



"A SCOUT DOES NOT TAKE MONEY FOR A GOOD TURN"

National headquarters was not unaware of the problems which faced areas such as Dayton and every effort was made to help in the formation of local Councils. Six men were selected to serve as National Field Scout Commissioners. They were to go into areas where there was some organizing difficulty. The main problem in setting up a new Council was that of raising funds to hire a professional Scouter and his staff, and to obtain an office plus the necessary equipment. Late in 1916, and again in 1917, the National Headquarters sent two men to Dayton to try to set up a local Council. But both left without success. In February, 1918, they decided to try again. By this time Fred Rike had become interested in organizing the Council, and at his suggestion the National Headquarters sent a man to Dayton for the third time.

For the job they chose Arthur E. Roberts. Although already enlisted in the Army and shortly to be shipped overseas, Roberts went to work in earnest. He contacted Fred Rike and outlined his plans for getting the Council rolling. He suggested that Rike ask fifteen friends to meet with him for lunch and at that meeting he would try to show them the good that the Scouting movement accomplished and why it was important that a Dayton Council be organized.

Late in February, 1918, as a bitter wind swept through Dayton from the north, the men gathered in Fred Rike's office. Of the fifteen Mr. Rike had invited, thirteen appeared. Roberts had a deep interest in boys and he sincerely felt that his mission was of real importance. He presented his case simply and earnestly and asked for their support. When he had finished speaking, a vote was taken. Twelve of the thirteen men voted against the Council. Rike's was the only vote in favor of it.

There were several possible reasons for the lack of interest in the idea. Those same men had been involved in so many drives and campaigns in such a short period of time that they had probably become just

a little tired of all of them. Perhaps even the bleakness and cold of the day had something to do with their reluctance. It seemed as though this third attempt to organize a Council was to end much as the other two had.

Roberts stood up from the table and began to put on his coat when he happened to remember a hundred dollar Liberty Bond in his pocket which he had received only that morning. He asked to talk again, and for five minutes he told them how important he thought it was that a Council be organized in Dayton, and of the great value of Scouting. He ended by saying, "I don't know a single boy in Dayton, and this Liberty Bond represents twenty-five percent of all I have in the world, but I'd like to start the Council with this." He laid the hundred dollar bond on the table and turned to leave.

There was a moment of silence as the men stared at the mahogany table top. Then Ralph DeWeese, of Winters Bank, obviously moved by what Roberts had done, jumped up and said, "Wait a minute. We can't let you leave like that." He turned to the others and went on: "We should be ashamed of ourselves. If a stranger to our city has so much faith in this Movement that he is willing to donate a large part of his worldly goods to see it work, there must be something to it. I move we reconsider this."

A new vote was taken and this time it was unanimously agreed that the Dayton Council should be formed and that they would organize a campaign to raise money in order to do it.

Included among those who had given their approval and agreed to back the new Council were Fenton Bott, Charles Kettering, Robert Patterson, Ralph DeWeese, and of course Fred Rike. These were very prominent members of the community, and to have them supporting the campaign was a **great asset**. But much was still to be done. The idea had to be sold to groups all over the city. Fred Rike signed the contract with the National Council which made the formation of the new Dayton Council official. He also agreed to serve as chairman of the fund raising campaign.

On March 25, 1918, an organizational meeting of the new Dayton Council was held at the Dayton City Club. By that time there were more than twenty small Troops operating in Dayton and at this meeting Scoutmasters of these Troops met for the first time as a single body. Fred Rike was elected President of the Council, but agreed to serve only until a permanent president could be found. John Haien, who had been obtained with the help of National Headquarters, was approved as the one who would serve as the first Scout Executive of the Council.

Roberts remained in Dayton and went on working with the campaign until time came for him to be shipped overseas. He began a speaking tour of the city, introducing dozens of organizations to the Scouting movement and seeking support for the infant Council. The Advertisers Club was particularly helpful to him throughout the campaign. With their help, the

Council was able to get a great deal of fine newspaper publicity. The Club even had a billboard erected in front of the old courthouse asking for support of the Boy Scouts.

When Roberts asked the Rotary Club for support, he found no help at all. Rotary had given a great deal of support to the 1917 campaign and that had been a complete failure; however, the president of the Rotary Club at that time, C. L. G. Breene, later became very active in Scouting and eventually received the Silver Beaver Award, one of the highest awards for service to Scouting. Before another year had passed, Rotary was a leader in supporting the Council and through the decades since, has been one of its staunchest friends.

It was bitterly cold in Dayton during the winter and early spring of 1918, and to make matters worse, the city suffered from an acute coal shortage. As the temperatures fell lower and lower, the shortage became an increasingly desperate problem. Schools were forced to close because they simply did not have enough coal to heat the buildings. In spite of bad campaign weather, the drive for funds continued to make progress. The new Scout Executive, John Haien, proved himself to be a vigorous and effective campaigner and a leader of boys. Before coming to Dayton, Haien, a Harvard graduate, taught economics at an eastern college. When he found that teaching was not entirely satisfying to him, he left that position to do settlement work in a notorious section of Boston known as the "Settlement of Forty Thieves." While there, he became acquainted with the Scouting program and he was so impressed with its effectiveness that he decided to make Scouting his profession.

Haien proved to be a quick judge of publicity value and kept the newspapers supplied with information about what was happening in the Council. The newspapers in 1918 carried stories almost daily telling of Scouting activities in the Dayton area. When a Troop went on a particularly interesting hike or camping trip, Haien made certain that the newspapers heard about it. If a Dayton Scout earned a special award of any kind, Haien saw to it that the newspapers were on hand for the presentation. As a result of his efforts, a full page advertisement was used to appeal for financial support of the Boy Scouts.

But Haien's work was not confined to the adult side of Scouting. He also found time to work closely with the boys themselves. He often accompanied Troops on overnight trips, and sometimes led trips of his own. It was largely through his efforts, that the Dayton Scouts obtained their own farm to work during the summer of 1918. Eight acres of land near McCook's

Field were donated by Colonel E. A. Deeds. The boys plowed and planted the farm and profits were divided between the Troops and local Council.

During that same summer the first Council camp began operation. Located near the farm, it was called Camp Pershing, honoring the popular General. The land, more than thirty-five acres loaned to the Council by Ralph DeWeese, spread along the east banks of the Stillwater River. It was intended that the camp be used not only during the summer months, but the whole year round.

After the Council obtained the land there was still much to be done. In the late spring of 1918 the new campsite bustled with activity. The Scouts went to work building roads, clearing underbrush, preparing for the summer season. Gerald Matthes, of the Miami Conservancy, helped in planning the general layout of facilities. It was decided that they would build a single barracks large enough to provide shelter for all the boys at the camp. In order to do this, they needed lumber and John Haien again demonstrated his ingenuity.

Work had just begun on wrecking an old baseball park in North Dayton, when John Haien made a proposition to the wrecking foreman. Haien would supply boys to pull nails for the wrecking crew in exchange for lumber. The foreman agreed and soon the boys had earned enough lumber to build their shelter and have some left over.

In addition to the shelter a kitchen was built, with sleeping space behind it for the cook. Near the kitchen they erected a mess tent. In the southern part of the camp they set up a baseball diamond and track for foot races. Only one problem remained. It was estimated that it would cost at least a thousand dollars to operate the camp through the summer.

To understand how the camp was financed, we have to look backwards a couple of years to an unknowing echo of the young London Scout who refused William Boyce's tip seven years earlier.

Late one afternoon in 1916, a woman in one of Dayton's busy markets struggled with her heavy basket full of groceries. A passing boy who saw the trouble offered his service. He helped her with the basket, carried it outside and stowed it away in the waiting car. When the woman offered him a tip, to her surprise he turned it down.

"A Scout does not take money for a good turn," he explained.

Little did he realize that his act of kindness would be the thing that sold the Scouting idea to a man who was to become a great friend of the Dayton Council. The woman was Mrs. Fenton

Bott, who told her husband what had happened. Mr. Bott, Master of the Mansion Studios, Dayton's finest school of dancing, became so impressed with the story that he resolved to do anything he could to further a movement so dedicated to kindness and service.

Fenton Bott found out more about Scouting from his friend, Fred Rike, and became one of the original Executive Board members at the organizational meeting in March, 1918. When he heard of the problems of the Council in raising money necessary to operate the summer camp, he presented an idea destined to become one of the traditions of early years of the Dayton Council. He offered to the Council the annual spring recital of his classic dancing classes. The boys sold tickets to the affair, held on the large lawn of John H. Patterson's Oakwood estate. The recital, entitled "Le Ballet Forest," was a sell-out and assured operation of Camp Pershing.

The war in Europe continued to rage and more than six thousand young men of Dayton had been sent overseas. Industry in Dayton was operating at peak production, many of the factories working on a twenty-four hour basis. On June 21, the Wright Airplane Company completed its one-thousandth warplane. National Cash Register produced airplane parts and instruments, triggers and other war products. An intense patriotism enveloped Dayton, and there were many flag-raising ceremonies and parades every week.

The Boy Scouts of Dayton took an active part in many of these parades and their contributions to the war effort were not going unnoticed. In a letter to Colonel Livingston, President of the National Council at that time, President Wilson commended the Boy Scouts for their work in the war effort, and bid them to continue.

"The active service of every Scout and officially enrolled member of the Boy Scouts of America is depended upon.... I beg every member of the Boy Scouts of America to realize that the services rendered by the boys have been greatly appreciated by the whole nation..." he wrote.

The Dayton Scouts continued their work through the summer and fall. They participated in the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign and collected and dried a full carload of peach pits, essential in the manufacture of gas masks.

During the summer and early fall of 1918 the number of Scouts in Dayton increased at a tremendous rate. Whole Troops applied for membership at one time. By October the Council had expanded to a point where it was becoming difficult for the Scout Executive to work as closely with each Unit as he thought necessary. It was decided that the headquarters staff should be

enlarged to meet this need. The man selected was H. W. Sinclair, Secretary of the Dayton Molding Machine Company, who had been working with the Scouting Movement for about three years. His job on the staff was to work closely with individual Units, bringing back to headquarters information on the development of each Troop in order to assist the Scout Executive, John Haien, in his overall planning. Sinclair could be known as the first Council Commissioner.

One weekend, Scouts from all over the city pitched their tents in Triangle Park for the first Council-wide encampment. It was not only the first time that all the Scouts of the Council had camped together, but the first time the public had an opportunity to see Scouts in action. It proved to be quite a show. Messages flashed around from one corner of the camp to the other as the Scouts demonstrated their signalling. Scouts showed their skill in starting fires by friction, kindling the fires in seconds. There were contests in bridge-building in which the Troops used only lashings for their construction. The test for each bridge was a simple one: a Model T Ford was driven across it. If it held, it passed. By the time the weekend was over, the public had gained a respect for this mushrooming movement.

The need for better leadership at the Troop level has always been one of the greatest problems in Scouting. A Troop can be only as good as its leaders. In order to improve the leadership of Troops in the Dayton Council, John Haien added another member to his headquarters staff. He appointed Paul Schenck to handle the instruction of adult leaders and patrol leaders. It was decided to set up a patrol leader's school. The leaders from each Troop would receive special instruction in Scouting skills, and then relay what they had learned to the boys in their patrols. There was also to be instruction for Scoutmasters who would learn how to improve the operation of their Troops.

On the morning of March 11, 1918, the first case of a mysterious sickness appeared at Fort Riley, Kansas. Case after case followed throughout the day, until by nightfall 107 men were stricken. Doctors worked round the clock to determine the identity of the mysterious killer. Soon the answer became painfully clear: Spanish influenza!

By the fall of 1918, Spanish influenza had become a world- wide epidemic. The sickness swept from city to city through the United States and the doctors had nothing to fight it with. In a

single week in October it left 21,000 Americans dead.

The disease was slow in getting to Dayton. It struck first at Wright Field and by October 4 the first fifty-one cases in the city were reported. By the next day that number had almost doubled. Authorities acted quickly, enforcing every preventative measure they knew. Rabbi Lefkowitz, head of the Red Cross in the Dayton Area, appealed to women for volunteers to serve as nurses in the coming crisis. He also called on the Boy Scouts to assist the Red Cross in locating blankets and sheets, to help in the over-crowded hospitals and to serve as messengers.

In the middle of November, the disease seemed to have run its course, and disappeared as mysteriously as it had come. During the months it had raged, twenty million Americans were stricken. Five hundred thousand of them had died. In Dayton, as in the rest of the nation, the Boy Scouts again rendered great service in a time of need.

Strangely enough, almost at the same time the last cases of influenza disappeared, the last shots were being fired in Europe. Finally, on November 11, the Armistice was signed. America could again look to her future and a new period of peace. There would be many new problems and adjustments to face.