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BOY SCOUTS OBSERVE ANNIVERSARY WEEK

Launch Elaborate Program Sunday Throughout Country for Week of Special Anniversary

By H. A. Armstrong

Exactly seventeen years ago Tuesday, or on February 8, 1910, there was brought into existence through an Act of Congress, an organization that overnight fired the ambition and imagination of half the boys in the United States and immediately stepped into a position of prominence as an institution of character-development—the Boy Scouts of America. Fostered and discovered by accident, it has gained in the succeeding period the prestige of 750,000 members, in the United States alone. Although young in years the Scout movement is nevertheless rich in history and traditions and next week the anniversary of its birth will be commemorated throughout the United States.

The Boy Scout movement was not first originated in the United States, although in its present form it is almost altogether an American product. In its original conception it served as a special training course for British soldiery in scouting and campcraft, under the direction of Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, and in connection with this course a textbook, "Aids to Scouting," was published.

ed. In the South African war of 1899-1900, this text was used by Major Lord Edward Cecil in the organization of Mafeking boys as a corps for general utilitarian purposes, along scouting lines rather than as cadets.

Baden-Powell, Leader

In 1903 Baden-Powell returned to England and discovered that his book was being used as a text for the training of boys in connection with church activities and immediately set about revising the book for that purpose. In 1907 he conducted a boys' camp at Brownsea Island and in its program introduced a training, based upon that which he had employed with the soldiers, with adaptations to make it suitable for boys. The camp achieved such success that he continued the experiment and, in 1908, brought out a handbook of the training entitled, "Scouting for Boys." As a result a number of troops were started in different parts of the United Kingdom, and by 1910 the movement had grown to such proportions that he found it incumbent upon him to leave the army and take the movement in hand.

About this time, W. D. Boyce, an American, was in London. While seeking a certain location in the congested part of that city one day, a lad noticing his bewilderment, saluted and asked if he might be of service. Mr. Boyce accepted his offer and upon reaching his destination offered the boy a shilling. The boy courteously refused the offer by saluting and saying: "A Scout accepts no reward for a courtesy or good turn." Mr. Boyce inquired as to what he meant, and the boy expressing astonishment that everyone did not know of Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts, asked permission to take him to the headquarters of the English Boy Scout association. This resulted in Mr. Boyce bringing back to America a trunk load of literature and the subsequent incorporation of the Boy Scouts of America.

Careful Organization

The present organization and its program are not the product of a haphazard assembling of ideas. At every point fresh obstacles were met and dealt with. Eminent psychologists and boy workers from all over the world were called together and several years of research and experimentation were necessary before the movement could show definite progress. It could not, of course, be a man made idea to thrust down the throat of a boy, nor a pattern cut to fit. It had to embody interest above all other things, and have extraordinary diversity, reaching out to boys of all degrees of mental ability, in all kinds of social environment and create for them a need to do their level best. It had to present a never ending succession of problems that would fire the boy with enthusiasm and bring out in him all of the boyish spontaneity, so necessary to the success of the project.

That it has achieved success is apparent; nor is this success limited to the United States alone. All over the world boys of every race, creed and color have taken the Scout oath and are still further extending this "brotherhood of boys."

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