

HISTORY OF BOY SCOUTING IN DWIGHT, ILLINOIS

"The movement was organized in the fall of 1923 and the meetings were held in the basement of the Methodist Church. In those days, we had no connection with the county or state organization but dealt directly with the Scout Headquarters in New York City. Our first group of boys consisted of Lone Scouts and we got all of our material from the W.D.Boyce Company of Chicago."

"Many of these boys later became Scouts" and their names are listed as follows: Irwin Baker, James Baker, Robert Boston, William Boston, George Davies, Joseph Dodd, J. Doepke, John Graves, Stewart Gordon, Louis Groll, William Hobbs, Leonard McKinney, Alexander McWilliams, Alvin Mickelson, Rex Monroe, Wray Monroe, James Norris, George Orr, Harold Orr, James Oughton, Louis Paaske, Louis Rabe, James Reynolds, George Rosendall, Carlyle Seabert, Roy Slattery, Hazer Smith, Hugh Thompson, Harold VonQualen, William Weldon, Louis Weicker, Richard Weicker and Robert Wilson.

"For many years we used to go to VanDyke's camp on Buttons Bay at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. At other times, we would go to the Kankakee River just east of Momence. Many of the boys secured their Merit Badges at this time and the awards were made at a public meeting in the basement of the Church. We did not have any Eagle Scouts but there were a good many boys who earned as many as twenty badges and were well on their way when I took sick and had to give up the work in 1931."

The above are excerpts from a letter from Rev. George Davies, St. Petersburg, Florida, who was the first Scout Master in Dwight. His assistant was Mr. Angus Lower and the troop committee consisted of Roy M. Baker, Dr. Monroe of the Veteran's Hospital and Dr. Floyd Donanville. The boys were examined to see if they were qualified for Merit Badges by the following men: Theodore Hayes, G.B.Hager, John McWilliams, Edward McWilliams and Dr. Monroe for Bandages and First Aid.

The Scouts were inactive until about April, 1939, when a troop was organized under the sponsorship of the Rotary Club through the Corn Belt Conference at Bloomington. The troop committee consisted of Harold VonQualen, Scout Master; James Lynch, Assistant Scout Master; L.W. Bush, chairman; Clement Steichen, J.F.Zeigler, C.A. Brothers and F.O.Lund, committee members. The following boys were members of this troop: Doten and Marshall Bush, Wilfred Christiansen, Roger Cooke, John Costello, Bob DeTrempe, Herbert Drew, Bobby Fortner, George Hager, Harold Hampson, Robert Henderson, Ralph Jensen, Walter Komonowski, Oluf Lund, John Metzke, Bobby Nelson, Clarence Sorensen, Laurie Stitzer, John Turner, Donald VanDyke, Frank Weber, Jack Welch, Billy Zeigler and Dick Zschau. Scout Masters since that time have been: 1939 to 1941, Harold VonQualen, 1942 and 1944-45, Kent Sanderson; 1943, Sam D. Lyon; 1946-47, William Grubb; 1948-49, Meredith C. Eymann; 1950-52, Elmer Smith; 1952 to July, 1953, Andrew Battrell; July 1953 to the present time, Sherman C. Brown. The troop was sponsored by the Odd Fellows from 1946 through 1950 and by the Lions to the present.

A Cub Pack was formed in March, 1941, with a troop of 30 members. The original committee was Bruce Rearick, Cub Master; Nevin E. Danner, committee chairman; committeemen, Harold J. West, and Dr. J.J. Burns; and Denmothers, Mrs. C.D. Pierce, Mrs. Avlin Sondergaard, Mrs. O'Brien, and Mrs. Ruth Christiansen. This pack was dropped but reorganized in December, 1946, and has been registered ever since. The original sponsoring institution was the Odd Fellows and the Methodist Church took over the sponsorship in November of 1953. The original Cubs of the 1941 troop were: Joseph Burns, James Chandler, Howard Christiansen, Lansing Hodgman, Harold Jensen, Richard Mathiesen, John O'Brien, Richard Pierce, Alvin Sondergaard, Paul Schou and Harold West. The Cub Masters have been: 1941; Bruce Rearick; 1946-48, Donald E. Nelson; 1949, Donald Chase; 1950-52, Kenneth Beiswanger; 1953, Ralph Weber; 1954, Louis J. Groll. Today there is an active pack with 50 members.

In June of 1949 an Explorer Post of the Boy Scouts was organized: M.C. Eymann, Leader; Assistant Leader, Francis J. West; Institutional Representative, Harvey Kime; Chairman, James Oughton, Jr.; and Ralph Stiles, D.E. Nelson, W.O. Prather, and Richard Foersterling, committee members. The original boys were Donald Beier, William Brorsen, Clark Christiansen, M. Eymann, Dayton Grush, William Kiesewetter, William Mortensen, J. Kent McFarland, George Roth, John Schou, Richard Schou, John R. VanDyke, Richard Vant and Joseph K. West. The original sponsor was the Odd Fellows and the American Legion Post was sponsor from 1952-53. The organization was dropped in June of 1953.