



## GIRL SCOUTING . . . FORTY-ONE YEARS OLD

Forty-one years ago in Savannah, Georgia, a determined and energetic woman made a phone call which has affected the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

"Come right over," she said, "I've got something for the girls of Savannah, and all America and all the world—and we're going to start tonight."

Mrs. Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., indeed had "something for all the world." Newly arrived in this country from England she had carefully blueprinted in her mind plans for the organization of Girl Scouting in this country. With characteristic vision she saw the, as then, untapped potential of girls from 7 to 17 as a powerful force for world peace, good will and mutual understanding among nations.

Today, less than half a century later, well over a million and a half Girl Scouts in the United States have reason to be thankful for the persistency and resourcefulness with which Mrs. Low carried out her plans.

A native of Savannah, Mrs. Low brought the idea of Scouting to this country from England where she became interested in the movement after meeting Lord Baden Powell, who founded the Boy Scouts of 1908 and with his sister, the Association of Girl Guides in 1910. Her first troop meeting was called together three days after her excited phone call.

In the forty-one years since then many changes have been made. The uniforms of navy blue are now woods-green, hem lines have fluctuated according to the dictates of fashions, new styles in Scout headgear have appeared, the organization itself, has consistently grown and expanded, but the aims of Girl Scouting remain the same. The building of good citizens, for democracy and for the world, the development of healthy bodies, alert minds and a spirit of friendly cooperation are, as they were then, the motivating factors of the organization.

The essentials of today's Girl Scout program were evident in the first troop activities planned by Mrs. Low. The girls learned how to cook and sew, designed their own uniforms, went on camping trips and hikes and were taught how to handle tools and instruments, information not generally included in the education of young ladies of the day.

Under Mrs. Low's tireless leadership the organization began to grow. In June, 1913 with the tension abroad making itself increasingly felt in this country, she entitled the first Girl Scout Handbook, "How Girls Can Help Their Country." A year later a patent for the familiar trefoil was secured. In 1915 the organization was officially incorporated as Girl Scouts, Inc.

The growth in membership in the next few years was phenomenal. By 1917 when the United States entered World War I there were more than 12,000 members. Three years later this figure had almost tripled. The idea had caught fire. Under the direction of the national office troops sprang up all over the country.

As its rolls expanded additions were made to the basic Scout program to meet the diversified interests of its members. In all, eleven separate fields of activity in which Scouts can earn badges and awards were organized. For Senior Scouts in the 14 to 17 age group there are a number of specialized programs, including the Mariner Scout and Wing Scout programs for year-round instructions in boats and planes, respectively. There are approximately 260 troops in institutions for the physically and mentally handicapped. Without regard for race, creed or nationality background, Girl Scouting is open to all girls who subscribe to the ethical code of its Promise and Laws.

The Juliette Low World Friendship Fund named in honor of the founder places on an international scale the Girl Scout program of helping others. The nickles and dimes of members channeled to this fund support a program of international exchange of leaders and girls, provide camping scholarships for DP girls in this country, and aid the development of Scouting and Guiding in war-torn countries.

As part of these activities, Girl Scouts send food, clothing, equipment, and toys all over the world, published a Scout handbook for Italian members, provided leadership and financial aid for Scouting in Japan, German, Korea and other countries. Only part of their over-seas aid program in 1949 was the shipping of 26 tons of school supplies of 27 different countries. The fund also enables girls from all parts of the world to meet annually at the Girl Scout Chalet at Adelboden, Switzerland. Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., is a mem-