversion (i.e. one having been ‘born again’), the importance of living a Christian life, and the preaching of the gospel.²

In America, the arrival of Methodism overlapped closely with the founding of the nation, and since this time, the faith has played a noticeable role in the religious development of this country.³ In terms of gathering followers to a faith, no other religion in the history of America collected churchgoers to a congregation more quickly, or in greater numbers, than Methodism. In 1776, Methodists in America were composed of a small religious society, loosely associated to the Church of England, that had only 65 congregations and an enrollment of 15,000 members disseminated through the colonies. Seventy years later, the Methodist society dominated over the nation, with 13,302 congregations that counted among their parishioners, more than 1.6 million registered members.⁴ By 1860, Evangelicals made up at least 85 percent of the American church-going population.⁵ In this relatively short period of time, Methodism had become the leading single religious denomination in America.⁶

Within the earliest beginning of this nation’s Evangelical Protestant community, even prior to the signing of the declaration of independence, there is presented this idea that America is to be a special place, and one element that makes it special, was that its citizens had a unique relationship with God. There exists this idea amongst the early Puritan colonies of New England, initially suggested by John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in his 1630 sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" that, as a people, the citizen’s of this country are to be God’s chosen, and that God has a unique destiny for America, and its people. During this period in our nation's his-
tory, as described by Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, Associate Professor of History, Boston College: You’d be hard pressed to find a white American who do not believe that the Lord had a special destiny for America and that the Lord wanted America to be an example to the world.7

But first, as a nation of European immigrants, these people God had specifically selected to inherit America, had to be brought to this religious faith, and the Methodist revival camps would service this introduction of the Evangelical Protestant faith. As locations for which to establish these revival camps, the organizers of these religious gatherings chose to position them somewhere increasingly considered to be a special gift from God to the chosen who had immigrated to America, in its wilderness.

As a faith, Methodism began as a profoundly personal, and deeply emotional religion of the heart that, in America, found expression in the form of mass spiritual “born again” wilderness revivals. Formative in the development of the wave of religious revivals were two charismatic preachers of the 18th century, the Reverends Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

Jonathan Edwards, though coming from Puritan, Calvinist roots, emphasized the power and importance of a personal and immediate religious experience.8 In 1733, at his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards inspired some of this nation's earliest revivals as members of his congregation expressed their individual religious experiences in response to his fire and brimstone preaching.9 Beyond his delivery of sermons describing the punishment of hell, Edwards often spoke of the ability to “derive spiritual joy from, and even perceive beauty in, natural objects such as clouds, flowers, and fields.”10 For Jonathan Edwards, the world of nature presented evidence of God as the masterful creator. Holding this belief, Reverend Edwards would, during much of his life, venture into the forest to worship and pray in the solace and beauty of nature.11

George Whitefield, as one of the founders of Methodism and the Evangelical Revival Movement, became possibly the most well known preacher in both America and Britain during the 18th century. Traveling through the American colonies, Whitefield drew large crowds as he preached from outdoor pulpits with the use of the natural
world as an inspiring backdrop. Reverend Whitefield’s extended tour of religious preaching through the American colonies, during the 1730s and 1740s, served to ignite a wave of religious revivals, a period commonly referred to today as the First Great Awakening. In the decades to come, between 1780 and 1840, a second wave of religious revivals swept through the nation. Recognized as the Second Great Awakening, this religious movement served to further introduce the morals, ethics and values of Protestantism into the American character.

During this period in the nation’s history, to accommodate the rapid expansion of Methodism, and the associated organizing of mass revivals, was the establishing of hundreds of rural Methodist camp meeting grounds, throughout the wilds of the Eastern United States. Literally thousands of these large outdoor religious gatherings were held as the enthusiasm for attending organized high spirited Methodist revivals swept through Atlantic States. From the beginning of the organizing of these wilderness revivals, even before the American poet William Cullen Bryant had penned the opening verse in 1824, Methodism had embraced the idea expressed in the first line of his poem, *A Forest Hymn*, which reads, *The Groves were God’s first temples.*
Engraving of a Methodist Camp Meeting, March 1, 1819.
Photograph courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
Creator: M. Dubourg, engraver. Number LC-USZC4-772
As these revival gatherings were meant to provide America’s new - found Methodist community with the opportunity to visit God in nature, an inspiring landscape setting was often an important consideration when selecting a location to establish a camp meeting. Beyond selecting an awe-inspiring location to hold a religious gathering, a revival camps’ open-air temple, which consisted of a simple wooden podium and associated benches, was selectively positioned in a forest clearings, surrounded by a dense grove of trees. This positioning of the open-air amphitheater in such a way, allowed the beauty of the natural surroundings to energize the inspiration for worship during these religious wilderness gatherings. Serving as centers for religious revivals, these Methodist camp meeting grounds, located in outdoor wilderness settings, far away from the industrialized immigrant crowded cities of the Atlantic States, allowed for hundreds, sometimes thousands of people to arrive, commune with God and nature, and find a charismatic preacher to save their soul.

What followed next was a period in American history known as the Third Great Awakening (1850 - 1900s), which saw an increased emphasis on social activism by the Protestant community. Beginning in the mid-19th century, accompanying the resulting large increase in the number of churchgoers, was a push from the Protestant Christianity, to change American society. The change in society that Protestant Christianity was pushing forward, was not so much about converting people to Christianity; it was more about changing America to look like the Kingdom of God. No longer was Evangelical Christianity just about going to church on Sunday or individuals attending revival meetings to be born again; Evangelical Christianity had turned its attention toward constructing a moralized America. In an effort to change the American society in such a way as to mirror the Kingdom of God, came the development of Methodist reform movements directed toward improving society. As Methodism expanded through the nation’s frontier, it brought with it a wave of Bible societies, temperance groups, and other organizations whose aim was to reform society, and educate the masses, living on the fringes of America. Established by Evangelical Protestants were the associations and organizations that built and staffed schools, hospitals, orphanages,
relief efforts for the poor; and societies that supported abolition, fought for women's rights and alcohol prohibition. Woman’s clubs were established with efforts directed toward educational, social, philanthropic, beautification and environmental conservation. It would be these Protestant faith-based efforts directed toward tackling the society's ills that eventually became the pillars of American life. Throughout the 19th and into the 20th century, the Methodism reform movement continued to bring education and relief to the less fortunate and address what it regarded as the immorality of American society (e.g. gambling, prostitution, use of intoxicating beverages, desecration of the Sabbath and the social problems associated with industrialization).

Accompanying this moralizing of American society in the image of the Kingdom of God, was the envisioning of the nation’s wilderness as the new-found Garden of Eden. With this shift from attending wilderness revivals to be born-again, to efforts directed toward educating and moralizing the American society, the Methodist reform movement came to establish and utilize the Methodist campgrounds for something other than that of saving souls. The camp meeting grounds, like the revival camps before, continued to be located in rural settings, close to nature, and far away from the industrialized immigrant crowded cities of the nation. Now referred to as Methodist retreats, rather than revival camps, these camp meeting grounds, positioned under a well foliaged grove of trees, a picturesque countryside lake, or a high mountain vista, provided members of congregations with the opportunity to spend their leisure time vacationing in God's natural cathedral. Those who visited the Methodist camp retreats found available opportunities to partake in religion services, education programs, and recreation activities. Leisure time spent walking within the a forested grove of trees, or along a high mountain top ridge, allowed one to reflect upon the divine presence of God in nature, and offered an occasion to replenish one’s spiritual, physical and psychological well-being.

Quoting the historian William Cronon - discussing Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and the belief that God is most accessible through nature -
From Ken Burns: National Parks: America’s Best Idea (Episode 1): What emerges in the middle of the 19th century is this idea that going back to wild nature is restorative, it’s a way of escaping the corruptions of urban civilized life, finding a more innocent self, returning to who you really are, returning to a kind of authenticity, and if you want to know God at firsthand, the way to do that is not to enter a cathedral, not to open a book, but to go to the mountaintop, and on the mountaintop, there you will see God as God truly is in the world.

The nature study movement was an extension of this idea - that the Creator presented his thoughts in the most lucid form to the individual through Nature; thereby through the study of objects of nature one drew closer to understanding the thoughts of God. Agassiz, himself a son of a Protestant clergyman, ultimately associated his scientific findings to simply being the hierarchical expression of the thoughts of God. In an effort to square the recent scientific findings of the day with the literal interpretation of two thousand year old scripture, the clergy of every religious denomination, many of whom were also the grammar school teachers of the mid-nineteenth century, presented the idea of the harmonious understanding of the thoughts of the creator could be realized through the study of nature.

The Chautauqua Institution, established by Reverend JH Vincent and Lewis Miller was, at its core, deeply rooted in this Methodist reform movement. Reverend Vincent’s effort to extend the Chautauqua program, beyond the shores of Chautauqua Lake, involved establishing branches of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle throughout the United States. To accommodate this effort of extending the Chautauqua program, a number of the Methodist camp meeting grounds were selected as locations for daughter Chautauqua Assemblies. Participants who traveled to these daughter Chautauquas, established in remote natural settings, safely away from the large industrialized, corrupt and overpopulated cities, were, once again, provided with an opportunity to enjoy the curative, inspirational and spiritual powers that nature possessed, while participating in a program of instruction, in all subjects of study, both secular and religious. The Pacific Grove Methodist Camp Retreat, located within a forest of
Monterey pine trees, on the southern tip of Monterey Bay, where the tonic of pine balsam blended with the fresh breezes of the ocean, would itself, offer participants of the Pacific Coast Assembly a vacation in nature’s abode.

Gate to the Pacific Grove Methodist Camp Retreat, (circa 1881).

Joseph Oscar Johnson, superintendent of the Grove Retreat in foreground.

Photograph courtesy of California State Library, Sacramento, California.
PACIFIC GROVE METHODIST RETREAT

On the westerly shore of the beautiful bay of Monterey, in a grove of pines, surrounded by scenery of the most diversified character, quietly nestled beside the restless, surging sea, musical with the swaying of wide-branching trees, and the songs of woodland warblers, lies the pleasant watering-place known as Pacific Grove Retreat.27

As a location for establishing a daughter Chautauqua Assembly, the Pacific Grove Methodist Camp Retreat offered a perfectly awe-inspiring natural setting from which to advance the ideals born of the mother Chautauqua Assembly in upstate New York; lifelong learning, voluntary simplicity, love of nature, science, literature, music, oration and the arts. In addition, the Pacific Grove Methodist Retreat served as a location from which to advance the ideals associated with the Methodist movement; civil rights, access to education, missionary efforts, respect for the Sabbath, temperance and women’s suffrage; Ideals that were beginning to extend outside the cultural society of the Protestant Christian community and becoming accepted as the ethical and social ideals of Anglo-Saxon America. Beyond functioning as the meeting place for the Pacific Coast Chautauqua Assembly, the Methodist Camp Retreat served as conference facility for other Methodist religious and reform organizations whose efforts were directed at Christianizing and moralizing the citizens of California. Counted among these Methodist organizations, who gathered annually in Pacific Grove, were the Summer Encampment and Assembly of Christian Workers, the Summer School of Theology, the Camp Meeting and School of the Prophets, the California Annual Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church, the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement (WCTU) of California - working for the prohibition of alcohol and for women's voting rights; and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) - an organization the famous naturalist John Muir, himself, for a short time in 1863, had served as president of the local chapter during his college years in Madison, Wisconsin.28
And so it was that, during the last quarter of the 19th century, projected from the podium of the outdoor amphitheater of the Pacific Grove Methodist Retreat, positioned under a grove of Monterey pines, were lessons in, and discussions of pedagogy, religion, science, literature, art, temperance and women’s suffrage. Here would begin to gather together Protestants, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Methodists, Episcopalians and Congregationalists of all classes, to study and learn. In addition to providing a platform to introduce the values of Methodism to the social order of California, the Pacific Grove Methodist Retreat served as a Puritan sanctuary safely tucked away from the ills of society, where gambling, the sale of spirituous liquor of any kind, a desecration of the Sabbath was strictly prohibited; and the character of order and morality stringently enforced.

Spectroscope photograph of campers at the Methodist Retreat in Pacific Grove, California (circa 1875). Photographer: Romanzo E. Wood. Photograph courtesy of California State University, Chico, Meriam Library, Special Collections.
In the May issue of the Del Monte Wave of 1886, the Superintendent of Pacific Grove Retreat, J. O. Johnson, presented in writing, his personal assurance to families considering a vacation at the grounds, as to the level of morality, safety and security to be found associated with the camp.

*I want to say to parents and all interested, that out of all the resorts on the coast, Pacific Grove is the only place where you can say as a fact that you are entirely clear of all the objectionable things that are usually found where large crowds of people congregate. No whisky, wines or cider are sold; no dancing or carousing, or roughness of any description is allowed; all places of public assemblies and public parlors close at 10 P.M.; persons are not permitted to go carousing and strolling through the grounds at all hours of the night to the discomfort of others. We have a night watchman whose duty is to see that all is quiet and safe during the night. During my residence of eight years here we have never had to make an arrest. Ladies and children come here unattended by husband or father, and occupy tents with as much safety as if they were in their own homes…*29

Beyond Superintendent Johnson’s reassuring comments related to the security of the grounds for visiting families, advertisements appearing in numerous periodicals of the day, described the Pacific Grove Methodist Retreat to potential visitors as the most idyllic of vacation resorts. As presented in the Bentley’s Hand-Book Of The Pacific Coast, the Pacific Grove Retreat was increasingly depicted as a highly moralistic and idealist community, as one might associate with Kingdom of God; nestled within an awe-inspiring natural environment, as one might liken to the Garden of Eden.

*Pacific Grove Retreat. - It is delightfully situated nearly two miles from the town of Monterey, along the shore of the bay. Its groves of pines extend down to the water’s edge, and is undoubtedly one of the most desirable and healthful resorts in the world. The balsamic influence of the pine has long been recognized, especially to all those suffering from throat or bronchial affections. This resort is free from all objections, and must remain the central, summer rallying place, for all Christian people, for many years. At Pacific Grove Retreat the Chautauqua Literary Society of California, meets annually, and religious gatherings are encouraged. No purer, sweeter thoughts can pervade the human soul than those that swell into being when standing upon the shores of the beautiful Bay of Monterey. No holier
hour than when man bows before his Creator upon the rocky shore, where loving waves ripple and kiss its glistening sands beneath him, and the soft light of the moon glows upon the peaceful ocean, when the anthem of praise thrills through forest, and distant lights, like fire-flies, glow and glow. Pacific Grove is a large, interesting, and permanent settlement. You will find elegant structures where you are sure to receive a Christian welcome, and there are tents that may disappear at a moment's notice, whose transient occupants have caught the enthusiasm that pervades the place, yet peace and good-will prevail. The absence of liquors, gambling, and all other objectionable occupations makes it the paradise of the coast.30

Within the campground of the Pacific Grove Retreat, the nature study movement that was about to arrive, in the program of a daughter Chautauqua Assembly, would service both the spiritual longings and scientific aspirations of the earliest beginnings of California’s middle and upper class Protestant society. The open-air temple nestled among tall pines would provide a pulpit to preach the conceptual idea that an interaction with the natural environment was essential; not only for the professional and popular understanding of science, but for the moral development of society that was threatened with displacement from an ever increasing industrialized country.31 The Pacific Grove Camp Retreat, positioned along southern edge of Monterey Bay, far away from the vices of the city and the dreariness of the rural community, served as a form of sanctuary where, as described in the program announcement for the Pacific Coast Assembly of 1881: "...families may come for the delights of free camp-life, united with pleasant society, and all the advantages of the Summer Science School."32
A SUMMER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

A popular feature of several days was the science excursion; the teachers conducted their pupils to the beach and hills to study nature in her own abodes.

(The Chautauquan: Volume 10, 1890).

Appearing in a printing of The Pacific School Journal, several paragraphs announce the program for the first annual Assembly of the California Branch of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, to be held in July 1880 in Pacific Grove, California. From the very title of the announcement, “Summer School of Science,” along with the outline of courses to be offered, and the divines being encouraged to participate, it is clear to the reader that, during the course of this two week assembly, an extended emphasis would be directed toward the instruction of natural history.

SUMMER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

THE first annual meeting, of the California Branch of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle will be held at Pacific Grove, Monterey, commencing on the Fourth of July, 1880. Rev. Dr. Dwinell, of Sacramento, will open the exercises with an appropriate address. The session will continue two weeks. Courses of lectures will be given, as follows: Marine Botany, Dr. Anderson of Monterey; Marine Zoology, Dr. Wythe of Oakland; Pedagogy, Prof. C. H. Allen; Economical Botany, Prof. Sanders of Fresno; Astronomy, Prof. More of San Jose; Greek Language, especially as related to Biblical Literature, Prof. Martin of the University of the Pacific; Chemistry in the Household, Prof. Norton of San Jose; General Botany, Miss Mary E. B. Norton. Almost all the leading divines of the State have a place on the programme. It is hoped that extensive collections of material for museums may be made. Negotiations are in progress with John Muir, Prof. Joseph Le Conte, and Prof. Hilgard, for some extraordinary attractions.
The railroads have made very satisfactory arrangements. Fare from San Francisco to Monterey and return, will be but $6.00; tickets good for some three months. There will also be special excursions at much lower rates. The cost of the entire programme of lectures will be covered by a ticket sold at $2.50. A magnificent hotel has lately been erected at Monterey, and there are extensive accommodations at low rates, at Pacific Grove. Descriptive circulars may be obtained of Miss Lucy M. Washburn, San Jose, secretary of the C. L. S. C. The object of the Circle is to furnish a high grade of instruction at the lowest possible rate, to the general public. The gates are open to everybody.

From this announcement for the first annual gathering of the Pacific Coast Assembly of the CLSC, one is left wondering what took place during those two weeks in July of 1880, when the Chautauquans gathered for the first time in Pacific Grove, California. Did John Muir attend this first summer Chautauqua Assembly in Pacific Grove? From the correspondence section of The Chautauquan Volume 1, 1881, written by the first secretary of the Pacific Coast Branch of the CLSC, Lucy M. Washburn, we are provided a descriptive account of the happenings of that first Pacific Coast Assembly.

CORRESPONDENCE: ASSEMBLY OF THE CALIFORNIA C. L. S. C.

The first Summer Assembly of the California Branch, C. L. S. C. is over. We draw a long breath after the pleasantly crowded fortnight, and have time to sum up the work accomplished, and to look forward to the future.

The committee that laid the plans for this gathering worked quite in the dark, uncertain how much of the spirit of the National Assembly at Chautauqua could be developed on the Pacific coast. It is with satisfaction and gratitude that they look back on a session which has more than realized their hopes.

The beautiful bay of Monterey was never more attractive. The white tents clustered thickly under the old pines of Pacific Grove, overlooking the cliffs, spoke of vacation and the leisurely charm of camp
Yet day after day an eager audience gathered in the large tent to listen to three lectures each morning, and again another lecture in the evening. Afternoons were to be left for the excursions and scientific collections; but during the second week, with so much rich material on hand, a fifth lecture was given each afternoon. The main session, three hours in the freshness of morning, was devoted to science, especially to study of the animal and vegetable life of the coast, for which the cliffs and beaches give us such rare opportunities. Specialists in each of these departments were there to teach us. Dr. J. H. Wythe, of Oakland, was the life of the Assembly, with his fascinating subject - Marine Zoology - his happy faculty of presenting it with clearness and force, and his fine microscope, which he was never tired of adjusting, to give us glimpses into a new world.

Dr. C. L. Anderson, of Santa Cruz, who is possibly more familiar than anyone else with the Marine Botany of the coast, gave us a course of four lectures on Alga, illustrated with fresh specimens, and others from his extensive collection; besides guiding parties on beach excursions, from which they came back with their hands laden. General botany, with study of the land plants growing in the vicinity, had a like able teacher in Miss M. E. B. Norton, of the State Normal School; while the application of botany to agriculture was brought out delightfully in a course of lectures by Mr. W. A. Saunders, of Fresno, who is doing so much on his own experimental farm, and through the press, to introduce into California the leading food-plants of the world. Professor Norton told us how to keep off the plague of insects that seems ready for our land as for Egypt. In other addresses he plead earnestly for more homes far from the demoralization of cities, and in his talks on chemistry in the household, showed us how to protect these homes from the germs of disease.

Professor More, also of the State Normal School, took us from the earth to the skies. His clear lectures on astronomy were just the help needed by our C. L. S. C. students, who have been pursuing that study without the help of such a life long student of the science. At night, too, dim companies might have been seen on the rocky headlands tracing out constellations under Professor More's guidance, or trying to catch a glimpse of the shy planet Mercury.

I have tried to sketch out for you these courses of from four to six lectures each, which filled our mornings and afternoons with science. I can only name the subjects of our evening lectures, to show you that the historical, literary and biblical studies of the society during the past year were not forgotten.
Rev. Dr. Dwinell, of Sacramento, struck the keynote for the whole work of the Assembly in his fine opening address on “Skepticism as a Judgment for the Rejection of Truth.” The address by Rev. C. V. Anthony, of San Francisco, on “The Three Books: Science, Experience, Revelation;” that by Rev. G. S. Abbott, of Oakland, on “Paul’s Casuistry, or His Method of Dealing with Difficult cases of Conscience;” and the two by the president of the society, Rev. Dr. C. C. Stratton, of the University of the Pacific, on “The Testimony of Contemporaneous History to the Truth of the Bible Records.” All these show the spirit in which the Assembly welcomed the combined work of faith and thought. Our studies in English history and literature were represented by two lectures by Rev. H. H. Rice of Sacramento, on John Wycliffe and Wm. Tyndale, and by Dr. M. C. Briggs of San Francisco, on Oliver Cromwell. Professor Martin, of the University of the Pacific, in two lectures on the Greek language and literature, treated of another of the subjects of our last year's course of reading. A lecture on Crystallization, by Dr. Crary, editor of the “Christian Advocate” should rather have been mentioned among those on science. The morning and Sabbath Bible readings were led by the venerable Dr. Burroughs. During the session, the Assembly had also the rare pleasure of hearing a noble sermon by Bishop Simpson.

“So many lectures and not one dull one!” was the comment I overheard. Indeed, this catalogue like rehearsal of the programme can give you no idea of the peculiar charm of the session. The lecturers from such different fields of work were happy to meet each other. The addresses were of the kind Gail Hamilton sighs for: “Where the congregation can talk back;” questions as to knotty points were freely put; eliciting fuller explanations of just what we care most to hear: while a sly quiz here and there brought the quick repartee, and dissolved the eager attention of the audience into laughter. There was an out-door freshness in the whole session; a mingling of instruction, cordial intercourse, and informal camp life.

After this satisfactory beginning, the committee feels that their way is clear for more definite plans as to next year's Assembly. Already an outline has shaped itself. It will be a good work, indeed, if such an annual Assembly can become a force upon this coast, stimulating to intellectual life, and uniting Christian faith with scientific study. The C. L. S. C. hopes to thus give a fresh impulse every summer to the quiet course of home reading; that is its main work. Many a lonely student, almost disheartened as to self-culture, has been encouraged to systematic reading by the thought that he is one of the thousands of...
comrades pursuing the same studies. As he fills out his memoranda of work done, and sends it to the central office of the society, there to be tiled till four years of faithful reading shall be recognized by a diploma, he has the college student's feeling of pursuing a worthy course, under careful guidance, and climbing step by step an ascent from which lie has a broader outlook on the world. Those C. L. S. C. members who live near each other gain the additional advantage of mental help in their “local circles,” associations of two or three reading aloud to each other, or of a dozen meeting weekly to discuss their studies, or in large towns, of a hundred or more gathering monthly for essays, lectures, illustrations by apparatus, and other helps. Already, within a year of its formation, the California Branch of the C. L. S. C. numbers between six and seven hundred members; the parent society at the East counting more than twice as many thousand. Applications for new members are already coming in from those who wisely wish to get a start before the first of October, when the regular reading begins. Letters of inquiry and applications for membership should be sent to the secretary, Miss L. M. Washburn, San Jose, Cal. During the Assembly, the original members of the executive committee were re-elected for the ensuing year.

The course of reading for the next year embraces Roman History, Biblical studies, early English History, Physiology and Hygiene, American History, and Biology, or the Science of Life, both animal and vegetable. Of course, so many subjects are not mastered; but the books to be read are chosen with care, and students who become specially interested in any line receive hints for more extended reading.

- Occident (The Chautauquan: Volume 1, 1881). 36

The above description of the Pacific Coast Assembly of 1880 provides a beginning to our introduction to the activities that were associated with the annual Chautauqua gatherings for the next 35 years. As for John Muir traveling to Pacific Grove and participating in the Pacific Coast Assembly, such an occasion had a high probability of never happening, as the celebrated naturalist held an unending fear of formal presentations in front of large audiences.
A SUMMER SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS

As described by Roy Walter Cloud in his book *Education in California: Leaders, Organizations, and Accomplishments of the First Hundred Years*, in the summer of 1880, on the occasion of this first annual gathering of the Pacific Coast Assembly of the CLSC, California held its first summer school for teachers.37

*The California branch of the Chautauqua Literary and Science Circle gathered together a group of teachers from many California counties and conducted a regular summer school. Every morning, Monday through Friday, lecturers of prominence talked to the teachers. Field trips were held every afternoon, and seashells and other beauties of nature were collected and studied. During the evenings lectures were delivered on literary, historical, and religious subjects. All who attended were thrilled by the great amount of instruction and entertainment they received.38*

This summer gathering of teachers, amongst the larger group of Chautauqua participants, amounted to what was, in effect, the state of California’s first summer school of science, held at what one could consider, California’s first seaside laboratory. A seaside laboratory, that would only be in existence for a two week period each summer, and whose emphasis was not directed toward the advancement of scientific research, but the training of schoolteachers, and other assembly participants, in the proper method of the study of nature.
Without exception, the first two courses of instruction to be offered at any of America’s first seaside laboratories, beginning with Anderson School of Natural History established by Louis Agassiz, followed by those early seaside laboratories established by the students who attended Penikese, were marine botany and marine zoology. These two courses, scarcely observed on the educational landscape before the end of the 19th century, were designed to allow the student to experience a combination of field and a laboratory science. Of all the daughter Chautauqua Assemblies that were established within the United States, the Pacific Coast Assembly was unique as the summer program offered both marine botany and marine zoology, as primary courses of instruction. The offering of these marine related courses provided participants of this first Pacific Coast Assembly of the CLSC (1880) with the opportunity to attend lectures, collect specimens along the seashore, and be introduced, through the use of tangible objects of nature, to the study of natural history under the direction and guidance of gifted instructors. Available for the instruction of these marine biology courses, during the Pacific Coast Assembly of 1880, were the experts in their fields, Dr. CL Anderson for Marine Botany and Dr. JH Wythe for Marine Zoology with the Use of the Microscope. In terms of its historical significance, it is important to remember, that at this time in the history of America, only three seaside laboratories had been established within the United States; Anderson School of Natural History on Penikese Island (1873-1874); Alpheus Packard’s Summer School of Biology at the Peabody Academy of Science (1876-1881) in Salem, Massachusetts; and the Chesapeake Zoological Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University (1878-1906).
A VARIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY COURSES

Much interest has always been fostered at this assembly in the study of natural science, as the facilities at Pacific Grove for the careful study of this subject are very unusual.41

Building upon the success of the first assembly, the founders of the Pacific Coast Branch of the CLSC continued to advance the natural science curriculum offered each summer. During the second Pacific Coast Assembly of 1881, an additional marine related course of instruction, conchology (i.e. the scientific study or collection of mollusk shells), taught by Professor Josiah Keep, Head of the Department of Science at Mills College, was added to the list of natural history courses to be offered.42 Beyond these three marine related courses was, again offered, a course in terrestrial (i.e. general) botany by Miss Mary E. B. Norton. These four courses - marine botany, marine zoology, conchology and general botany - would form the core courses of scientific instruction offered at the Pacific Coast Assembly for more than twenty years to come. In addition to these four courses of instruction, a variety of natural history talks on subjects of archeology, astronomy, economic botany, economic entomology, household chemistry and geology would be presented at Pacific Coast Assembly of the CLSC.

This emphasis on the instruction of natural history at the Pacific Coast Assembly provided students with an introduction to the proper method of the study of nature, under the direction of gifted teachers, similar to the experience tendered to those students who had attended America’s first summer school of science on Penikese Island. This guided instruction of the study of nature, offered to students attending the Pacific Coast Assembly, was described in the State Educational News: Monterey County (1887) as follows: Every person in attendance at the convention can select one or more studies which he would like to pursue, and be tender the guidance of distinguished teachers.43