

Boy Scouts

After 80 Years Still Doing Good Deeds Daily

By Robert L. Williams

As strange as it may seem, the Boy Scouts of America, now eighty years old, had their start in deepest South Africa, where Robert Baden-Powell and a small unit of men defended the military outpost as Mafeking against the invading Boers.

What bewildered many of the soldiers at Mafeking was the uncommon cheerfulness and gaiety of Baden-Powell in the face of extreme danger.

Another amazing aspect of the Boer Wars was that this same Baden-Powell had studied warfare at its lowest level—the use of the individual soldier who had to be trained to a state of perfection if he was to be the most efficient unit of military might possible.

It is perhaps even stranger that Robert Baden-Powell himself was in South Africa and engaged in this strange war. He was actually the seventh son of an Oxford professor, and except for the strangeness of fate it is unlikely that Baden-Powell's name would be linked with the Boy Scouts of America in any way.

It is even possible that there would have been no Boy Scouts as the world knows them today.

Bored with the geometry that his father taught year after year, Baden-Powell, when he was old enough—not yet twenty years old—joined a regiment of Hussars in India, and there he saw at once the need for a highly specialized type of training that would set the English soldier apart from all other military men.

So Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell decided that what the English soldiers needed was advanced training in military scouting. He saw the need because of the increasing need to have military intelligence of the enemy's whereabouts and plans and strengths.

The need was emphasized even more because the English soldier, who was accustomed to the comforts of the highest level of civilization in the world, often in war found himself in virtually barbaric surroundings, and the typical soldier was unable to adjust to the challenges of the most unusual parts of the world.

So Robert Baden-Powell decided that he would fine-tune the scouting training until the men were equally at home in jungles or in the finest homes in England.

In 1902 Baden-Powell had a chance to find out for himself—first-hand—how well his training tactics worked. In Africa during the Boer Wars, Baden-Powell found himself commanding a garrison that was under attack for 217 days against forces that highly outnumbered his own weak troops. Yet, miraculously, Baden-Powell and his men managed to hold out for more than seven months until reinforcements could arrive.

And, suddenly, this quiet young man from the home of an Oxford geometry professor found himself a national hero. He also was promoted to the rank of major general.

After the wars Baden-Powell continued to teach his special style of military preparedness.

He, like most observant people, had watched kittens playing, and it occurred to him that throughout the animal kingdom every game that was played by the animals is in actuality training for later life.

But the human being was often different in this respect. Boys in England played games that had no point other than the enjoyment of the sport, and these boys

grew into men who had never seen the importance of early training—through games—for the most serious game of all—Life.

Baden-Powell wrote a book for men called "Aids to Scouting" in 1899, and to his surprise the most avid readers of the book were not men but boys who had heard of the heroism of Baden-Powell and wanted to grow up to be like this military hero who was also a classical gentleman. The boys of England had seldom known of such a man, who was kind, gentle, loyal, and in general filled with the highest qualities of mankind, and yet this same gentle man was a master of warfare and conflicts of all types.

So the boys of England read the book and began to train themselves in the manner suggested by Baden-Powell.

Baden-Powell himself was so impressed by the interest among boys that he organized a camp at Brownsea Island where boys could live in nature and practice what they studied.

This camp, of course, evolved into the very first Boy Scout camp-out in history, and it was so successful that other camps sprang up everywhere that Baden-Powell could be to supervise them. And he wrote another book, this one specifically for young men, called "Scouting for Boys."

Out of this second book came the Boy Scout Handbook.

In 1910 Baden-Powell left the army to devote all of his time to the new Boy Scout movement, and that same year the female version, the Girl Scouts, were organized.

Both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts movements spread rapidly all over England and then to America and eventually all over the world. At the first international scout jamboree Baden-Powell was named Chief Scout of the World, a title he held until his death in 1941.

He remained active with the scouting movement until he was 80 years old, and his wife, Olave St. Clair Soames Baden-Powell, worked as energetically as her husband with the Girl Scouts movement.

Oddly, after the Boy Scouts became popular in England, Chile was the next country to adopt the Boy Scout program, and after Chile came Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, followed by Sweden, France, Norway, Mexico, and Argentina, all before America became deeply involved.

The entire concept of Boy Scouts as Baden-Powell saw the movement was that boys all over the world would be members of small gangs or groups, each with a leader who encouraged the younger boys to set the very best examples of citizenship and high principles and ethics. Baden-Powell knew that it was the nature of boys and men everywhere to cluster together in small groups, and he felt that if the groups were dedicated to the highest goals, the result would be a better society than we could have enjoyed otherwise.

When he organized his first Scout camp, Baden-Powell used the same types of games and sports that he had enjoyed as a child: canoeing, hiking, and sailing. He wanted the boys to learn to be at home in the water as well as on land, and he wanted them to learn the skills necessary to survive in the world of nature if they were forced to do so.

He insisted that the boys he trained would receive a full formal education so that they would be well-versed in math, English grammar and composition, geography, history, and arts. But he also wanted them to be able to track animals—or other human beings—and to be able to read a map, a compass, and the signs to be found on the forest trails and by-ways.

He encouraged the boys to learn how to tie the best and most useful knots, because these were often crucially important in the forest, and to be able to use a variety of signals and to have a thorough knowledge of first aid in the event of injury and illness.

But, he said repeatedly, a Boy Scout must promise on his honor that he would do his best to do his duty to God and to his country, to help other people, and to understand and obey the Scout Law.

To Baden-Powell the wolf was one of the most majestic animals in the world, and when he realized that there was a need for scout activities for boys both older and younger than the typical Boy Scout, Baden-Powell organized the Wolf Cub movement, which became known as the Cub Scouts in America.

Rapidly the slogans, law, motto, and other Boy Scout philosophic standards became part of the program. It is thought that one reason Baden-Powell suggested the left-handed handshake was that the left hand was believed to be nearer the heart and therefore more sincere. Another suggestion was that the right hand was often used to hold weapons, and the left hand was suggestive of peace and brotherhood.

One of the major reasons for the spread of scouting to America occurred when William D. Boyce, an American travelling in England, became lost in a thick fog and a Boy Scout helped Boyce find his way to his destination.

When Boyce returned to America he sought the help of leading citizens, and on February 8, 1910, the Boy Scouts of America movement was organized. In 1916 Congress gave the organization a federal charter.

On February 8, 1910, William D. Boyce returned from England and started the movement to organize the Boy Scouts of America. He found a valuable friend in Daniel Carter Beard, known affectionately as "Uncle Dan," a man who realized the importance of boys and good social programs for them.

Even before he met Boyce, Beard had organized the Sons of Daniel Boone, one of the first such movements in this country. Later Beard became the first National Scout Commissioner, and James E. West became the first Chief Scout Executive.

Today there are about 15,000,000 Boy Scouts in the world today, and they are found in every country except for the Communist Bloc. They have different uniforms, different languages, and different badges and customs, but they are all unified in that they all belong to the Boy Scouts.

In America the Cub Scouts were organized in 1930, and at that time a boy of nine could join. He started as a Bobcat and could move up through the ranks of Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and the Arrow of Light.

The Cub Scout motto is "Do your best."

The promise is "I promise to do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to help other people, and to obey the law of the pack."

The law of the pack is: "The Cub Scout follows Akela. The Cub Scout helps the pack go. The pack helps the Cub Scout grow. The Cub Scout gives good will."

When a boy is 11 years old he may join the Boy Scouts. After he reaches the Tenderfoot stage, he may work his way up to Second Class, then to First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout. The rank of Eagle Scout is the highest rank in scouting.

A Boy Scout may earn merit badges in 100 different fields. He must earn 24 merit badges in order to reach the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Scout Oath is: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The Scout Motto is: "Be prepared."

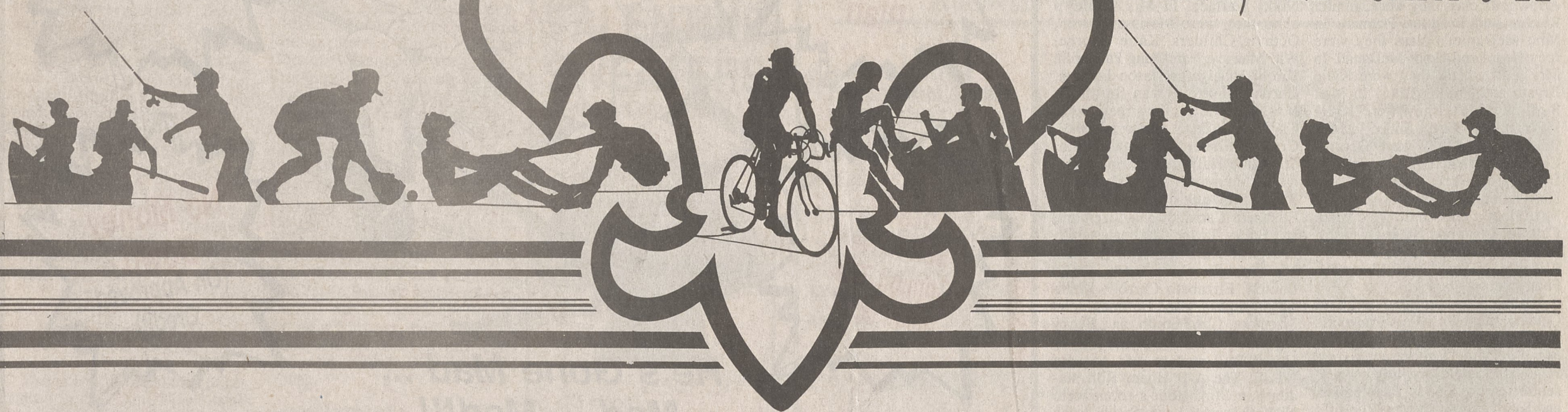
The Scout Slogan is: "Do a good turn daily."

The Scout Law is: "A Scout is Trustworthy. A Scout is Loyal. A Scout is helpful. A Scout is Friendly. A Scout is Courteous. A Scout is Kind. A Scout is Obedient. A Scout is Cheerful. A Scout is Thrifty. A Scout is Brave. A Scout is Clean. A Scout is Reverent."



NATIONAL BOYSCOUTS

WEEK, FEBRUARY 5-11



Fishing For Lunch



A blue herring is shown during various stages of gathering his lunch at Moss Lake.

Photos by Lem Lynch