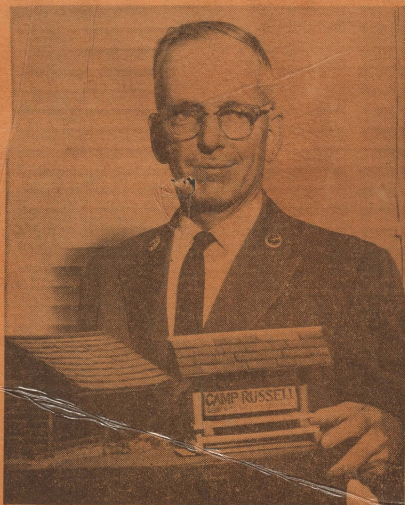


PEOPLE

Worth Knowing



Scout Executive Theodore E. Russell

... he builds character by putting ideas to work

By **ROBERT FISTICK**

Ted Russell builds character.

He uses the outdoors as his proving ground, and camping, cooking, swimming and nature study as his tools. He sprinkles the whole experience with generous amounts of Indian lore.

Officially, he's Theodore E. Russell, 46, of Mohawk, scout executive of General Herkimer Council, Boy Scouts of America. But to the public—especially the youth and adults of Oneida and Herkimer Counties he's served since 1950—Russell is fondly known as "Ted."

For nearly a decade he has instilled esprit de corps at a 200-acre lakeside scout camp which ironically bears his family name. Under his guidance Camp Russell at White Lake has won several "A" ratings from the National Scout Council, ranking it among the best in the nation.

BUT HAD IT NOT BEEN for his own early scouting experience, Ted would not be engaged in a far remote profession.

He was born in Norwalk, Conn., the son of a research chemist. After reaching the rank of Eagle Scout in his hometown troop, Ted served as both assistant scoutmaster and scoutmaster—all by age 17.

But when he left the Long Island Sound coastal city to study at Middlebury College, Vermont, his career choice was pre-medicine. He graduated in June 1941 and, shortly after Pearl Harbor, enlisted in the Army as a private. Four years and eight months later, he was honorably discharged as a captain.

Yearning to return to his alma mater, Ted volunteered to raise funds on campus for his fraternity, Kappa Delta Rho.

"But my love for camping and the outdoors soon won out," he recalled.

Ted entered Schiff Reservation, the national professional scouter training school and, upon graduation in May 1956, was appointed field executive with the Adirondack Council, Saranac Lake.

THIS FIRST SCOUTING POST not only brought valuable outdoors experience in the Adirondacks; it also afforded him the chance to meet his wife. Ted married Jean Hutchins, whose family boasts Saranac's first Adirondack guide, at Saranac Lake in 1949. They have two children, Elizabeth Ann, 8, and Richard Ralph, 5.

The Russells came to Utica in 1950 when Ted was appointed field executive for the Upper Mohawk Council. The following year he was named director of Camp Ballou. In 1957, Russell became assistant executive of General Herkimer Council, Herkimer, and was introduced to his major project, Camp Russell.

The camp was the gift of the late Samuel T. Russell, a former wood products manufacturer in Ilion. He had organized Camp Russell, Inc., in June 1919 and that October conveyed about

15 acres on the shores of White Lake for its site.

AT THE TIME, the Boy Scouts of America was nine years old, so Camp Russell ranks as one of the oldest scout camps in America. And that's just what it looked like when Ted first saw it in 1957. The only major building was a dining hall, and its roof caved in that winter under the weight of snow.

By 1960, Ted had begged, pushed and prodded help from numerous Mohawk Valley organizations, especially the Seabees (Construction Battalion Division 3-31 of the Naval Reserve in Utica). A central lodge with an estimated value of \$41,000 was built for only \$1,600—all because of men interested in the welfare of boys.

But the facelifting didn't stop there. The 100 camper layout was provided with six "villages" made up of Indian teepees, canastota wagons, jamboree tents, and Adirondack lean-tos. Other improvements include an archery and rifle range, a boat house, water-front dock and float, wilderness pond, forester's cabin, a conservation lean-to, a "model acre" to illustrate woodland conservation, and a chapel (in honor of the late John Hannahs of Ilion).

On the more utilitarian side, there are staff tents, new wiring for camp buildings and a water pipe network.

TED'S NEXT MAJOR IMPROVEMENT will come this year with construction of a storage center and staff headquarters on the site of the old dining hall. Integrated in the new building will be the original fireplace and chimney, familiar to thousands of Oneida and Herkimer County youths. (Oneida County scouts formerly used the camp; they now go to Cedarlands, the Upper Mohawk Council camp at Long Lake).

Ted takes such progress in stride; his main interest remains the character of his boys. Standing before the closing campfire of a summer scout week, he says, "Fellows, you have enjoyed a full week in the forest, in a beautiful setting on White Lake (crystal clear—you can see the sand bottom), and have had an experience you will remember the rest of your life. Maybe you would like to help others enjoy this same experience. Next month there's a work party. . ."

So goes Ted's work at Camp Russell, where his theory is that outdoor adventure is the stuff that makes a boy a man.

Yet his humor is as bright as his modesty. When his own children ask, "Daddy, where have you been all this time," Ted always replies:

"Oh, I've been up to my uncle's place. . . you know, he's lucky to have a place like that."