

1000

Story by Andrea Lefebvre
Photos by Calvin Dyke



A century ago, a rapidly-growing international youth movement took root in Halton Hills. In 1910, Acton and Georgetown each founded a Boy Scout troop and, over the course of the next hundred years, countless local youths learned valuable skills and made lifelong friends while getting in touch with nature. Members of the local scouting community recently celebrated this milestone anniversary by looking back at the people and events that shaped scouting in Halton Hills.

The scouting movement was founded by Lord Robert Baden-Powell, a lieutenant-general in the British army and a hero of the Boer War. In 1907, Baden-Powell took a group of boys camping on Brownsea Island in the United Kingdom where they took part in activities involving camping, observation, woodcraft, chivalry, lifesaving and patriotism. The success of the camp led Baden-Powell to publish *Scouting for Boys*, a wildly popular book that inspired a new type of youth group—dubbed the Boy Scouts—to pop up all over the world.

Baden-Powell came to Canada to open the Canadian National Exhibition in 1910 and his presence inspired the Acton and Georgetown communities to start their own Boy Scout troops later that year.

W.H. Stock and James Fogg founded the first Acton troop with the sponsorship of St. Alban's Anglican Church. The first few decades of the group's history were rocky, with the group folding and reorganizing several times. Scouting in Acton was firmly established in 1934 and has been running continually ever since.

As the movement grew around the world, so too did the demand in Acton. Boys of all ages wanted to join, which led to the creation of Wolf Cubs in 1929, Rover Scouts in 1938, Venturers in 1968 and Beavers in 1974. The groups met in churches and shops until they were granted a tract of land on School Lane in 1948. Volunteers built Acton Scout House, which they dubbed Hodenosawnee—an Iroquois term meaning "people of the long house."

In Georgetown, high school teacher L.R. Halnan founded the town's first Boy Scout troop in 1910. As was the case in Acton, the Georgetown Scouts disbanded and re-formed several times in the early years, eventually growing to include Wolf Cubs in 1922, Rovers in 1931, Venturers in 1968 and Beavers in 1975. The groups have met in a variety of churches and halls over the years and today run meetings out of St. John's United Church, St. George's Anglican Church and St. Andrew's United Church.

To celebrate 100 years of scouting in Halton Hills, anniversary events were held earlier this year in both Acton and Georgetown. Acton kicked things off in February with a parade, church service and reunion at the Acton Town Hall. Hundreds of past and current Scouts participated in the event.

years of scouting



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