



# West Texas Scouting History

All pages with the header shown above on the Scouting Memories Project are taken from Frank T. Hilton's remarkable website, [www.westtexasscoutinghistory.net](http://www.westtexasscoutinghistory.net), with his permission. The website is a comprehensive history of four modern west Texas councils, the Buffalo Trails Council, the South Plains Council, the Texas Southwest Council and the Texas Trails Council. Web links in these pages are to Frank's original website.

## Buffalo Trail Council No. 567

### Midland, Texas

One of the earliest records existing of a council in Region 9 was in Midland, Texas. A letter from the home office established a council there in 1913, with E. A. Bryan, President. It was called the "Midland Council" in Midland, TX, and was first registered from April 1913 to December 1913. The President was E. A. Bryan. Dr. W. K. Curtis was elected as President for 1914 but the council apparently died a natural death sometime that year. Apparently, the small council died a natural death at the end of its second year, because there is no evidence of any other Council organization until November 1923.

In 1922, a second class council was organized in Sweetwater, Texas. **Buffalo Trail Council** first appeared in the National Report when it was organized on November 1, 1923. It was a 'district' council, "district" giving way to "area" in terminology the following year. The council has been in continuous existence since 1923. Up until April 1928, the Council territory included Scurry, Fisher, Nolan and Mitchell Counties. In April, 1928, the following counties were added: Kent, Stonewall, Howard, Martin, Ward, Andrews, Loving, Winkler, Ector, Midland and Reeves. This territory remained the same up to 1945.



**The picture on the left is of Bill Noble, posing at the Annual Meeting of Scouters on January 8, 1931 in Big Springs.**

The major territorial changes have included the transfer of Kent, Nolan, Fisher and Stonewall Counties to Chisholm Trail Council (now Texas Trails Council) in 1954 and the transfer to Buffalo Trail Council from Yucca Area Council, El Paso, the counties of Brewster, Presidio, Jeff Davis and Culberson in 1955. Also transferred at this time were the counties of Sterling and Glasscock from Concho Valley Council.

The council office was first in Colorado City but was moved to Sweetwater about 1925. Scott Barcus was Scout Executive there in 1926.

### 1945 Annual Report

By 1945, the council had grown from 1,431 active membership in 1936, to 4,745 active members. That year they had 358 Scouts attend a six-day camps at Philmont Scout Ranch, 162 Scouts attend a six-day camp at the Davis Mt. Camp, 70 attend a six-day camp at Sweetwater Lake and 20 Black Scout attended the same camp that summer. Twenty-two Scouts attended the Philmont Senior Camp, 14 attended a three-day Winter Camp at Louis Farr, 45 went to the three-day Davis Mt. Winter camp, 75 participated in the Balmorhea Water Activities Camp and 872 attend a three-day Round-up in Big Springs.

That same year, according to their 23rd Annual Report, 374 Scouts made Second Class, 227 made First Class, 134 made Star, 64 mad Life and 67 Scouts mad Eagle. Twenty-seven Eagle Scouts added a Palm to their badge and 2,357 Merit

Badges were earned. Cub Scouts did well too with 299 earning Bobcat, 127 Wolf, 147 Bear and 16 Lion, the highest badge available at that time for Cubs.

Twenty-one training courses were conducted in 1945, including courses Scoutmasters Courses, Advanced Scoutmaster, Introduction to Scouting, Troop Committee, Patrol Leaders, Den Leaders, Den Mothers, Den Chiefs and Commissioners.

Activities for 1945 included Waste Paper collection; old clothing collection; cooperation with Red Cross Campaign; War Chest Dinner, War & Victory Bond Campaigns; put up posters for T.B. Seal and Infantile Paralysis Campaigns; ushered at football games; Cub Day Camps; Cub Rallies; Halloween events; observation of Anniversary Week; and Christmas Good Turn.

### **Council Office Moved**

The council office was moved to Midland in June 1947. That same year the council was incorporated and a council seal was approved and secured. The Council Trust Fund was established to help fund the council. A Capital Funds Campaign was conducted in 1947 and 1948, raising over \$200,000.

The name Buffalo Trail actually came from the trails cut in the sandstone near Big Spring by buffalo hooves as the animals walked to water.

### **Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch Acquired**

In 1948, the council acquired title to a 6,000 acre tract in the Davis Mountains for camping and it was named Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch.

In 1958 the Council secured, by gift, approximately 60 acres on Lake J. B. Thomas in Borden County to be used as an Aquatic Camp, **Camp Ed Murphy**. The land was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Ed Murphy and the Colorado River Authority.

Both Camp Ed Murphy and the Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch were then developed into adequate camps with needed buildings and equipment. Later, Camp Murphy had to be closed due to the low water situation in Lake Thomas. Since then, the property has been sold.

A Council Service Center was purchased in 1959 in Midland following a Capital funds campaign that raised more than \$200,000 for camp development and the service center.

In 1963 the Council secured, by gift from the Humble Pope Line Company, a tract of land of 16.07 acres near Wink, Texas. This track was used for overnight and short term camping. Also secured from Trustees a lot and residence at 707 West Storey in Midland, Texas in 1963.



**Boy Scout Troop 54 of Midland**

In 1960 the Council was given permission to use 40 acres known as Camp Pegasus (south of Midland Air Terminal) from Mobil Oil Company to be used as a short term and overnight camp. Improvements, such as water and latrines were made, but the latrines were destroyed by vandals.

On October 22, 1980, the council received a gift from the American Petrofina Corporation a 1.76 tract of land on the east side of Lake Colorado City in Mitchell County. Included with the gift was a large dining hall. The base was named the ColTex Aquatic Base. The name was later changed to the Hughes Aquatic Base in recognition of volunteer G. Newell Hughes who spent much of his time on the development of the base. With other funds raised and additional donations over the years, the Hughes Aquatic Base has been fully developed and used for many different programs including Aquatic camps, Wood Badge courses, College of Commissioner Science, weekend camping and other training events.

| [Council Presidents](#) | [Scout Executives](#) | [Map of Council](#) | [Council Offices](#) | [Silver Beavers](#) | [Eagle Scouts](#) | [Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch](#) |  
| [Other Camps](#) | [Camp Ed Murphy](#) | [Hughes Aquatic Base](#) | [Camp Lake Sweetwater](#) | [Camp Lake Colorado City](#) |  
| [250 mile hike to Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch by Sea Scout Ship 111](#) | [OA Tatanka Lodge](#) | [District Award of Merit](#) |  
| [National Jamboree Troops](#) | [Philmont Treks](#) | [Silver Antelope Awards](#) | [Whing Ding](#) | [First High Adventure Camp - 1954](#) |  
| [Old Photos of Buffalo Trail Scout Camp](#) |