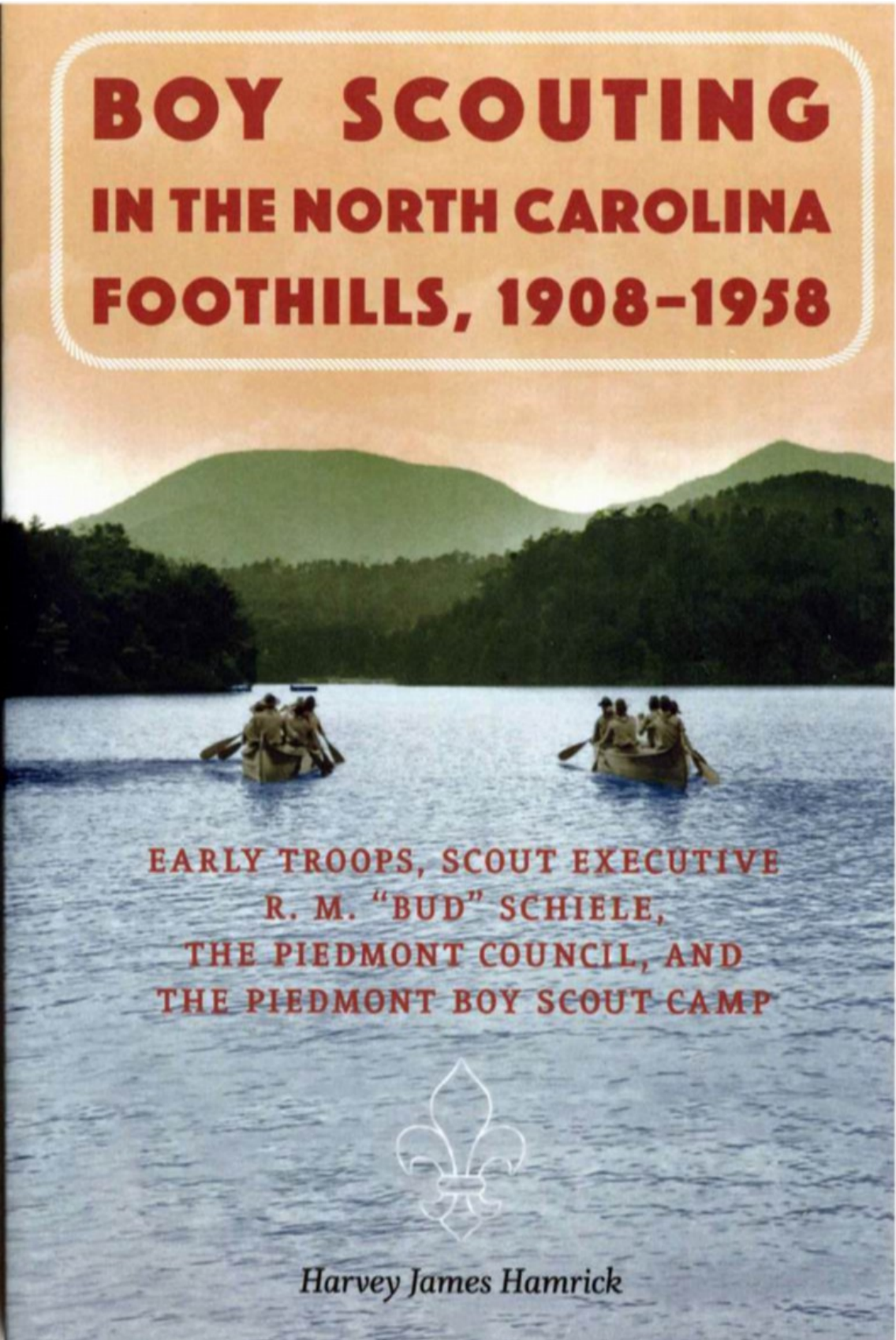


BOY SCOUTING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA FOOTHILLS, 1908-1958

A photograph of two Boy Scout canoes on a lake. The canoes are positioned in the middle ground, with several scouts visible inside. The background features a range of green mountains under a hazy sky. The water is calm with gentle ripples.

**EARLY TROOPS, SCOUT EXECUTIVE
R. M. "BUD" SCHIELE,
THE PIEDMONT COUNCIL, AND
THE PIEDMONT BOY SCOUT CAMP**



Harvey James Hamrick

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NORTH CAROLINA FOOTHILLS,
1908-1958



Rudolph Melchoir Schiele
1893-1974

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FOOTHILLS, 1908-1958**

*Early Troops, Scout Executive
R. M. "Bud" Schiele, the Piedmont Council,
and the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp*



HARVEY JAMES HAMRICK

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ISBN: 978-0-578-57663-3
Library of Congress Control Number: 2019914124

Printed by Bookmobile in the United States of America
Design and production by BW&A Books, Inc.

Unless otherwise indicated, photographs are courtesy of the
Schiele Museum of Natural History & Planetarium, Gastonia,
North Carolina (SMNH&P).

Hamrick Press
Distributed by Itasca Books
www.itascabooks.com
1-800-901-3480

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Acknowledgments

A NUMBER OF PEOPLE contributed their time and expertise to this effort. At the beginning, Ken Badgett, historian for the North Carolina Old Hickory Council, Boy Scouts of America (BSA), shared his experiences in recording the history of his council and pointed me to the Benjamin Lee Smith papers in the Rubenstein Library at Duke University and to several archives in the Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He also made me aware of the value of two online newspaper archives (newspapers.com and digitalnc.org). Because the Piedmont Council does not have archives from the early years, the research effort also focused on the libraries, history museums, and genealogical and historical societies of the council area.

Mike Allen of the Broad River Genealogical Society was diligent in tracking down people, news articles, and books in Cleveland County. Steve Hill of the Statesville Historical Collection provided valuable news clippings, pictures, and book references, and connected me with Brad Nesheim (noted below). Stacy Ward of the Historical Museum of Catawba County and Alex Floyd of the Catawba County Library System responded to numerous requests concerning Scouting in Catawba County. Brian Brown of the Gastonia Public Library probably got tired of receiving requests from me, but his prompt and thorough research was outstanding. Patti Holder of the McDowell County Public Library guided me to the online Scout notebooks from her facility. Bari Helms of the Reynolda House Museum in Winston-Salem and Alston Colbourn of East Carolina University shared their respective information on

Hiawatha pageants in the early 1900s. Betsy Logeman of the Mauney Museum in Kings Mountain and Melissa Barnett of the Kings Mountain Historical Museum provided references on the 1908 troop with a British charter. Natalie Bishop, university archivist at Gardner-Webb University, located an unpublished biographical sketch of Eugene Poston, a former president of her institution and one of the five Eagle Scout Poston brothers, and suggested other possible sources in Cleveland County. Brownie Plaster of Shelby retrieved information on Dr. Hubert Plaster and provided other contacts in Shelby. Jimmy Autrey, president of the North Carolina School for the Deaf Historical Museum in Morganton, sent material related to Scouting in that institution. Meredith Nichter, curator of the Earl Scruggs Center in Shelby, willingly searched her archives for Scouting material. Deborah Page of the Spangler Branch Library in Lawndale was very helpful in tracking down the five Poston brothers.

Special thanks go to three Cherryville residents. Pat Sherrill, director of the Cherryville Historical Museum, encouraged me to visit the museum to view its Scouting material. Pat also tracked down information on Lone Scouts in the Cherryville area and responded to other related requests. Her colleague Glen Lashbrook provided valuable images of the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) from the museum collection. Ed Feemster, Scoutmaster of Troop #316 of Cherryville, graciously met me on a Saturday morning at his troop building to view Scouting memorabilia and notebooks containing news clippings of the troop.

Dr. Ann Tippitt, executive director of the Schiele Museum, kindly met with the 2019 reunion group of former PBSC counselors for a tour of the museum and a showing of several Bud Schiele movies. Two museum staff members were also very helpful. Dr. Alan May, research coordinator and curator of archaeology, and Carrie Duran, collections manager, worked their magic to provide me with excellent digitized images of the Bud and Lily formal portraits and a photograph of Bud Schiele in his World War I uniform. Carrie also provided access to a collection of digitized images of PBSC and responded to a number of other requests concerning the project.

Ben C. Smith gathered biographical information on his grandfather, Benjamin Lee Smith, and read an early draft of the manuscript. Benjamin "Benjy" Seagle provided biographical information on his father, Benjamin F. Seagle Jr., and confirmed that Bud Schiele was his god-

father. Jerry Kennedy, son of C. A. Kennedy, provided key information on his father's Scouting career.

Three Scout executives provided much support and expertise. Brad Nesheim and Clif Morris worked in the Piedmont Council during parts of their careers and Jack Crawford is currently active in the council. Clif facilitated the first reunion of 1950s counselors at the council headquarters in Gastonia in 2008. He also identified Helen Turner, his mother-in-law and a longtime employee at the council headquarters, as the author of the unpublished document "Piedmont Council History 1923-1998." Jack discovered the Seagle papers when he purchased the Seagle home in Hickory, and he graciously shared the contents for this project. Brad was a key stalwart throughout the entire writing process. He read the early drafts with a critical eye for accuracy, sought information in national Scout archives, visited the council headquarters and the Schiele Museum to inquire about any available records, contacted former council colleagues for information, and, most importantly, was a constant source of encouragement.

Two university professors were most responsive and supportive. Benjamin René Jordan, professor of history at Christian Brothers University and author of *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America: Citizenship, Race, and the Environment, 1910-1930*, responded immediately to several specific inquiries. Of course, his book was a major source of information about national trends in Scouting during the early years of the Piedmont Council. Peter Nabokov, professor of American Indian studies and world arts and cultures at UCLA and author of *How the World Moves: The Odyssey of an American Indian Family*, confirmed that the Wilbert Edward "Blue Sky Eagle" Hunt in his book was the same Blue Sky Eagle who had been at PBSC during the 1930s. Professor Nabokov described the relationship between Wilbert and the Schieles as lasting into the early 1970s and provided access to Wilbert's nephew for a telephone interview.

Don Crawford of Kings Mountain joined the Boy Scouts in 1940 and was active most of his adult life. He welcomed me for two visits to discuss his years in Scouting and to view his digitized slides of PBSC.

Shem Blackley, a counselor in the 1940s, read the first two drafts, gave important suggestions, served as a general sounding board for ideas about the organization of material, and was a constant source of encouragement. Shem's two sons, Fred Blackley and Chip Blackley, connected

me with Shem and suggested other contacts in Cleveland County. Fred and Chip, both Eagle Scouts, are active Scoutmasters in Shelby.

Newton MacCormack was a counselor, bugler, and camp doctor at PBSC during most of the 1950s. As a longtime friend, he was my first consultant on the project, tolerating my many "fact checking" telephone calls and carefully reviewing the early drafts. He also described his experiences as camp doctor and wrote the section on the camp bugle schedule (appendix B).

Jason McDaniel, Bill Sayers, and Bill Whisnant, former PBSC counselors, read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions on content and style. Bill Whisnant's remarkable recollection of Lily Schiele's comments at the last camp staff meeting in 1957 is included verbatim in the manuscript narrative.

Former counselors at PBSC in the 1940s and 1950s (and one, Bruce Warlick, in the 1930s) were enthusiastic about the project, helped identify sources of information, and supplied leads on possible topics. Conrad and Bruce Warlick recorded their memories of PBSC in a ten-page typed document.

The original idea for this project grew out of the reunions of PBSC counselors of the 1950s and early 1960s. At those reunions, the men shared pictures, memorabilia, and memories that clearly needed to be preserved. Attendees included Jim Moorman, Jason McDaniel, Joe Morris, Henry Thomason, John Mason, Ed McFarland, Frank Goldsmith, Bill Whisnant, Bill Sayers, Edward Goodson, Newton MacCormack, Alex MacCormack, Jim Hall, Russell Rice, Bud Oates, John Greene, Marshall LaFar, Arthur Burgess, Richard Little, and the late Mike Tarlton, Bob Stapleton, Ric Stapleton, and John Cone.

For full disclosure, my family connections to the Piedmont Council are relevant. In doing the research, I was quite surprised to find the name of my grandfather, Fred D. Hamrick of Rutherfordton, on the letterhead of a council letter in 1925. At that early stage, district officers and committees were several years away and the council had designated contact persons in various towns. I found no other mention of his involvement. In the 1940s my older brother, Fred D. Hamrick III, was a camper and then counselor at PBSC. During the same period, my father, Fred D. Hamrick Jr., an attorney, began serving as a legal advisor for the council. It appears that I was destined to become a Boy Scout.

The next generation took the connection to a higher level. By sheer

coincidence, my son, Harvey J. Hamrick Jr., married Shannon E. Goldsmith. Their grandfathers, Fred D. Hamrick Jr. and C. Frank Goldsmith of Marion, were Piedmont Council presidents respectively in 1961 and 1962. Shannon's father, Frank Goldsmith Jr., was a counselor at PBSC in the early 1960s.

Finally, my wife, Ann, needs very special thanks. She allowed me to work on the manuscript at my own pace, traveled with me to interview sources, and was a source of strong encouragement throughout the entire process.

Prologue

THE BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT in the western North Carolina foothills during the first half of the twentieth century is a fascinating story. Many people associated with Scouting are not aware that Scout troops existed in the area before the beginning of the Piedmont Council in 1923. Of course, the prominent role played by Rudolph Melchoir "Bud" Schiele in leading the Piedmont Council for almost four decades is the central theme of the story. Surviving former Boy Scouts of the 1940s and 1950s are now in their late seventies, eighties, and nineties, so existing memory banks are on the decline. Therefore, there is some urgency in getting the facts straight now.

The author joined the Boy Scouts in 1951 at the age of eleven and was active through 1958. He spent four summers as a counselor at Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) near Tryon, North Carolina, when Bud Schiele was in charge of the council and the camp. The pleasant memories, lasting friendships, and important life lessons from his days at PBSC kept returning to his consciousness, particularly when stimulated by reunions with fellow counselors from that time. Over several reunions, we began to realize how much Scouting and Bud Schiele, with his leadership, discipline, and mentorship, had influenced our lives. We were the recipients of a remarkable legacy that started in 1923. It is now time to understand how it all occurred.

Unfortunately, key archives of the Piedmont Council such as annual reports, important letters, and related material were lost when the headquarters in Gastonia made several moves to new offices over the years.

Without access to these archives, the research for this history depended on locating documents, letters, brochures, reports, photographs, and other primary sources scattered throughout the eleven counties of the Piedmont Council in libraries, historical societies, small museums, churches, and Scout troop buildings. Certainly, some important archives remain undiscovered in boxes and files in family homes. By far, the most important archives are in the Benjamin Lee Smith papers at the Rubenstein Library at Duke University. This collection has extensive material on the administrative structure and function of the council from 1926 to 1936: two annual reports, commissioner reports, various BSA and council pamphlets and brochures, Bud Schiele letters, documents on fundraising strategies, etc. Another important source is the Benjamin Franklin Seagle Jr. papers in possession of Mr. Jack Crawford, a Scout executive from Hickory. In addition, local newspapers provided regular coverage of Boy Scout news and activities after about 1910, enabling reconstruction of the basic threads of the story.

There are many excellent books and articles on the Boy Scout movement, from factual accountings of specific events to sociological analyses of its effect on youth and society. There are also many histories of individual Boy Scout councils and Order of the Arrow lodges across the nation. This effort is an attempt to frame the arrival and development of Scouting in the Piedmont Council within its particular social, economic, and cultural context. During the Schiele years, the council enrolled approximately 100,000 boys, and 50,000 of them attended PBSC on Lake Lanier.¹ These are remarkable numbers for a Boy Scout council serving a primarily small town and rural population. Explaining how such success occurred is a primary goal of this book.



Eleven county area of the Piedmont Council in the Western North Carolina Foothills.

Gastonia to Tryon = 66 miles

Statesville to Tryon = 105 miles

Baden-Powell's Movement Crosses the Atlantic

LORD ROBERT BADEN-POWELL, a highly decorated British Army officer in the Boer Wars in South Africa, started the Scouting movement in England in 1907 with an encampment of twenty-two boys on Brownsea Island, in a harbor on England's southeast coast. He published the initial Scout manual, *Scouting for Boys*, in May 1908.¹ In 1909 William D. Boyce, an American publisher, encountered an English Boy Scout in London who assisted him in finding a destination. The Scout's helpfulness and manner made a significant impression on Mr. Boyce and led him to visit Lord Baden-Powell's office to learn more about the British Boy Scout movement. Upon returning home, he had the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) incorporated on 8 February 1910, by a law firm in Washington. However, he had no organization and did not realize that some Scouting activity was already present in this country.²

In America, *Scouting for Boys* created much interest. Adults liked its emphasis on citizenship and character development, and boys saw excitement in the described outdoor activities and skills. Using it as a guide, Boy Scout troops across America organized as early as 1908. Without a functioning American national Scouting organization, some troops requested charters directly from Lord Baden-Powell.³

In the summer of 1910, the BSA gained traction through the efforts of a dedicated group of leaders who realized that success depended on a sound organizational and administrative structure. At that time, there were other youth movements for boys competing for resources and enrollment. With strong leadership and vision, the BSA emerged as the

dominant volunteer organization for boys.⁴ E. M. Robinson, a Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) professional, and James E. West, a lawyer with a strong background in youth work, were prominent figures in these early efforts.⁵ James West became the Chief Scout Executive in 1911 and guided the organization until 1943.

The Scout movement entered the American scene at an opportune time. The transition of the economy from a small business and agricultural base to the evolving industrial advancements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created major cultural and social changes. A downside of industrialization was the use of child labor in the factories and neglect of public education. These changes first occurred in the large urban centers and only later spread to other areas of the country.

Gradually, progressive attitudes enabled the passage of child labor and compulsory school attendance laws and provided young people with more unstructured time. Concurrently, there were concerns with delinquency in the immigrant and disadvantaged youth populations of the northern cities. Academic sociologists studied the physical and emotional aspects of child and adolescent development with the goal of understanding how to influence such development toward positive life outcomes.⁶ The Scout movement, with its emphasis on character and citizenship in preparation for responsible manhood, brought a reassuring credibility to the social concerns. The early leaders recognized the potential of having this credibility and committed themselves to building a strong national organization.

The YMCA was one of the most prominent organizations serving youth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in the larger cities. Salaried executives and staff based in urban centers and in affiliated camps led the various programs. This model differed from the BSA model but was not in conflict with it. Although not wanting to have a formal affiliation with the BSA, the YMCA leaders supported the organization, sponsored some troops, and provided critical early leadership. A press release in 1910 picked up by papers all over the country is an example of early YMCA support. It characterized the nascent BSA organization as "Something to do, something to think about, something to enjoy in the woods with a view always to character building, for manhood, not scholarship, is the aim of the boy scout movement which is being taken up by the YMCAs of this country."⁷

Some knowledge of the structure and organizational plan of the national BSA organization is helpful in understanding the formation and growth of the Piedmont Council. As noted above, James E. West became chief Scout executive in 1911 and was in that position for thirty-three years. Under his leadership, the BSA developed into a highly structured, top-down, corporate-like entity. He was an exceptional leader who brought a high level of executive expertise, organizational ability, and vision to the task.

In 1910 the BSA Committee on Organization formed a national council of prominent business, government, professional, and philanthropic members that provided recognition and credibility. A smaller group, the board of managers, assumed the daily tasks of running the organization. This group consisted of a president, two vice presidents, a treasurer, three commissioners, and the chief Scout executive, James West. Training professional executives and voluntary leaders, establishing councils, fundraising, developing program materials, and publicity were key priorities over the first decade.⁸

Revising Baden-Powell's manual *Scouting for Boys* to be better suited for American boys was an important early task. This involved Americanization of the Scout Oath and Law and the requirements for awards and advancement, resulting in the *BSA Handbook for Boys* (1911).⁹ The BSA publicity branch sent newspaper articles all over the country announcing the release of the manual. One such article stated, "The Scout Law has been amplified in keeping with the American ideal of manhood and citizenship. It is aimed to train boys to face the perils which threaten them daily."¹⁰

James West and the other early BSA leaders realized that a working and mutually respectful alliance with churches of all denominations demanded full attention. Therefore, in adapting the Scout Oath and Law from the British versions to be more applicable to American boys, they made God and religion take center stage.¹¹ This is particularly evident in the addition of the twelfth Scout Law, not present in the British version, which clearly articulates a personal responsibility of religious obligation and acceptance of the beliefs of others: *A Scout is Reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties, and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion.* This brief statement of clarity and meaning reassured leaders of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths

that the Scout movement would be a willing partner in the spiritual and moral development of young boys without infringing the role of the various churches in the process.

In the 1940s the BSA and the separate religious denominations established awards to encourage Scouts to become more involved in the teachings of their faiths. In the Piedmont Council, the God and Country award established by Protestant churches constituted another link in the church relationship. To earn the award, Scouts completed a structured curriculum including a service project for the church. Parents and clergy served as counselors and certified completed units. The award was a specific medal worn with other awards on the uniform.

By the early 1920s the BSA was growing rapidly, with clear goals and priorities, and firm guidelines for expansion. A first step was to transition local councils headed by community volunteers to the more effective model of councils headed by trained, full-time Scout executives. In unserved areas where no council organization existed, the goal was to start one with a full-time professional executive.¹² In this regard, the BSA trained a corps of traveling regional professionals to organize councils around the country. Councils without a full-time paid Scout executive were "second-class" councils and those with an executive were "first-class." Converting all councils to first-class status was a primary BSA goal between 1915 and 1930.¹³

In nearby Charlotte, the first troop to receive a charter directly from the national office of the BSA started in 1913. Later that year, a group of men in Charlotte received permission to form a second-class council. The Mecklenburg County Council (MCC) received its charter in 1915.¹⁴ In 1918 the MCC hired its first Scout executive, James E. Steere, and became a first-class council.¹⁵

Scouting in the Western Foothills Prior to the Piedmont Council (1908–1923)

IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY North Carolina was an impoverished rural state with an economy based largely on family farms, a small mercantile class, and a budding textile industry. A largely Protestant, racially segregated population struggled to modernize with improved transportation and education efforts. Poverty, illiteracy, child labor (on farms and in textile mills), poor nutrition and sanitation, and an inadequate and fragmented system of surfaced roads were major issues.¹ The Rockefeller Sanitary Commission increased public awareness of health and sanitation concerns through its hookworm campaign in 1909–14. Field workers documented the large number of unsanitary conditions, specifically waste disposal, throughout North Carolina that caused hookworm and other diseases.²

Political will and public funding were slow to coalesce because reform-minded advocates in the urban areas and universities met significant inertia from conservative elements in the rural areas who worried that modernization might adversely affect their traditional farm and small business livelihoods. With muddy roads and streets and many homes lacking electricity, telephones, gasoline-powered vehicles, and indoor plumbing, the standard of living had not progressed much beyond the late 1800s for most families. Times were hard and cash was in short supply, prompting many families to move into the towns for

employment in the growing number of textile mills.³ Twenty-four per cent of those workers in the early 1900s were children.⁴

In 1900 public schools, if open at all, had only four-month terms and secondary education was almost nonexistent. There was much indifference toward funding public education at either the county or state level. Affluent families supported private academies and boarding schools for their children and had little interest in education for the masses. However, these attitudes began to change with the election in 1900 of Governor Charles B. Aycock, who vigorously promoted increased funding and expansion of public education to reduce illiteracy.⁵ The next several decades experienced gradual advances in public education, including more state funding (from various tax increases and bond proposals) for school construction and salaries of teachers, principals, and superintendents. In 1913 a compulsory school law required all children eight to twelve years old to attend school four months per year and prohibited children under twelve years of age from working in factories. In 1918 the school year increased from four to six months.⁶

In this environment, there was a significant cultural void around organized youth activities, with church groups and scattered 4-H clubs the main options. Therefore, it is not surprising that Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* in 1908, the first BSA manual in 1911, and the Lone Scout publications in 1915 stimulated the spontaneous formation of Scout troops in some western Piedmont towns.

The first known troops in the Piedmont Council area took shape because, as noted above, individual citizens in several small towns were attracted to Scouting by Baden-Powell's manual. The first troop, and likely one of the first in the nation, has quite a distinction. Established in Kings Mountain in 1908 at the St. Matthew's Lutheran Church by the Rev. Dr. C. K. Bell, it received its charter directly from Lord Baden-Powell.⁷ Current members of the church do not have knowledge of the location of the charter, and the Baden-Powell Heritage Museum in England does not have records of charters issued during those early years. The British charter for the St. Matthew's troop is a historically significant document, and its discovery someday in personal or family records would be tantamount to finding the Holy Grail.

On 9 February 1910, J. Wesley Clay, inspired by Baden-Powell's manual, established Troop #1 of Hickory. The boys' mothers made the uniforms from a bolt of khaki cloth purchased by Mr. Clay. The boys made



1917 Statesville troop. Courtesy of Steve Hill, Statesville Historical Collection.

their tents, flags, and other equipment themselves.⁸ This troop has the distinction of obtaining one of the first charters issued by the BSA.

Claude Abernethy (1897–1979) was a member of that first troop and continued his involvement with the Scouts as a lifetime avocation. Referred to affectionately and respectfully as “Mr. Ab,” he started as a Scoutmaster in 1920 and served for fifty-four years. During his tenure, over five hundred boys were members of the troop and a hundred became Eagle Scouts. Abernethy is the acknowledged father of Scouting in Catawba County. He also served as a member of the National Boy Scout Council and in important Piedmont Council leadership roles over the years.⁹

Reported activities for Hickory troops prior to 1920 included raising money by selling tickets to a Chautauqua presentation, participating in a wrestling competition, and performing a public service by cleaning up a vacant city lot.¹⁰ In 1917 Hickory Scouts went door to door in a Liberty Loan drive for World War I. Some of the early Scouts served in the

war and returned home as active promoters of Scouting as a patriotic activity.¹¹

Scouts in Hickory (and elsewhere) often built frame structures, termed "huts," as meeting places. In the 1920s five Hickory troops used three such buildings. In 1937 the local Rotary Club funded a stone state-of-the-art common meeting structure for all the troops that is a part of the architectural history of Hickory.¹²

Several troops formed in Statesville and Iredell County between 1911 and 1913, but none obtained a BSA charter. In 1916, a troop organized by Clyde Alexander (1887–1954) was the first in Statesville to obtain a BSA charter, but all of the pre–World War I troops in Iredell County became inactive during the war years. In the early 1920s several troops were formed as part of the Catawba River Council with Clyde Alexander in a leadership role. Mr. Alexander, the father of Scouting in Iredell County, continued to work in Scouting at the local and Piedmont Council levels for his entire life.¹³

The first troop in Marion was formed in 1915 with Frank Wood and Homer Beaman as Scoutmasters. That same year, Dr. Donald McIntosh formed a troop at Old Fort.¹⁴

Lone Scouts of America

William D. Boyce, one of the founding members of the BSA, established the Lone Scouts of America (LSA) in 1915 to extend Scouting to boys in rural areas. There was tension between Boyce and the BSA leadership on how best to serve these boys. The BSA sought to extend its standard program by forming troops in rural areas and creating "farm"-themed merit badges, while Boyce believed that the LSA model was more effective. He and others pointed out that farm communities rarely had enough adult leaders to serve as Scoutmasters, troop committee members, or merit badge counselors. In addition, the rigid structure of the BSA troop model, with adult leaders in direct control of all activities, was counter to the rather independent spirit of rural youth. Moreover, the traditional BSA outdoor activities of hiking, camping, and pioneering held little appeal for farm and rural boys, since their daily routines already involved being outdoors.¹⁵

In the LSA model, boys had no local leader and acted independently in following the LSA program materials received by mail. The printed

materials incorporated some of the ideas of Ernest Thompson Seton, whose Tribe of Woodcraft Indians, founded in 1902, provided help to Baden-Powell in writing *Scouting for Boys*.¹⁶ The LSA organization did very well and enrolled over 500,000 members prior to its merger with the BSA in 1924.

Recognizing the need to reach isolated boys but not in agreement with the LSA model, the BSA created its own program, Pioneer Scout, in 1916. But the program had little national success in enrolling boys and ended several years after the LSA merger. A main reason for its failure was the insistence by the BSA that the program follow the traditional BSA model, whose rigid structure simply did not fit the family and cultural values of rural America.¹⁷ It appears that the failure of the Pioneer Scout program, in contrast to the LSA's success, was a sensitive topic for the BSA. William D. Murray's *The History of the Boy Scouts of America* (1937) has no discussion of the LSA or even an entry for the Pioneer Scouts in its index. Mr. Murray, a charter member of the BSA executive board, certainly represented the core values and biases of the original BSA leadership.

There is no record of any Pioneer Scout activity in the Piedmont Council, but the Seagle papers contain a Pioneer Scout information sheet and application form. In 1925 Benjamin Seagle Jr. wrote a letter to the BSA office in New York expressing interest in Scouting. In response, he received a form letter dated 5 February 1925 from James E. West, chief Scout executive. The letter, enclosing the information sheet and application, expressed the hope that the BSA would "soon have the pleasure of receiving" the application. It's not clear if Benjamin requested information on Scouting in general or on the Pioneer Scout program specifically. Because he lived in Hickory, where there were several BSA-chartered troops, he was ineligible for the Pioneer Scouts. Reading over the Pioneer Scout information sheet is quite revealing as to why the program failed. The sheet design is overly elaborate and the information content, long and detailed, with many conditions and restrictions, is legalistic in style. The application form is similarly complex. In view of the simplicity of joining the LSA, it is no wonder that few families opted for the Pioneer Scouts.

Lone Scouts continued as a separate entity in the BSA organization after the merger, but as the BSA gradually imposed its structure into the new organization, many LSA members chose to function as independent

groups outside of the BSA.¹⁸ The BSA promoted the merger because it wanted to protect its lucrative copyright to the word "Scout," the result of a federal charter granted by Congress in 1916, which prevented competing youth organizations from using the word in their name or on their equipment. Since the LSA organization formed in 1915, it could use the word "Scout" in its name.¹⁹ Although he is not mentioned in the chapter titled "Our Federal Charter" in Murray's book, Representative Yates Webb of Shelby, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, evidently had a leading role in introducing and securing passage of the bill which granted of the federal charter.²⁰

In an interesting twist, the Girl Scouts United States of America (GSUSA) filed a lawsuit in 2018 against the BSA about the use of the word "Scout," after the BSA announced that it would admit girls to its core programs and change its name to Scouts BSA. The GSUSA claims that the name change and initiative will damage its trademark and confuse the public. The litigation is pending.

The Lone Scout movement had a presence in North Carolina, but records of membership and activities are difficult to find. In 1970 the Lone Scout Foundation built a museum, called a "Memory Lodge," at Camp Bernhardt near New London, North Carolina. Camp Bernhardt is the council camp for the Central North Carolina Council headquartered in Albemarle. In 2006 the museum directors transferred holdings to the Ottawa Historical and Scouting Heritage Museum in Illinois.²¹

Evidence of Lone Scout activity in the Piedmont Council is sparse. As documented by pictures in the Cherryville Historical Museum, a group of Lone Scouts existed near Cherryville and that group had reunions in later years. In the area around Marion and Hickory, a group of former Lone Scouts called themselves the Catawba Tribe. A brochure of the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) from the 1920s states that Lone Scouts were eligible and welcome to attend camp as individuals. However, there is no record of how many Lone Scouts attended, if any. This author was unaware of the existence of Lone Scouts in his years at PBSC. The low profile in the Piedmont Council may reflect Bud Schiele's commitment to the standard BSA program and his sense that the LSA represented the "red-headed stepchild" of the BSA.

As indicated above, Scouting in the western Piedmont in the early 1920s had small pockets of activity in some towns but no cohesive organization to promote growth and sustainable activity. Concurrently, the

BSA organization was hitting its stride and training field executives to organize councils with jurisdiction over defined geographical areas using the BSA model. In 1917 a committee of the International Association of Rotary Clubs endorsed the Boy Scouts, with the result that local Rotary clubs began promoting Scouting at the community level.²² The presence of an active Rotary club in Gastonia probably helped to bring a BSA field executive there in 1923.

The Beginning of the Piedmont Council (1923)

THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1920S, riding a post-World War I stimulus, was a time of increasing economic development. A priority of this development was to improve transportation by building better surface roads. Most railroad construction in North Carolina took place in the latter half of the nineteenth century but continued, at a slower pace, in the first part of the twentieth century. By the 1920s railroad connections between major towns crossed the state and railroad expansion was complete. Yet the poor conditions on the secondary roads persisted and hampered progress. In 1921 funding of highway and secondary road improvements received a major boost with the passage by the General Assembly of a \$50 million bond issue to construct five thousand miles of roads across the state.¹ Over the next decade, new roads assisted small farms in becoming larger enterprises as markets expanded and prompted continued development of the textile and furniture industries, resulting in more growth of towns and small cities.² By 1923 North Carolina was the largest textile-producing state in the nation, and the majority of the mills were in the Piedmont.³ Organizations like the Piedmont Council that depended on vehicle travel for expansion were additional beneficiaries of better roads.

Gradual social and economic advances between 1900 and 1920 brought some economic and convenience benefits to the families and communities of the region. The first telephone exchanges in the major North Carolina cities started with Southern Bell in Raleigh in 1892. By the early 1900s some of the small towns of the Piedmont had small,

private telephone exchanges.⁴ Still, in the early 1920s electric power, radios, telephones, and indoor plumbing were mainly limited to the upper- and middle-class families in established towns, and the main sources of information continued to be local newspapers, civic groups, neighbors, and churches.

Between 1920 and 1932 public education at the elementary and secondary levels received increasing state funds for construction and salaries for teachers, principals, and superintendents, and small, rural schools experienced gradual consolidation.⁵ For example, in 1925 Rutherford County closed nine one-room teacher schools in the wake of consolidation.⁶ In 1933 the school year was extended from six to eight months. It was not until 1943 that the nine-month school year was mandated.⁷ During these years the mandatory school attendance age became fourteen years and remained there until it became sixteen in 1945.⁸ These laws reduced the likelihood of young boys' quitting school to become mill workers and possibly created more opportunity to pursue membership in the Boy Scouts.

As the textile and furniture industries expanded, more people moved into the towns, often living in housing subsidized by the mills. While Gaston County was the center of the textile industry in the Piedmont, all of the counties had a large stake in the industry. The twenty-four-hour shift schedules and strict oversight by mill owners of almost all aspects of family life dramatically altered working-class family dynamics. Often entire families worked the shifts, and the resulting social disruption created concerns about delinquency in young boys. As the interest in Scouting grew, mills across the counties addressed the demand by sponsoring Boy Scout troops. A good example away from the Gastonia area is Cross Cotton Mills, which began sponsoring Troop #4 in Marion in 1931, a relationship which lasted into the 1950s.⁹

Generally, the early to mid-1920s were a period of economic prosperity for the region in terms of industrial growth, stable worker wages, banking, and progressive leadership in state government for education, road construction, and public health. Even so, as the textile industry consolidated during the decade, some out-of-state owners exploited the nonunionized Piedmont mill workers to maintain profits. Working hours and productivity demands increased as wages were decreased. As noted in chapter 5, this trend resulted in abrupt social upheaval in the spring of 1929.

Social class, based largely on education and income, determined family values and choices. The professional class (lawyers, dentists, engineers, physicians, mill owners, senior mill executives, and others with advanced degrees such as clergy and school administrators) formed the more affluent upper class. Teachers, nurses, small merchants, middle managers, government employees, and skilled workers defined the middle class. The small farmers and unskilled mill and factory workers, with limited education and low wages, were the lower class, with little hope of changing their status. African Americans, working as domestic servants and unskilled laborers for little pay, had the additional obstacle of living in the Jim Crow South.

This social hierarchy determined how Scouting made inroads in the Piedmont Council and across the nation, because the upper- and middle-class families who valued the principles of Scouting and encouraged their sons to participate usually had sufficient income to support the expenses that Scouting entailed: uniforms, equipment, publications, registration fees, summer camp fees, etc. With school as their major activity and no pressure to contribute to the family's income, these boys had extra time and saw Scouting as an enjoyable and challenging endeavor. The BSA organization availed itself of this demographic group while at the same time trying to be relevant to all classes by directing special initiatives toward rural areas and "less advantaged" boys.¹⁰

The same dynamic was evident in the Piedmont Council, in which middle- and upper-class boys and men in the cities and small towns provided the primary source of enrolled Scouts and voluntary leaders as the movement expanded. However, the council leaders, in alignment with national BSA efforts, worked hard to enroll boys of all classes by keeping the costs of membership as low as possible and through targeted efforts toward rural churches and communities.

In October 1923 a group of prominent citizens in Gastonia met with John C. Norsk, a deputy regional BSA executive, to request a BSA charter to establish the Piedmont Council.¹¹ During this period the BSA had field agents all over the country with the mission of starting councils. Therefore, it's likely that it was Mr. Norsk who initiated contact with the men in Gastonia. As noted earlier, the national BSA organization had a strong relationship with Rotary International. Mr. Kay Dixon, a member of the Gastonia Rotary Club, became the first president of the Piedmont

Council, a signal that the club regarded starting a Scouting movement as a priority.

An organizational plan presented by Mr. Norsk designated the counties of Gaston, Cleveland, Lincoln, Rutherford, and Polk as the service area.¹² Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, and McDowell counties started out in 1923 as the separate Catawba River Council and only in the early 1930s came under the jurisdiction of the Piedmont Council. The history of the Catawba River Council and its transition into the Piedmont Council follows in chapter 5. An unpublished Piedmont Council document provides the names of the men present at the organizational meeting in 1923 and contains an excerpt of meeting minutes prepared by Mr. Norsk.¹³

The first council officers were Kay Dixon of Gastonia, president; S. N. Boyce of Gastonia, treasurer; G. R. Gillespie of Gastonia, commissioner; and four vice presidents—H. B. Gaston of Belmont, E. D. Johnston of Lincolnton, C. E. Neisler of Kings Mountain, and F. C. Kinzie of Spindale. Other important supporters of starting a council were W. L. Balthis of Gastonia, O. E. Hutchinson of Mount Holly, R. E. Price of Rutherfordton, and Dr. A. O. Duncan of Forest City.¹⁴

The new council needed professional leadership, and the regional Scout executive based in Atlanta recommended R. M. "Bud" Schiele, the Scout executive at the Georgia Carolina Council in Augusta. The regional executive described Schiele as "a man of wide experience in Scouting and in the fields of outdoor camping, nature study, and educational work." The council leaders were impressed, and Bud Schiele began work in Gastonia on 15 January 1924.¹⁵

Based on the recommendation of the regional Scout executive, the council officers knew that Bud Schiele was certainly qualified for the job. What they could not know at that time was how fortunate they were: the man they hired had extraordinary leadership abilities, an unwavering commitment to the principles of Scouting, and a realistic vision of how to establish Scouting throughout the territory.

R. M. "Bud" Schiele: Preparation for a Life of Service

RUDOLPH MELCHOIR "Bud" Schiele (rhymes with "steel") was born in Philadelphia on 2 April 1893. There is little information about his immediate family or the specifics of his early education. His obituary (1974) states that he was educated in the public and private schools of Philadelphia. A newspaper article in 1932 reported that his mother, Mrs. Sophia Schiele, died in Philadelphia and that Mr. and Mrs. Schiele attended her funeral and interment in Newark, New Jersey.¹ Published interviews during his life and his obituary do not provide names or information about immediate family or relatives. An article in the *Gastonia Gazette* after his death mentions a niece living in New Jersey, but she is unnamed.² Dr. Ann Tippitt, executive director of the Schiele Museum in Gastonia, found Philadelphia census records that indicate his parents were first-generation German immigrants.

As an adolescent, he developed a strong interest in natural history, and between 1911 and 1914 he received some training as an apprentice curator at the Philadelphia Commercial Museum. From the age of twenty-one (1914) until he entered the Army at twenty-four (1917), he was employed as a taxidermist and assistant curator in the museum.³ Although several articles about this period of his life state that he attended the University of Pennsylvania, the university alumni archives have no record of his enrollment as either a full-time or part-time student.

The Philadelphia Commercial Museum has an interesting history. It opened in 1895 and closed in 1994. Attempts to access employee records

between 1910 and 1918 were unsuccessful. However, a newspaper article documents that in the summer of 1916, Bud Schiele accompanied a senior curator from the museum, Mrs. L. L. Wilson, PhD, on an expedition to New Mexico to collect Native American artifacts.⁴ The article reports that the Philadelphia expedition had "many important finds."

In September 1916 Bud Schiele married Lily Emma Hobbs, also of Philadelphia. Both twenty-three years old, they met in one of the city parks where she encountered him taking nature photographs for the museum.⁵ Lily Schiele shared many of his interests and was a full partner in all of Bud's later professional activities. Her loyalty and life role in the marriage constituted an essential part of his success in Scouting. As with Bud Schiele, there is no information available about Lily's immediate family, and her obituary lists no relatives. The couple was childless, and this may explain their strong mutual devotion and their shared interests in the natural world and in serving youth. Lily headed up Cub Scout work for the Piedmont Council in the 1940s and 1950s. In the summers, she was camp dietician, instructor of Indian lore, director of the Hiawatha pageant, and general ombudswoman. A rather authoritarian personality, she kept a watchful eye on all aspects of camp life to ensure smooth operations—a strong motivation for counselors and staff to be cheerful, cooperative, and prompt team players in all their responsibilities.

In 1917 Bud joined the Army and became a lieutenant in the Officers Reserve Corps after training at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. His first assignment was to the 87th Division at Camp Pike, Arkansas, and in the summer of 1918 he trained in machine gunnery at the Second Corps School at Châtillon, France. There he served as a special instructor in machine gunnery and later received orders to join the 141st Machine Gun Battalion until the war ended on 11 November 1918.⁶ Whether he had combat experience during this period is unknown. An attempt to access his military records (which are in the public domain) was unsuccessful. The National Personnel Records Center reported that his records were likely lost in a fire on 12 July 1973 that destroyed or damaged most records of Army personnel for the period 1912 through 1959. He returned to the United States on the SS *George Washington* in November 1918 and spent a few months at Camp Merritt, New Jersey, until his discharge in 1919.

Discharge from the Army was a time of decision for the Schieles. Evi-



Bud Schiele in his mid-twenties as a World War I army lieutenant.

dently Bud explored options with both the National Park Service and the Boy Scouts of America.⁷ He decided against a position as the only wildlife official in the Territory of Alaska and chose to become a Scout executive in Independence, Kansas. With his strong interest and training in the natural sciences, it is not clear why he did not seek employment back at the Philadelphia Commercial Museum or at a similar institution. The Scout movement was growing, and perhaps he saw Scouting as a career path that might complement both his leadership experiences acquired in the Army and his interest in teaching natural science to young people. In any event, the Schieles were off to Kansas in November 1919.

Based on Kansas newspaper accounts, Bud Schiele, as a newly minted executive, was firmly committed to the strict, corporate business model developed by the National BSA Council. One account states, "R. M. Schiele arrived from Philadelphia today to become the Scout master for

the five troops of the Boy Scouts of this city. He plans first the organization of a Scout council composed of businessmen. After that, an effort will be made to get all boys eligible for Scouts to join. Mr. Schiele was a soldier in France, being a lieutenant in the machine gun company of the 336th infantry. He has also had experience in the Philadelphia Museum as curator in the Department of Education."⁸

Five days later, the paper had a bylined article: "Lt. Schiele Has Taken Charge of the Effort to Systematize Things for the Boy Scouts." The brief article states, "He will devote his entire time to the development and extension of the Scout program. Lt. Schiele has had exceptional training in work of this character. It is his aim to secure the best leaders to assist in the work and make every available boy in Independence a 'Good Scout.'"⁹

A later article states, "Lieutenant Schiele, the Scout Executive, has been assigned to attend a scout executive training camp to be held at Hardy, Arkansas May 31-June 7. By attending this conference, Lieutenant Schiele will learn what other Scout executives are doing."¹⁰

Bud Schiele was in Independence from November 1919 until September 1920. A newspaper article mentions that the council selected a new executive, but there is no mention of his departure to be the Scout executive in the Georgia Carolina Council in Augusta.¹¹ The early records of the Independence Council did not survive a later merger with the Quivira Council, leaving no information about the decision to leave Independence.

He started in Augusta in early 1921 and remained there until late 1923, when he came to Gastonia. Augusta Council records for these years are in the Augusta Council headquarters but remain unexamined to date. An article in the Aiken, South Carolina, newspaper states, "Camp Conley is where the Boy Scouts of Augusta are having 'the time of their lives.' Mr. R. M. Schiele, the Scout Executive, is himself a live wire and has the rare talent of knowing how to manage boys to the best advantage. The boys are well organized and have a regular program to carry out each day. This includes drilling, bathing, and exercises in life saving, rowing, etc."¹² After three years in Augusta, the call came from Gastonia and the Schieles moved again.

By virtue of his experience as a Scout executive over four years in two previous councils, Bud Schiele was well versed in the national BSA administrative and organizational doctrines when he arrived in Gasto-

nia. He had attended several national and regional BSA leadership training sessions, including an eight-day conference in Blue Ridge, North Carolina, in 1922.¹³ His job now was to establish a new council in a large, mostly rural service area on a limited budget. Gaining a foothold would require many meetings and much travel on difficult roads in the cars of the day. With only a handful of active troops, the Scouting network at the community level was sparse.

The First Decade of the Piedmont Council (1923–1933)

WHEN BUD SCHIELE ARRIVED in Gastonia in January 1924, the textile turmoil in Gaston County and the Great Depression were five years away. Yet the social and economic changes associated with industrialization concerned community leaders and parents who worried about the need for better direction of their youth. As noted in chapter 2, Scout troops formed in some towns beginning in 1908, but many early troops died on the vine when community leadership lagged. Regardless, in 1924 Scouting had a good reputation in the region, and the time was right for a new start.

Bud Schiele knew that the Scouting movement, when understood by people in the small cities and towns of the region, had strong appeal. The Scout Oath and Law, succinct and easily memorized, clearly articulated the message and values of Scouting. Translating this appeal into community action and the formation of troops were the challenges. The support of civic, religious, business, and professional leaders in Gastonia was a solid base. Therefore, the first task was recruiting the same support across the region to secure troop sponsorship (by local churches, mills, and civic groups) and to provide adult leadership (for county and district positions, fundraising, troop committees, and Scoutmasters). This would require constant oversight, including many direct meetings across the area, persuasive letters and telephone calls, and a strong publicity effort using local newspapers to help prepare the ground. Several of Bud Schiele's letters from the 1920s and 1930s illustrate his preoccu-

pation with fundraising, the appointment of county officers, suboptimal advancement numbers, and poor attendance at important meetings.¹

He started by organizing the council administrative structure in line with BSA guidelines. Officers included the president, vice president, commissioner, treasurer, and Scout executive. There were sixteen Council departmental committees: Court of Honor; health and safety; troop organization; interracial activities; civic service; sea scouting; publicity; rural scouting; leadership training; school relations; camping; church relations; reading; ten-year program; finance; and Scoutmaster.

The county organizational model was similar: chairman; deputy commissioner; and committees for finance, publicity, camping, Court of Honor, training, organization, church relations, school relations, civic service, reading, and health and safety.

The purpose of a reading committee requires some explanation. In addition to the *Handbook for Boys*, the BSA produced numerous handbooks and publications for all aspects of Scouting, including the popular magazine *Boys' Life*. But the BSA also recognized that reading good books in general was important in shaping young minds. Therefore, reading committees promoted age-appropriate books of all types for "Every Boy's Library."²

The council and county officers and committees submitted annual reports to the president and Scout executive to document progress on all fronts during the preceding year. These reports were the basis for the council's own annual report presented each January at a meeting in Gastonia. The comprehensiveness of the organizational model had all bases covered.

Finances and fundraising required much time and effort to stay on budget. The textile mills were reliable contributors and, in 1925, established an annual contribution standard of one-half cent for each spindle.³ The basic budgetary areas were salary for the Scout executive and clerical help; maintenance of the council headquarters; training of leaders; operation and improvement of PBSC; expenses associated with awards, badges, and Courts of Honor; and telephone, travel, and postage to supervise and promote Scouting across the area. Each county had an assigned quota; for Cleveland County in 1929 this was \$1,000.⁴ The Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs of Shelby met the quota by convincing citizens that they should support the Boy Scouts because the movement provided "training for better citizenship."⁵

Newspaper accounts, based on publicity releases from Gastonia, provide general statistics on council growth in the first decade. Many of the articles highlight the growing attendance at PBSC each summer as its facilities expanded. More than five hundred boys attended camp in the summer of 1927,⁶ as did eight hundred in 1931.⁷ When Bud Schiele started work in January 1924, the total membership in the five original counties was just sixty boys. By the end of 1924, enrollment had increased to six hundred boys.⁸ In 1930 the Piedmont Council was the second-largest council in the Southeast, with ninety troops, sixteen hundred boys, and five hundred adult volunteer leaders. The Atlanta Council had the largest enrollment, with 2,300 boys. The contrast in economic resources is striking—Atlanta had an annual operating budget of \$45,000, while the Piedmont Council annual budget was only \$11,400.⁹

A key person in the early years was a talented young educator and administrator in the public school systems of Rutherford and then Cleveland County named Benjamin Lee Smith (1893–1961). He was born in Granite Falls in Caldwell County in 1893 and attended local schools prior to sending himself through Trinity College (now Duke University) and graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1916. He entered World War I at the age of twenty-four and served as a captain in the horse cavalry from 1917 to 1919. Upon discharge, he became principal of a Forest City school in 1919 and later served as superintendent of schools in the Rutherfordton-Spindale system from 1924 to 1929 and in Shelby from 1929 to 1936.¹⁰

During that period, Smith made significant contributions to the Piedmont Council as chair of the school relations committee and one term as commissioner of the council. As reflected in correspondence, his leadership, time commitment, and loyalty to Scouting during those years were an important source of support to Bud Schiele. That the two were the same age and had been Army officers in the war probably enhanced their relationship in terms of shared principles of the importance of citizenship and character. Benjamin Smith's papers in the Rubenstein Library at Duke University are the most important archives pertaining to the history of the Piedmont Council during the early years.

As an educator and chair of the school relations committee in the late 1920s, Smith promoted the concept of high school credit to recognize Boy Scout rank attainment. Some school systems in other states established such a precedent several years earlier. Drawing on their experi-

ences, in 1928 he proposed to Dr. J. Henry Highsmith, North Carolina director of the Division of Instructional Services, that one high school credit unit be awarded for the Eagle Scout rank and one-half credit unit for First Class rank. The units, classified as citizenship credit, qualified equally with traditional course units for graduation. Dr. Highsmith approved the proposal, allowing Smith to seek the approval of principals and superintendents across the area to implement the plan.

As documented in letters in the Benjamin Lee Smith papers, obtaining the consent and cooperation of the other high school administrators and educators required much effort in the form of letters, telegrams, and telephone calls. But the approval of Dr. Highsmith at the state level carried the day, and in 1929 the Piedmont Council was the first council in North Carolina to establish citizenship credit. Smith wisely cautioned that educators expected to award such credit only for the highest standards of achievement in Scouting. Ensuring excellence was the responsibility of the local Boy Scout commissioners, troop committees, and Scoutmasters.

Some college administrators were less enthusiastic about accepting high school credits for Boy Scout work and deferred decisions to admission committees. Smith's position was that most colleges were highly inclined to admit boys who were Eagle Scouts, even if the required number of high school graduation credits was met by including Boy Scout units for citizenship.

In 1936 Smith moved to Greensboro to become superintendent of the Greensboro public schools, where he remained active in scouting in the Old North State Council and received the Silver Beaver award. Smith's tenure was not untroubled: he and his family were threatened and harassed by white supremacists because of his commitment to ending segregation in Greensboro. During his twenty-two-year tenure Smith supervised the construction of thirteen new schools and twenty-two major additions and led the process of racial integration. In 1959 he received an honorary doctorate from Duke University and, after his death in 1961, the City of Greensboro honored his legacy by naming Smith High School for him in 1963. His many contributions to public education and Scouting are quite remarkable.

Bud Schiele knew the importance of earning the trust and cooperation of the churches. In the 1920s and 1930s Protestant churches of the mainline southern denominations (Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, and

Presbyterian) were the most prominent ones in the towns and small cities. There were no synagogues in the region and only small numbers of Jewish families in the towns. In addition, there were very few Catholics and Catholic churches. Therefore, engagement with the leaders of the Protestant churches became a top priority because the potential Scouts, Scoutmasters, and troop committee volunteers were members, and churches were the logical institutions to sponsor troops.

Through personal outreach, publicity releases to local newspapers, and the appointment of church leaders to council and county committees, Bud Schiele gradually established a firm and productive relationship with the church leaders of the region. In time, churches realized that sponsoring a Scout troop contributed to the overall good of the community and possibly resulted in Scouts having a closer identification with religious teachings.

In concert with the implementation of the administrative structure, one of Bud Schiele's first priorities was the establishment of a summer camp. He recognized that a camp experience was a strong attraction for boys to join the Boy Scouts. It was not possible to start a camp by the first summer of 1924, so he arranged for troops from the Piedmont Council to attend Camp Steere, in the Mecklenburg County Council in nearby Charlotte. Part of the arrangement was for him to direct Camp Steere that summer.¹¹ By the summer of 1925, the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) was open for business on Lake Lanier near Tryon. The story of PBSC follows in chapter 8.

Articles in the *Cleveland Star* give examples of how Bud Schiele built the grassroots structure in Cleveland County, and the same approach applied in the other counties. In Cleveland County he conducted training sessions for Scoutmasters by driving to Shelby from Gastonia for ten consecutive Monday evenings,¹² had night meetings with Shelby civic leaders to get their support and involvement,¹³ and presided over monthly Court of Honor meetings.¹⁴ In 1929 a newspaper article by a local Scoutmaster, V. C. Mason, updated the status of Shelby troops and adult leadership (troop committee members, Scoutmasters, and sponsorship). There were six active troops, with two sponsored by textile mills, two by Shelby schools, and two by churches. Thirty men served as troop committee members and seven as Scoutmasters.¹⁵

At the annual meeting of the Piedmont Council in 1930, Lee B. Weathers, vice president for Cleveland County, reported that the county

had 186 enrolled Scouts in 11 troops. This report drew praise from the council leadership because four of the troops were in rural communities (Belwood, Earl, Grover, and Lattimore). This was especially noteworthy because at the time, Cleveland was the only county in the council to have rural troops.¹⁶ Formation of troops and recruitment of Scouts in rural communities remained a BSA priority in the late 1920s. After the demise of the Pioneer Scout program and difficulties with the merged LSA, the BSA forged ahead and applied its traditional model for rural communities. In 1930 Scouts received merit badges at a Shelby Court of Honor for poultry keeping, hog and pork production, corn farming, farm home and its planning, fruit culture, animal industry, and blacksmithing.¹⁷

As mentioned earlier, some textile mills across the region sponsored Scout troops for the sons of their employees in the mill villages. One such troop, sponsored by the Dover Cotton Mill in Shelby, made a remarkable accomplishment in Scouting. In 1929 Herman Martin was Scoutmaster and Thurman Moore assistant Scoutmaster when the oldest of five Poston brothers joined the troop. Between the late 1920s and 1948, all five brothers (C. B., Eugene, Carl, Ben, and Bobby) earned the Eagle rank.¹⁸ This was at that time (and maybe still is) the record for North Carolina.

Life was not easy for families of mill workers. The Poston boys had to balance working in the mill to help support the family, going to school, and participating in their Scout troop. According to a relative, Mrs. Poston was a strong woman who was the stabilizing force of the family. A brief biographical sketch of the second-oldest brother, Eugene, credits, in addition to his mother, adult mentorship by teachers, ministers, and Scout leaders as the reason he finished high school and then pursued higher education.¹⁹ Eugene became a Baptist minister and served as president of Gardner Webb College (now University) for fifteen years.

Brother Carl, upon high school graduation, entered the Navy in World War II. He became a Navy fighter pilot assigned to the USS *Yorktown* in the Pacific and received the Navy Distinguished Flying Cross for combat heroism. After the war, he graduated from Wake Forest College (now University) and became a Baptist minister. In a memoir, Carl states, "To keep a young boy out of trouble, he should join the Boy Scouts. When he is tempted to do drugs his scout training tells him to do otherwise. He may not have a wholesome home environment nor clean community,

but his Boy Scout Troop and training will give him the guidance, dignity, integrity, honesty, cleanliness and reverence toward building himself into good citizenship." He continues, "My Shelby Mill Scout Troop was the making of my life. Mr. Sam Smith, scoutmaster, was my inspiration. He was really my father figure."²⁰

Of course, the number of boys from similar backgrounds positively influenced by Scouting and dedicated Scoutmasters remains unknown. However, knowledge of the social landscape of the times suggests that it was more than a few.

Establishing a firm base in all of the counties was difficult in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Jobs were scarce and wages low. In such an environment, recruiting enough men to serve as Scoutmasters, troop committee members, and merit badge counselors, and meeting annual fundraising quotas, presented a challenge. New troops started, but when adult leadership declined, a number became inactive. Bud Schiele, often accompanied by the council president, appeared at numerous civic club meetings and special "called meetings" of community leaders all over the territory to advocate for increased adult participation. The council suspended Scouting activities in Rutherford County for a period in 1931 because of lagging adult leadership and failure to meet its financial obligations.²¹

The Relationship to the Catawba River Council

The Piedmont Council and the Catawba River Council (CRC) formed as separate councils in 1923. The Piedmont Council had jurisdiction over Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Polk, and Rutherford counties, the CRC over Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, and McDowell counties. Mr. C. H. Turner of Statesville was the first president of the CRC and Mr. J. P. Mahaffey, a native of South Carolina, the first Scout executive.²² In July 1925 Mr. Edward J. Ronsheim, from Anderson, Indiana, became the Scout executive, and he moved the headquarters from Hickory to Statesville.²³ During the years 1923–26, the number of troops increased from ten to thirty-seven, and scouts performed volunteer service activities and met advancement goals as expected. In March 1926 the council leaders selected a site near Marion for a camp, and work progressed so that a camping season was held that summer. The camp, named Cove Echo Camp, evidently had a successful summer, but in

October "heavy rains washed away a part of the dam."²⁴ This event was one more piece of bad news that added to the already looming financial crisis. Early in the spring of 1926, the council faced insolvency because of the failure of fundraising campaigns to meet quotas. In October, Mr. Ronsheim announced his departure and the CRC became defunct.²⁵

Sometime between 1927 and 1929, the CRC counties became "extension territory" for the Piedmont Council.²⁶ In 1929 a regional executive, Francis D. Chadwick, was in Hickory to begin organizing an effort to make the CRC region eligible to join the Piedmont Council. Presumably, each town or county area met certain financial and adult leadership goals before being accepted. In 1930 Statesville and Iredell County became full members of the Piedmont Council,²⁷ and it appears that the other five counties joined by 1932. There is no information on scouting activities in the CRC area between 1927 and 1932 or on the process of merging with the Piedmont Council.

Several months prior to stepping down as Scout executive for the CRC, Mr. E. J. Ronsheim "completed the organization of two troops in the NCSD (North Carolina School for the Deaf)."²⁸ O. W. Underhill was the first Scoutmaster in 1926 and he served for most of the years until 1940. The troops remained active during the transition of Burke County from the CRC in 1926 to membership in the Piedmont Council by 1932. When Paul Crutchfield became Scoutmaster in 1940, there was just one NCSD troop, designated Troop #3, Morganton. He served from 1940 to the early 1960s, and each year the membership was around forty boys. For his contributions as an outstanding leader in Scouting, he received the Silver Beaver award in 1962. He also received certification from the National Council BSA for completion of the prestigious Three-Year Training Program. Between 1938 and 1945 Troop #3 produced nine Eagle Scouts.²⁹

The Depression and the World War II Years (1933-1945)

THE ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS of the 1930s resulted in mass unemployment across North Carolina due to sharp declines in crop prices and manufacturing. In 1933 24 percent of the population was on relief, and cotton and textile wages fell by 25 percent.¹ The strikes and violence of 1929 subsided, but as the Great Depression progressed into the 1930s, financial difficulties increased for many families, causing an increase in poverty, ill health, and social disruption.

Obviously, fundraising was extremely difficult, resulting in reduced staff, budgets, and salaries in Boy Scout councils across the nation; many Scoutmasters nationwide experienced unemployment. Funds for travel and gasoline were in short supply. However, most councils, by focusing on enrollment and support of volunteer leaders, continued their mission without losing ground. Fortunately, most communities valued Scouting and worked hard to sustain its programs during those lean times.²

The Piedmont Council followed the national trend in responding to the economic realities of the 1930s. It stayed on budget and was frugal in all decisions. Bud Schiele worked extremely hard in promoting Scouting in each county to ensure that it was a priority with civic leaders. In 1933 he traveled twenty thousand miles, training adult leaders, advising on fundraising, and conducting Courts of Honor.³ As a result, the council remained solvent and finished each year with a slight surplus. This allowed progress to continue by enrolling boys and adult leaders and forming new troops.

The total council budget for 1932 was \$11,700. Bud Schiele's salary was \$3,600 and his auto, travel, and meal expenses \$1,400. The budget for maintaining and improving PBSC was \$2,000. Leadership training received \$350 and the charter fee to national BSA was \$200.⁴ Careful budgetary decisions by Bud Schiele and the council officers resulted in a sparse but financially secure passage through the Depression years. The council boasted in a report in 1932 that "the Piedmont Council is regarded as one of the most efficient Scout Councils in the South and the cost of maintaining the council is far below the average cost per capita of population and per boy being served by other councils in America."⁵

Bud Schiele and the council officers were persistent with fundraising efforts directed toward the public, civic clubs, churches, and the textile mills. The various mills, scattered throughout the eleven counties, were the main economic engines of the area. The presidents and upper-level managers recognized the importance of the Boy Scout movement and provided support by serving in council leadership positions, sponsoring troops, and donating generously to fundraising efforts. As noted earlier, Gastonia cotton mills donated one-half cent per spindle and other mills in the area adopted this rate.

In February of each year, National Boy Scout Week highlighted Scout activities for the communities with service projects, assemblies, and fundraising campaigns targeting individual citizens, civic organizations, and businesses. In the late 1920s and 1930s local papers carried full-page spreads advertising Scout uniforms, shoes, and equipment and extolling the virtues of Scouting. Each county organization had an assigned financial quota for the operation of the Piedmont Council.

The Piedmont Council had prestige in the early 1930s with the national BSA staff. In 1932 the organization selected it over many other councils in the Southeast to host a one-week Boy Scout Leaders Training School at PBSC. Scout executives and volunteer leaders from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia attended. Judson P. Freeman, BSA national director for training, and other members of the national staff conducted the training sessions. Subjects covered included nature instruction, pioneering, first aid, handicrafts, and outdoor leadership.⁶ Bud Schiele made sure that PBSC and the associated logistics functioned smoothly during the week.

Newspaper articles released by the council contain specifics of growth and activities. In 1936 there were 2,300 Scouts and 700 lead-

ers.⁷ In 1937 there were 143 troops, 2,632 Scouts, and 815 Scouters.⁸ The Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) at Lake Lanier near Tryon was the subject of many of the articles because its activities and programs helped with marketing Scout membership.

Ben Franklin Seagle Jr. (1909–75) was a dedicated Scouter and supporter of Bud Schiele. A realtor and owner of his own company, he was an integral part of the business, religious, and civic affairs of Hickory his entire life. In addition, he is part of aviation history in Hickory. In his early twenties, he was a test pilot for several airplane manufacturing companies and was the first person in Hickory to own an airplane. Also, he was an early advocate for the construction of an airport in Hickory. Several articles in the *Piedmont Rebel* document his aeronautical exploits.⁹

Seagle was especially interested in the Boy Scout movement and for over thirty years was involved with Scouting at the local and council levels. He was Scoutmaster of Troop #5 of Hickory from 1934 to 1944 and during those years became president of the Piedmont Council Scoutmaster's Club, in which capacity he was a member of the executive council. In 1953 he received the Silver Beaver award for his long service to Scouting.¹⁰ In these activities he worked closely with Bud Schiele, and the two men became close friends. Bud Schiele was the godfather of Ben's oldest son, Benjamin "Benjy" Seagle III.

Fortunately, Ben Seagle Jr. saved some of his Scouting letters, documents, and other related items from 1925 to the 1950s—materials that strengthen the narrative of this history. Items include letters to and from Bud Schiele and the national BSA office, Troop #5 records, a Piedmont Council "Report to the Executive Committee" (1954), and information on the early BSA Pioneer Scout program.

The story of the serendipitous discovery of these papers is quite remarkable. Ben Seagle Jr. and his family lived in the home built by his father in Hickory in 1906. Over the years, a shed separate from the house became a sort of purgatory for boxes of family papers and other items, awaiting decisions on "landfill-bound" versus "save for family archives." At one point, after the death of her husband, Mrs. Seagle offered a worker \$200 to dispose of the entire contents but, upon seeing the volume of stuff, he declined.

As time passed, the material in the shed remained untouched. Jack Crawford, Piedmont Council senior development director, bought the

house from Benjy, after Benjy's mother died in 2007. Jack, as the new owner, explored the contents of the shed and, much to his surprise, discovered a box containing the Seagle Scouting papers. Jack is a careful custodian of the collection and graciously shared its contents for this history.

Scouting activity at the council and local troop levels continued on pace during the Depression. The Seagle papers provide evidence of such activity in a series of letters between 1934 and 1939 that relate to events involving Troop #5 of Hickory. A document titled "Troop Five By-Laws" and dated 1935-36 is a list of twenty beliefs, actions, and behaviors that the troop members pledge to uphold during the year. The list includes adherence to the Scout Oath and Law, loyalty to the troop, participation in all troop activities, effort at regular advancement, and commitment to remain active in Scouting for four years. Twenty-two Scouts signed the document.

A letter from Bud Schiele to Ben Seagle in 1935 discusses the installation of a Piedmont Council "rural Scout exhibit" in a large display area at the Catawba County Fair. The exhibit, prepared for the national BSA Jamboree in Washington, stayed at home because a polio epidemic in the South cancelled the Jamboree. The Jamboree was held in 1937 and Ben Seagle was part of the planning for a delegation of Piedmont Council Scouts. The preparation of a "rural Scout exhibit" indicates that the BSA remained active in recruiting boys from farm families and rural communities.

A notable visitor came to Hickory in the spring of 1935. A letter dated 9 May from James West, BSA chief Scout executive, to Ben Seagle thanks Mr. Seagle for the "fine hickory stick" which he "so kindly presented" to him "incident to the Scout Rally." Mr. West was on a "southern trip" and Hickory was one of his stops.

Several letters from Bud Schiele in 1938 and 1939 remind Scout leaders to register their troops for summer camp. Another urges the leaders to attend a two-day Scout Leaders Training Camp Conference at PBSC in June 1938.

A letter dated 1936 to adult Scouters in the Catawba County District, signed by Ben Seagle and two others, contains their assignments as merit badge examiners. The letter notes "104 Boy Scout merit badge subjects, many of which are of a great deal of vocational value to the Scout" and describes the process of examination and certification for earning

merit badges. The badges cover subjects ranging from astronomy, chemistry, journalism, and mechanical drawing to dramatics, civics, salesmanship, and public speaking. Farm subjects include dairying, cotton farming, poultry farming, and farm mechanics. Traditional Scouting subjects are swimming, rowing, canoeing, first aid, and physical development. The wide array of merit badge topics is a "something for everybody" approach aimed at attracting as many boys as possible.

Following the national trend, the Protestant churches became the major source of troop sponsorship in the Piedmont Council, although a small number of troops had sponsorship by mills and civic organizations. In 1937 the executive board of the Piedmont Council formulated a plan for an intensive membership campaign to enroll five hundred new Scouts in thirty days. The focus of the plan centered on the churches, with the slogan "A Boy Scout Troop in Every Church." The group charged with implementation included Bud Schiele and the chairs of the program, troop organization, and church relations committees.¹¹ The results of this initiative remain unknown, but membership increased each year during the 1930s.

Obviously, determining the overall impact of Scouting on the character development of young boys is more difficult to assess. However, the impressive statistics during the Depression years are reflective of mission objectives—enrollment is growing, leaders are volunteering their time, and activities guided by the principles of Scouting are taking place. As the country gears up for war in the late 1930s, the economy improves and the Boy Scouts are eager to do their part.

At the national level, growth continued during the war years. The Boy Scout movement, with its emphasis on citizenship, service, and patriotism, captured public approval across the nation and stimulated growth in enrollment and support. There was the general sense that active military personnel with prior Scout training performed at an overall higher level.

One story about a former Gastonia Boy Scout in World War II supports this impression. Major J. W. "Buck" Timberlake was on an Italian beach in 1945 when he heard cries for help from a British Army officer a hundred yards offshore. Major Timberlake had learned swimming and lifesaving techniques (certainly including the "cross chest" carry) at PBSC in the 1930s. He responded immediately to the emergency by swimming out to the man and bringing him safely back to shore. As he

reported at a Boy Scout fundraising meeting in 1955, "I was at the right place at the right time and happened to have had the right training."¹²

Bill Whisnant, a counselor at PBSC from 1956 to 1962, points out that many Piedmont Council Scouts served with distinction in the U.S. armed forces during the war. A plaque mounted on a millstone in 1968 and placed near the flagpole assembly area at PBSC honored three counselors killed in action. Unfortunately, the current location of the plaque and the names inscribed on it are unknown.

In the Piedmont Council, the number of enrolled Scouts and chartered troops, and attendance at summer camp, increased during the war years. Bud Schiele sent a letter to all Scoutmasters in 1943 thanking them for their leadership and reminding them to renew their annual troop charters and to reregister all active Scouts. He stressed the importance of Scout training for the war effort: "One of the most patriotic services a man can render on the home front is through the Boy Scout program."¹³ In 1945 there were 222 troops.¹⁴

Piedmont Council Boy Scouts, and Scouts nationwide, supported the war effort in a variety of ways. In the summer of 1942 Scouts at PBSC received training in conducting blackout tests, rendering first aid, and fighting firebombs. They also trained in physical fitness as preparation for possible future military service.¹⁵ Scouts collected scrap metal and waste paper, sold and bought War Bonds and Stamps, worked in "Victory Gardens," and volunteered with community organizations to distribute posters and perform other Civilian Defense services.¹⁶

Eleven troops in Hickory combined their journalistic skills to produce a monthly Scout newspaper named *The Eagle*. The October 1943 issue states, "The newspaper is free from adult supervision and is financed by the sponsoring troops and advertisers." The editors promised to mail copies without charge to former Scouts serving in the military when given their addresses. Topics include a request for contributions toward rebuilding the dining lodge and kitchen at PBSC, a profile of an outstanding Scout, and brief items related to individual troop activities. Local papers carried "Scout News" columns, but *The Eagle* boasted that it was the "First Scout Publication in North Carolina."¹⁷

From 1925 to the mid-1950s Bud Schiele provided regular press releases to local newspapers to keep the virtues of Scouting in the public eye. A 1950 release to the *Gastonia Gazette* is a good example, presenting a very positive picture of the council and the camp: "The Piedmont Council is

recognized as one of America's outstanding Scout organizations because of its phenomenal growth during the past 26 years. It also ranks highly because of its quality of membership, Scout advancement, membership in its camping program, and volunteer leadership . . . much of the organizations' success is due to the top business and professional men who volunteer leadership and to the churches which sponsor Scouting."¹⁸

A series of postcards, created from photographs of camp scenes in the 1930s and from cartoon depictions of camp life, carried the message of PBSC through the mails to numerous households. Some of these cards are available today online for purchase.

Bud Schiele also recognized early on the public relations value of movies. As an accomplished photographer, he made "color moving pictures" of PBSC during the 1930s. In the late 1940s he made a long color movie of PBSC with the soundtrack narrated by himself. These movies highlighted presentations at civic clubs, churches, and similar groups to promote interest in supporting the Scout movement and the camp. Bud Schiele's will specified that the Schiele Museum take custody of his cameras and films.¹⁹ Dr. Ann Tippitt, executive director of the Schiele Museum, reports that some films are now in compact disc (CD) format and others need professional restoration and conversion to digital format to ensure preservation and future availability. In 2019 she showed several films on CD to a small reunion group of former PBSC counselors. One film was of Piedmont Council Scouts at the National Jamboree in Washington in 1937; the other was the color film of PBSC mentioned above. Both films, and certainly the others that need restoration, are extremely valuable archives for the Piedmont Council and for Scouting in general.

On the national level, Scouting in all councils received a major sixty-year run of outstanding publicity from the illustrations of Norman Rockwell. His first illustrations appeared in *Boys' Life* in 1913, and from 1925 to 1976 he did a painting each year for the annual BSA calendar. In 1929 this calendar was the most popular calendar in America. In addition, Rockwell painted a series of Boy Scout posters that depicted themes of patriotism and citizenship. The iconic posters *Scout Master*, *Our Heritage*, *Forward America*, *Growth of a Leader*, and others, widely circulated, conveyed a priceless message to the hearts of all Americans.²⁰

This level of progress and accomplishment from very meager beginnings in 1923 to being one of the most outstanding councils in the country in the 1950s was the result of a sustained and concerted effort by Bud

Schiele to engage community leaders of all types in a common goal. The national BSA organization employed a very efficient, corporate approach to its mission of citizenship and character development. It transmitted policies and guidelines to the local councils through leadership training courses, a well-trained group of professional field workers and inspectors, and a continuous stream of printed material to keep all parties updated. Bud Schiele demonstrated by his steady adherence to national BSA administrative guidelines that he was a strong supporter of this "top-down" approach.

Notwithstanding, there was some resistance from him to national guidelines calling for council camps to do their camping in tents and prepare their meals over open fires. He felt strongly that the PBSC model of a structured camp program, with troops sleeping in cabins and meals provided in a dining lodge, was best suited to learning and advancement. In addition, as discussed in chapter 7, he did not allow the Order of the Arrow (OA) society to form a chapter in the Piedmont Council.

Bud Schiele developed a comprehensive and accountable administrative structure for conducting the business of the Piedmont Council. Throughout each year he carefully monitored Scouting activities in the various counties by attending Courts of Honor and adult leadership training sessions, corresponding with the county officers, and reviewing committee reports. He could readily detect a county decline in enrollment, advancement numbers, training sessions, or fundraising and thereby begin efforts to remedy the situation. Part of this oversight was the preparation of an annual report detailing all activities and initiatives at the national, council, and county levels.

Annual council meetings, usually held in January at the council headquarters in Gastonia, featured a banquet, a keynote speaker, and the installation of new officers. The agenda included review and approval of the annual report that served as a blueprint for the coming year. Attendees included council and county officers, Scoutmasters, Eagle Scouts, and guests. Press releases summarized the meetings and the reports.²¹ Only two copies of annual reports (1934 and 1935) have been located for this history, both in the Benjamin Lee Smith papers. Fortunately, a copy of the "Report to the Executive Board" (1954) that contains the same basic information is in the Seagle papers.

In supporting most of the BSA administrative framework and philosophy, Bud Schiele pushed forward with his considerable executive skills

to guarantee the success of the Piedmont Council. He understood his mission and had the vision, insight, interpersonal skills, and work ethic to accomplish it. Throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, he continued to recruit the top business, professional, church, and civic leaders in Gastonia and throughout the small towns of the council to gain support and bolster the credibility of the movement, and to raise funds. He was persuasive, intelligent, practical, focused, and no-nonsense—basic ingredients for success.

From the Post-World War II Years into the 1950s

IN THE TRUMAN AND EISENHOWER YEARS, from the end of World War II through the 1950s, America experienced an expanding economy and general prosperity. Victory over the Axis powers created a sense of national pride and accomplishment. The Korean War, ending in a stalemate, raised questions about our role as an arbiter of global conflicts, but everyday life continued to reflect optimism and confidence in the country.

In the North Carolina western Piedmont, continuing industrialization strengthened the central towns of each county, giving more families steady employment and economic security. These towns, most with populations of under ten thousand, were independent economic hubs for their surrounding communities and provided almost all the needed goods and services. However, the number of family farms was in decline due to competition from the increasing number of large corporate operations. In some farm families, wives sought employment in local mills and factories while husbands worked to sustain the farm. Public education and highway construction enjoyed increased funding, and manufacturing in the nonunionized textile mills and furniture factories had solid growth. Concurrently, church membership, civic involvement, and public service remained priorities for many citizens.

In middle-class families, traditional family structure continued, with fathers working full time and mothers staying at home and supervising the upbringing and activities of the children. Most families either owned an automobile or had access to one. Modern appliances reduced

household chores and created more leisure time. Young boys also had more spare time, and Scouting was an attractive option. Year-round elite sports teams—baseball, swimming, soccer, tennis—were not then in vogue, which was fortunate, because such commitments would have certainly pulled from the available pool of boys. The Scouting movement was strong in the numerous smaller towns and rural communities, with many churches sponsoring troops. Indeed, Scouting was available to boys from less affluent families as well as the more affluent middle- and upper-class families in the larger towns.

For the Piedmont Council, this period represented the highly successful culmination of the commitment and hard work of the previous years. The council experienced continued growth, with ever-increasing troop numbers, enrollment, and attendance at PBSC. Annual recruitment and fundraising drives, stressing the role of Scouting in citizenship and character, generally met goals and quotas.

At the annual meeting in 1949 the council celebrated its first twenty-five years and approved its largest budget ever, of \$34,270, with a treasury surplus of \$2,395. In 1950 it had 274 troops and cub packs, with a total membership of 5,328; 141 troops and 2,217 Scouts and leaders attended PBSC.¹

The changing cultural landscape of the 1950s provided an expanding menu of youth activity choices that began to make some inroads into the sustainability of troops and enrollment numbers. The council's "Report to the Executive Board" in October 1954 expressed concern about the increased number of dropped or lapsed troops since January of that year. Charles K. Bryant, council president, outlined a strategy to stem the trend and increase enrollment by five hundred new Scouts before the end of the year.²

In 1955 a press release with the headline "Piedmont Boy Scout Council is One of Best in the Country" stressed the success of the council in building character and providing citizenship training. It gave credit to the many churches that sponsored troops, the voluntary leaders, and the business and professional men who served as council officers over the years.³

In 1957 the council officers approved a budget of \$60,317 and began preparing for Bud Schiele's retirement by looking for a new Scout executive.⁴ In addition, the council acquired 126 acres of adjoining land behind the row of patrol cabins. This purchase included a small moun-

tain called Jake's Mountain on local maps (but "chigger ridge" by the counselors) that is prominent in views of the camp from the Lake Lanier basin. The acquisition protected the camp property from the backside and was to "serve for excellent hiking trails and possibly be used for out-post camp sites."⁵

The important role played by many business and professional leaders was essential to the growth and development of the Piedmont Council. Bud Schiele recruited and depended on these men for their business acumen, administrative expertise, and influence across the region. He chose men willing to work hard in addressing important issues of fundraising, fiscal and budgetary matters, and community relations. They shared his commitment to developing good citizenship and character in boys and saw the Boy Scout movement as an important element in that process. Because the council headquarters was in Gastonia, the largest city and center of the textile industry for the region, many early leaders lived there. This proximity facilitated easy access between Bud Schiele and the various council presidents and treasurers and created a valuable network of advisors and a potential pool of new leaders across the years.

It is also important to recognize that many talented and willing men across the counties served as council president, vice president, commissioner, and chair of various council committees. Others served as district presidents, commissioners, and chair of district committees. With Bud Schiele as the facilitator, the Gastonia men worked in tandem with their colleagues throughout the region. There was a mutual respect and a common purpose between all of the leaders as the work of the council progressed at regular executive council meetings each year.

A breakdown of professions of council presidents during the Schiele era reveals nine textile executives, two business owners, one attorney, one newspaper publisher, and one architect. Over the thirty-four years, many served more than a single term, with one, Bismarck Capps, serving for fourteen years. Most started mills and businesses in the 1920s and weathered the Depression successfully. All were civic-minded, working not only with the Boy Scouts but also other community programs and organizations. Their business experience and management skills were extremely valuable in building the Scouting grassroots network across the territory.

It is not possible to profile each council president individually, but a

listing of names through 1958 is appropriate: Kay Dixon, Fred Smyre, Hugh White, J. W. Atkins, Bismarck Capps, Henry McKelvie, H. Gilmer Wingate, David R. LaFar, Daniel S. LaFar, William R. Garrison, W. L. Balthis, Nelson Jackson Sr., Charles K. Bryant, and Albert G. Myers.

Capable leadership at the troop level was the heart of the movement, and there were many effective and dedicated Scoutmasters in the Piedmont Council during the Schiele years. However, accurately recording (or even knowing about) their individual accomplishments is an impossible task. The three men chronicled below are examples of the very best adult leaders during those years.

Dr. Hubert S. Plaster (1904-76) was one of the most prominent adult leaders in the early years. He began as assistant Scoutmaster of Troop #2 of Shelby, sponsored by the First Baptist Church, when it formed in 1927. From this start, he became a leader in Scouting in Cleveland County and in the Piedmont Council over the next forty years. Council leadership positions included chair of the Health and Safety Committee for eleven years and president from 1965 to 1967. In Cleveland County, he worked with a number of troops in keeping them active and took on various county leadership roles. Awards include the Scouter's Award, Scoutmaster's Key, Silver Beaver, and Wood Badge certification.⁶ In addition to his work in Scouting, Dr. Plaster served as mayor of Shelby from 1963 to 1976.

Wyatt Milton Stamey (1904-95) became Scoutmaster of Troop #1 of Polkville in 1945. In addition to being a Scoutmaster, he spent many years working at the council and district levels. He was the leader in charge of the Piedmont Council contingent of Scouts for three National Jamborees (1950, 1953, and 1957) and was also the chair of the leadership training committee of the Piedmont Council. In 1955 the Piedmont Council recognized his years of service with a Silver Beaver award.

Calvin Amos "C. A." Kennedy (1907-95) started in Scouts in 1940 as a member of the troop committee of Troop #1 Ellenboro. In 1943 he became assistant Scoutmaster and advanced to Scoutmaster in 1945, continuing into the 1970s, during which time the troop earned an excellent reputation in all categories of accomplishment and was a model for other troops. In the 1950s seven boys from the troop received the Eagle rank at one Court of Honor—probably a record for the council. By 1960 it had produced twenty-three Eagle Scouts.

Mr. Kennedy also worked at the council level on the Scoutmaster

committee and was Scoutmaster for one of two Piedmont Council troops that attended the National Jamboree in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1957. In 1959 the council chose him as an assistant leader for its Piedmont Scout Ranch troop. BSA Region Six (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida) honored him in 1959 as "Rural Scoutmaster of the Year." The Piedmont Council recognized his outstanding service with a Silver Beaver award in 1960. In addition to his work in Scouting, he served terms as chair of both his local school board and the county commissioners in Rutherford County.

The rapidly changing postwar environment brought new cultural perspectives that competed with Scouting for time and attention. The civil rights movement was gaining momentum. Television, rock and roll, movies and movie stars portraying alternative lifestyles, and a proliferation of magazines provided a new level of social and cultural communication. The Scouting movement needed major public relations efforts to stay abreast and remain relevant. In that regard, the BSA constantly provided new merit badge subjects that reflected modern skills and areas of youth interest and offered new programs like Explorer Scouting, Sea Scouting, and Air Scouting for older Scouts. In addition, recruitment strategies continued to emphasize that Scouting was a strong deterrent in young boys against two adversaries—communism and juvenile delinquency.

A youth movement based on the premise of building character and citizenship in boys with a belief in God was a natural target for socialist and communist activist organizations. During tours of American cities about the time of World War I, James West encountered socialist protesters claiming that the BSA mission included training boys for the military.⁷ In the 1920s the Young Pioneers, a communist youth organization, campaigned against the BSA organization as a "militaristic, capitalistic tool of the rich American power structure designed to perpetuate oppression of the masses."⁸

In the 1920s the American mainstream viewed communism as a threat to capitalism and democracy. On 11 April 1929 James W. Atkins, editor of the *Gastonia Gazette* and president of the Piedmont Council, spoke to the Forest City Kiwanis Club in Rutherford County. To grow as a movement, Scouting needed more adults to volunteer as leaders. His message stressed this need: "The matter of training the boys of this generation into useful, law-abiding citizens was demonstrated in Gastonia

during the last few days. A situation exists there which has been agitated by the Communists and Russian Bolsheviks, and such propaganda as put out by these extremists must be combatted. No finer training school to overcome this exists than the Boy Scout organization."⁹

The "situation" in Gastonia was the Loray Mill strike that started on 1 April when textile workers, spurred on by outside agitators from the National Textile Workers Union (a communist labor union), protested low wages and long hours. The resulting violence and social disruption lasted into the fall months and to a lesser extent played out in other Piedmont towns. The police chief in Gastonia and Ella Mae Wiggins, a textile worker and activist, died violently during the unrest. Ella Mae achieved fame beyond Gastonia for her ballads about the cause.

In the 1940s and 1950s tensions with the Soviet Union led to the Cold War. Fears of communism fueled anxiety that it posed a serious threat to America's ideals and system of government. During those years the Boy Scout movement, as portrayed in speeches and newspaper articles, represented a stalwart force against the communist menace. A press release from the Piedmont Council in 1950, probably by Bud Schiele, stated that "Scout training is a strong force in offsetting the spread of communism."¹⁰ The extent to which this impression contributed to the steady increase in enrollments is unknown.

The Korean War heightened Cold War tensions between China, Russia, and the United States, and concerns of possible communist activities in government made regular headlines. Newspaper articles and civic leaders in the 1950s continued to proclaim the Boy Scout movement as a strong deterrent against the spread of communism in America.

Juvenile delinquency was the other adversity. BSA publicity on both national and local levels promoted Scouting as a positive alternative to delinquency. In a letter to the editor in 1929, Henry B. Edwards of Shelby wrote, "Statistics show the percentage of criminals among boys who are Scouts to be negligible. There are boys here who are found, after school and often during school hours, upon the streets smoking, using improper language, and often getting into whatever mischief they can find."¹¹ His point was to create interest among adults in the Boy Scout movement in Shelby so that more boys could participate.

Reducing delinquency among boys in the large northern cities was one of the motivating factors in the establishment of various youth organizations, including the Boy Scouts, in the early 1900s. The ability of the

Boy Scout movement to guide twelve-year-old boys toward productive paths was a central belief of the BSA founders. This belief was a strong selling point in the early days, when solutions for delinquency were in short supply.

In the Piedmont Council, addressing the delinquency problem with a Boy Scout approach was stressed in publicity releases and speeches. The point was made that almost no boys in penal institutions or involved in court hearings were current or former Scouts.¹² In a speech to the ministers of Burke County, W. J. Allran, judge of domestic relations and Juvenile Court of Gaston County, stated, "Of one thousand delinquent youths over four years, not one had been an active Boy Scout." He urged the ministers to "help make Scouting possible for more boys as an effective means of preventing delinquency and crime."¹³

The implication that Scouting could steer "at-risk" boys away from delinquency or criminal behavior was possibly overly optimistic—an apple-and-orange comparison. The vast majority of delinquent boys in the towns and small cities of the area were from hardscrabble, poorly educated families beset with poverty, and sometimes violence and alcohol abuse. Without supportive adult family members and financial resources, engaging with the Boy Scouts was simply not an option for most boys from these families. Certainly, exceptions occurred (as with the Poston brothers mentioned earlier) when a concerned scout leader or other responsible community adult stepped in and successfully mentored a boy in Scouting. Not surprisingly, the Scouting message resonated mainly with the church-affiliated, upper- and middle-class families whose sons, because of social advantages, were at little risk for ending up in reform schools or criminal court.

As the Piedmont Council entered the 1950s, some Scouts and leaders asked why the council did not recognize the honorary Order of the Arrow (OA) organization present in other councils. The answer is that Bud Schiele had a longstanding opposition to the organization. It began in June 1922 at the Second Annual Conference of Boy Scout Executives at the Blue Ridge Conference Center in western North Carolina. One of the discussion items at the conference was the formation of "camp fraternities and secret organizations" in several councils. Most attendees opposed these organizations as elitist, much like college fraternities, and not compatible with the egalitarian principles of the BSA organization. A proposed motion "that camp fraternities be discouraged in connec-

tion with Boy Scout camps" passed.¹⁴ This action did not forbid such organizations, specifically OA, but rather created a wait-and-see attitude toward their existence. By the mid-1930s OA chapters thrived in many councils, and OA received official sanction from the BSA.

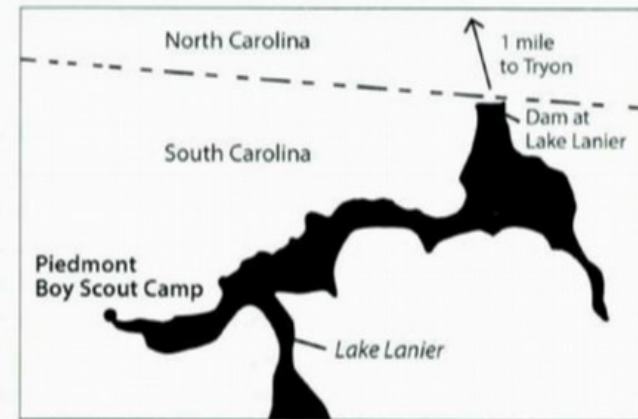
Bud Schiele was at the Blue Ridge conference representing the Augusta Carolina Council. Based on his lifelong opposition to OA, he obviously was in agreement with the majority of executives that such societies did not belong in Scouting. As a result, the Piedmont Council did not have a chapter until after his retirement. In the 1950s the counselors at PBSC had either never heard of OA or were only vaguely familiar with it as some sort of organization in other councils. The first Piedmont Council lodge formed in 1964, with the Catawba Indian name Eswau Huppeday that refers to the Broad River.¹⁵

Piedmont Boy Scout Camp: The First Twenty-five Years (1925-1950)

IN THE EARLY 1920S a group of investors chartered the Lake Lanier Development Company under the laws of South Carolina. F. P. Bacon, the mayor of Tryon, North Carolina, headed the board of directors. The site for the lake was in Greenville County, South Carolina, but only two miles from Tryon in North Carolina. Specifications included a 7-mile shoreline, a lake surface area of 150 acres, depths from 6 to 60 feet, and a dam 400 feet in length at the top, and 60 feet in height and 50 feet in width at the base. The dam is right on the border dividing the two states. Tryon is on the North Carolina side and PBSC, on the lake, is in South Carolina. Filling the lake were "several springs and small streams flowing from the territory beyond the foot of Clark's Mountain."¹

It is not clear just how Bud Schiele and the council officers became interested in (or even knew about) Lake Lanier as a location for the camp. He and members of the camping committee looked at other sites in western North Carolina, but the Lake Lanier site "offered the greatest possibilities of any inspected."²

Tryon officials, realizing the economic potential of a permanent Boy Scout camp, may have actively recruited the Piedmont Council. There is no mention of a sale price, so in all likelihood the original land was a donation. One source states that "the camp site was donated by the Tryon Development Company through the generosity of Warren Fisher."³



Location of PBSC on Lake Lanier in South Carolina and proximity to Tryon, North Carolina.

Another source credits a Gastonia textile executive, Fred L. Smyre, with donating the first twelve acres to start the camp.⁴ Fred Smyre, council president in 1925, was certainly involved in the decisions concerning the location of the camp, but there is no evidence that he donated the land. A report of a Piedmont Council executive board meeting states, "The Executive Board accepted the offer of the Lake Lanier Corporation of a permanent Boy Scout camp on the shores of this wonderful lake development and will operate a Scout training camp there this summer."⁵

When Bud Schiele first saw the site, with its location at the far end of a secluded cove on gently sloping foothills terrain, he immediately recognized that it was ideal for a camp. He referred to it as "splendid summer encampment grounds . . . under the shadow of Hogback Mountain."⁶ The council acquired additional parcels of land over the next twenty years, and by the 1950s it owned all of the waterfront land surrounding the cove.

There are two lakes named for the acclaimed southern poet, author, and musician Sidney Lanier (1842-81). The larger lake in Georgia commemorates him as a native-born son. The lake near Tryon honors his final residence, where he died at the age of thirty-nine in the Polk County community of Lynn. Lanier's most famous works include the poems *The Marshes of Glynn* and *Sunrise*.

The Boy Scouts and Mountain Culture

Independent, self-reliant English, Scotch Irish, and German frontier families first settled Polk and surrounding mountain counties in the mid-1700s. Social isolation, limited education, fierce loyalty to their cultural traditions, and a resistance to change and government regulations created a stereotypical image of the southern Appalachian "mountaineer."

Part of this image centered on the tradition of making and selling intoxicating beverages—a steady source of income for some families who had no other reliable source of income to purchase goods and services from neighboring towns. There was no outside interference until the temperance movements finally prevailed in North Carolina. In 1908 a statewide referendum on prohibition passed by a large majority, making it unlawful to make, sell, or transport intoxicating drink in the state.⁷ Between 1908 and 1920 local law enforcement officers had the responsibility of enforcing the prohibition law, but the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (i.e. Prohibition) in 1919 brought federal revenue agents into the effort.

Western North Carolina created much activity for local and federal agents as distilling operations remained profitable. Newspapers provided plenty of ink on stories depicting raids, arrests, and the destruction of "moonshine" stills cleverly concealed in remote mountain locations. Many of those arrested, because of economic necessity, returned to the same enterprise after serving prison sentences and became part of local folklore. The folklore extended into the mainstream consciousness and media as moonshiners, driving specially altered cars, eluded pursuing revenue agents over mountain roads. Stock-car racing on dirt tracks originated from these activities.

Interestingly, a boys' adventure novel with a Boy Scout theme written in 1913 (but not published until 1938) reinforced the "mountaineer moonshiner" stereotype on a national level. The author, St. George Henry Rathborne (using the pseudonym Herbert Carter), wrote a series of twelve books between 1913 and 1917, each describing the exploits of a group of Boy Scouts in various locations across the United States. *The Boy Scouts in the Blue Ridge; or, Marooned among the Moonshiners* describes the experience of a group of Scouts who meet up with "real moonshiners" at their still. The Scouts make it safely back home but the image of people in the North Carolina Mountains suffers. Mr. Rath-

borne may have conceived the plot for the novel by reading some of the many newspaper reports of raids on stills in Western North Carolina.

Evidently, Mr. Rathborne's novel about Scouts and moonshiners was not too farfetched. Bruce Warlick, a camper and counselor at PBSC from 1934 to 1942, remembers that before making long hikes into the surrounding hills, he was warned to make plenty of noise so as to avoid surprising people running a distilling operation. He also recalls a local man, well known in the area for making whiskey, who had an operation near the camp property. Several times a week, the man drove through the camp on his way to making deliveries. Ironically, the man's son was a Lone Scout and Bruce and other counselors assisted him in some of his rank advancements. Conrad Warlick remembers that in the 1940s the name "Dark Corners" referred to the region around Lake Lanier, known as a closed community where the local mountain people were leery of strangers until some sort of trust was established. Fortunately, Mack Durham, the camp ranger and a Polk county native, was the bridge to that trust in the early days.

Shem Blackley, a camper and counselor from 1944 to 1949, recalls a camp doctor who returned from a long solo hike with a crosscut saw picked up at an unguarded still. This caused major concern on the part of Mack Durham and Bud Schiele, because stealing from moonshiners could have serious repercussions. Mack knew the still operators and returned the saw immediately. Bud Schiele terminated the camp doctor, most likely on the grounds of "lack of common sense and stealing."

On a side note, Brad Nesheim, a native of Gastonia and a retired Scout executive, remembers being with a group of Scouts in the early 1960s that discovered an old destroyed still while clearing a fire line on PBSC property. Based on newspaper accounts of raids in Polk County, the still probably operated between 1910 and 1920, the heyday of "still-busting" revenuers.⁸

The Expansion of Facilities as Demand Increases

In 1924 Bud Schiele designed the camp to include eight-man patrol cabins, buildings for pit latrines and showers, a dining lodge, an assembly lodge, handicraft buildings, a nature museum, and a medical dispensary. A waterfront for swimming, canoeing, and rowing was a key feature, according to PBSC brochures in the Benjamin Lee Smith papers.



View from nearby elevation of PBSC waterfront, with Hogback Mountain to the right, 1930s. SMNH&P

However, preparations for the first camping season in 1925 were a challenge, because there were no permanent structures to accommodate the several hundred boys planning to attend. The Gastonia Rotary Club provided tents and cots. An article in the *Polk County News* reports, "R. M. Schiele, Scout commissioner Hobbs, and Eagle Scout Hobbs, arrived in Tryon last Friday and are busy setting up the permanent Scout camp on the tract set aside for that purpose by the Lake Lanier Development Company. Tryon will be the base for the purchase of supplies, mail, and telegraph service. Scouts will arrive June 20. Two springs are adjacent to the camp."⁹

During the fall and winter of 1925–26, much progress was made in building permanent structures. *The Polk County News* reports, "Since 1925, R. M. Schiele and Mr. Harmon and a corps of mountain laborers under their direction have transformed the temporary camp of last summer into the model camp of Region six. Around the level athletic field are nine patrol huts. The rebuilt kitchen is equipped with a regular army cooking range. A mess hall that accommodates 75 Scouts is remodeled."¹⁰ Mr. Harmon was probably a resident of Tryon available to supervise the work in the months after the camping season.

There was no water line from Lake Lanier to Tryon in the early days,



Eight-man patrol cabins. SMNH&P

so the two springs served as the camp water supply. In the 1925 and 1926 seasons, water, carried by hand, served the needs of the camp. After the 1926 season Bud Schiele set up an effective pipeline that moved water by gravity from the springs to the kitchen building.¹¹

In the first decade, money from civic clubs and fundraising efforts in the counties enabled the building of various structures and the purchase of canoes and rowboats for the waterfront. From 1925 to 1940 the Gastonia Rotary Club donated something to the camp each year, including patrol cabins, waterfront structures, lifesaving equipment, a shower and washhouse structure, and a rifle range.¹² Mooresville citizens donated a patrol cabin,¹³ and other communities followed suit with donations for cabins and other improvements over the first three decades.

A crisis occurred in 1943 when a fire destroyed the dining lodge and kitchen on the morning of 20 August. On 1 September Bismarck Capps, council president, and Bud Schiele sent letters to all Scoutmasters and Scouts announcing a campaign to finance a new facility. In his letter, Bud Schiele reports, "Fire was caused by overheated fat in preparing 'French Toast,' the favorite breakfast at our camp."¹⁴ The campaign goal was \$25,000 to replace the loss with a larger and much improved facil-



Scouts under original entrance gate, 1930s. SMNH&P

ity. The campaign promptly raised the necessary funds, and the new facility opened on time the next summer.¹⁵

Steady expansion was necessary to accommodate the increasing number of boys and troops who wanted a camp experience each summer. In 1926 a publicity release boasted of "four new patrol huts and five more under construction to replace the tents used last year."¹⁶ It also listed a tennis court, athletic field, diving platform, and handicraft lodge as works in progress. Evidently, Lake Lanier had not reached its desired water level, because the article states, "the three lake basins will be full of water by the middle of July." In 1927 a new mess hall was under construction that would "make it possible to seat 100 campers at patrol tables and allow meals to be served family style."¹⁷ In the following year a publicity release mentions a new museum, a new library, and twelve screened patrol cabins.¹⁸ And in 1932 there were thirteen patrol cabins



New dining lodge, 1944. SMNH&P



Basic herpetology at the Nature Museum. SMNH&P

and a "library and museum with exhibits and books on nature study and Scoutcraft."¹⁹

Several articles during this era state that PBSC was the largest Scout camp in the Carolinas and that "national Scouting experts regard it as the finest in the South."²⁰ In 1936 the council acquired thirty-two additional acres for the camp and the number of patrol cabins increased to sixteen. The additional land provided room for an athletic field for track and field events and several tennis courts. During the summer of 1936 eleven hundred boys and leaders attended camp.

First-Person Accounts:

Brothers Bruce and Conrad Warlick

The three Warlick brothers, A. C., Bruce, and Conrad, had a combined experience at PBSC of twenty-one years. They grew up in Ranlo, near Gastonia, where their parents were teachers and their father was a Scoutmaster. The oldest brother, A. C., graduated from college in 1939, served in World War II as a naval officer, and then became a professional Scout executive. His first assignment, beginning in 1948, was as an assistant to Bud Schiele for several years. Later assignments were in councils in South Carolina and Georgia, and then at the Old North State Council in Greensboro. Unfortunately, A. C. died in 1962 at the age of forty-three.

During the writing of this book, Bruce was a ninety-five-year-old retired dentist living in Southern Pines. In May 2019, before publication, he passed away. Bruce loved Scouting and the author had several very enjoyable and informative telephone conversations with him. He started as a camper at PBSC in 1934, became a counselor in 1937, and returned each summer through 1942. He served as a dentist in the Army in World War II, returned to Southern Pines to practice dentistry after discharge, and was a Scoutmaster for seventeen years. During those years, he took his troop camping once a month regardless of the weather.

Conrad started as a counselor in 1946 and continued through 1953, when he served as camp doctor. He graduated from Wake Forest University, obtained a master's degree from UNC Chapel Hill, and then earned an Ed.D. from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. His career was in teaching and university administration at the University of Virginia and at Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia.

The collective first-person memories of Bruce and Conrad, obtained

through phone interviews and in a written document by Bruce with added comments by Conrad, provide a rare insight into camp life and activities in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Several of their recollections from those early days are included below, as are others throughout this chapter.

The camp week began with the arrival of troops on Monday morning and ended with their departure on Saturday morning. Bruce Warlick remembers one eventful arrival day in the late 1930s, when a distress call reached Bud Schiele informing him that trucks and other vehicles loaded with troops could not proceed beyond the dam, a distance of two miles from camp. There had been much rain in the week before, and the dirt road from the dam to camp was impassible.

This crisis set in motion an operation reminiscent of the evacuation of Dunkirk. The ten war canoes sped off toward the dam, each paddled by two counselors and carrying extra paddles. At the dam, the counselors took on boys and gear, handed out the extra paddles, and headed back to camp. The process continued until all campers were safely in camp. Though not as dramatic as the real Dunkirk, it was a very successful operation and saved the day. Winston Churchill would have been proud.

On separate occasions, Bruce and Conrad Warlick had the grim duty of participating in body recovery operations for persons who drowned near the dam. The camp waterfront had a set of grappling hooks designed to trail from the transom of a rowboat. Bruce was part of the recovery of two bodies in the late 1930s and Conrad rowed a boat with a grappling hook to recover one body in the late 1940s. In those days, calling 911 was not an option, so local communities marshalled any available resources to help. The experience of participating in recovery operations for drowning victims created vivid and lasting impressions for Bruce and Conrad. In addition, the visibility of grappling hooks on the camp waterfront was a constant reminder of the importance of water safety.

The daily camp routines and planned activities experienced some obvious changes in these twenty-five years, but the basic fabric of camp life and schedules remained intact. In 1927 merit badge instruction was given in leatherwork, wood carving, basketry, canoeing, swimming, lifesaving, first aid, archery, hiking, nature study, forestry, blacksmithing, rifle marksmanship, athletics, pioneering, and Indian lore.²¹ In 1928



Working on basketry merit badge beside Craft Lodge. SMNH&P



Lifesaving training. Note "old style" method of artificial respiration and boys' bathing suits with straps. Courtesy of Cherryville Historical Museum, Cherryville, North Carolina.

Indian lore was taught by Frank Swaney, a Cherokee Indian who attended the Haskell Indian School of Lawrence, Kansas.²² Evidently, he was only there for one season. (See chapter 11 for further discussion of possible connections with the Schieles.)

In the late 1920s and 1930s there were special Independence Day celebrations, with parents, friends, and council officials invited for a day of special Scoutcraft activities and demonstrations, tours of the grounds, a picnic, music by the Scout band of Statesville, and a speech by a prominent citizen of the area. This custom was not a part of the camp life in the 1950s.

In a press release from 1932, there is mention of hiking up nearby Hog Back and Rocky Spur mountains.²³ Such hikes did not occur in the 1950s. A camp brochure for 1929 mentions a baseball diamond and a tennis court and advises boys to bring their tennis and baseball outfits and musical instruments. Regulations prohibited bringing boxing gloves, playing cards, tobacco, and firearms to camp, and "blue overalls are out of place." A brochure from the later 1930s does not list baseball outfits as recommended items, suggesting that baseball was no longer a camp activity.²⁴ By the 1950s, the tennis courts had disappeared.

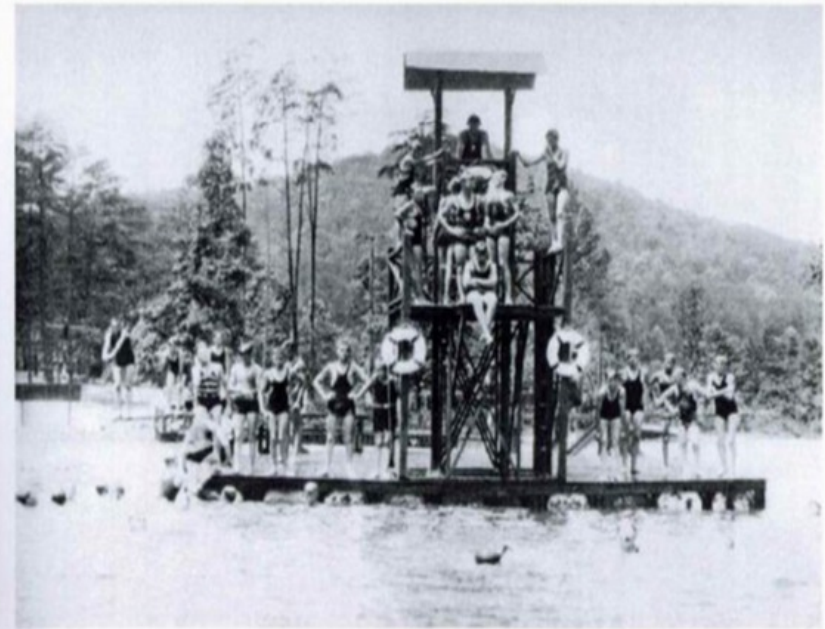
The Reverend John Cline accompanied a Statesville troop to camp in June 1929. His account of the week, published in a local newspaper, describes the facilities and daily schedule in some detail.²⁵ The facilities described were: 12 Scout huts with roll-down curtains; a library and museum; a large sanitary latrine; an open "dining-arbor" with sand floor; adjoining kitchen and tables for 140 boys (eight to a table); a tennis court; an archery range; and 6 large canoes. The water supply is "a good spring." Bud Schiele is "gentle and courteous but very firm." Lily Schiele "doctors the boys who need any medical attention." As for the daily routine, the Rev. Cline notes table and cabin inspections, washing dishes, required letters home at supper, and campfire programs. There is no mention of a nighttime Indian play or pageant. A special all-day activity is "to climb Hogback Mountain."

The Rev. Cline does not describe the latrines in his letter, but Bruce Warlick remembers from the 1930s a "12 cylinder latrine" (i.e. 12 "seats" joined in a row) and a urinal which was "a longitudinally cut in half hot water tank." It's likely that the facilities were the same as in 1929.

The complete daily schedule included by the Rev. Cline is almost identical to that of the 1950s, with several exceptions. In 1929 there was



Campers washing their dishes, 1930s. SMNH&P



Floating diving tower, 1930s. Jake's Mountain (Chigger Ridge) is in the background. SMNH&P



Flag ceremony, 1941. SMNH&P

a "morning dip in the lake" at 6:15 and a formal flag-lowering ceremony, with Scouts assembled at the flagpoles each evening for the bugle calls *Retreat* and *To the Colors*. An early publicity postcard for PBSC features the flag ceremony.

The traditional camp activities of working on rank advancement and earning merit badges, swim periods, weekly track and field and campo-ree events, meal routines, night assemblies and skits, and cabin inspections changed very little during these years and through the 1950s. But references to morning dips, tennis courts, baseball games, the archery range, formal flag-lowering ceremonies, and hikes to Hogback Mountain faded from the schedule sometime prior to the 1950s. As Bud Schiele often said, the Scout Oath and Law set the standard for conduct at PBSC, and the mission of Scouting is to develop character and citizenship. In that regard, not much change occurred because the camp activities focused on those precepts from the very beginning.

Summers on Lake Lanier, 1950s—As We Remember

A SMALL GROUP OF FORMER COUNSELORS from the 1950s and early 1960s, men now in their seventies and eighties, meets every two years to discuss their experiences and common bond with Scouting and PBSC. The first reunion was in 2008, and subsequent ones were held in 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019. Much of the information below is from the collective memories of this group.

Mack Durham (1915–2003), a native of the area, was the camp ranger for over fifty years, protecting and maintaining the grounds and buildings. He and his family lived year-round in a log-type house near the road that traversed the camp. In addition to being camp ranger, he owned and operated a Texaco service station in downtown Tryon, ran a dump truck service, and had a chicken-egg farm. For a small remuneration, he also served as the camp barber for any counselors in desperate need of a haircut. Mack was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and a charter member of the Tryon Lions Club. He was very loyal to the Schieles, essential to the operation of the camp, and well-liked and respected by the counselors and staff.

Mack's assistants in building and maintaining camp facilities included several local men (primarily relatives) with skill in building and repairing cabins, fences, stone masonry work, gravel pathways, equipment, and even rowboats and canoes. Their industriousness and expertise kept all facilities in top condition throughout the year.

A cooking staff of five African American men from the Tryon area prepared all the meals. Mrs. Schiele was the official dietician and prob-



Cooking staff, 1950s. Bill Prior is at far right; Benny Shepard is third from right. SMNH&P

ably kept a close financial eye on available food options. However, the food was excellent and reflected the culinary expertise of the main chef, Bill Prior. In the winter, he was the chef at the Oak Hall Hotel in Tryon. Every Friday night at the end of the dinner meal, a designated Scout called the cooks out from the kitchen, to much enthusiastic applause. Bill Prior, Benny Shepard, and one other man were the main cooks, assisted by two younger men introduced on Friday nights as the "helper" and "other helper." Benny Shepard, the pastry cook, received the loudest applause for his delicious dessert pies. Benny was also an excellent singer and on occasion would display his talent by singing an inspirational song at the Friday night introductions.

Two full-time assistant Scout executives, A. C. Warlick and Tommy Rankin, were assistant camp directors during separate times between 1947 and 1957. A. C. was also in charge of teaching the pioneering merit badge and supervised Scouts in the "rope and log" construction of a large signaling tower (chapter 8 discusses A. C. and his two brothers, Bruce and Conrad).

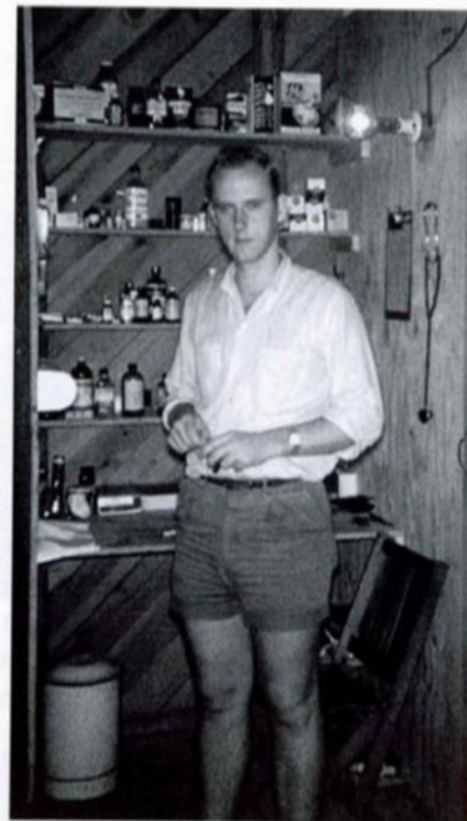
Tommy Rankin grew up in Gastonia, became a Scout in the late

1930s, and, after earning his Eagle rank, was a counselor at PBSC in the early 1940s. He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1943 and received an honorable discharge in August 1945. At some point after the war, he received training as a Scout executive and in 1947 was a district executive in the Piedmont Council under Bud Schiele. He served in that role until entering the service again in 1950 because of the Korean War. After the war, he returned as a field Scout executive with the Piedmont Council and was assistant director of PBSC from 1953 through the 1950s. After a total of twelve years as a district executive with the Piedmont Council, he left professional Scouting to take a job in private industry. In the private sector, he was a volunteer Scoutmaster for twenty-two years: in a six-year period, his troop produced twenty-one Eagle Scouts. All told, he was associated with Scouting for over thirty years.

The camp "doctor," sometimes a medical student but usually a college student, staffed the small medical dispensary and reviewed the health forms and immunization records as the new arrivals checked in each week. Newton "Newt" MacCormack was in that role for two summers (1960–61). He was very familiar with PBSC since he had been a counselor in various roles, including waterfront director and camp bugler, for the previous six summers.

Newt recalls that "sick call" occurred every Tuesday to Friday morning at 8:15 for non-emergency conditions. Common complaints were insect bites and stings, sunburn, constipation, swimmer's ear, minor cuts and scrapes, and homesickness. If necessary, consultations were readily available from physicians in nearby Tryon or Landrum, South Carolina. Serious conditions were rare but during Newt's tenure included a Scoutmaster with an anaphylactic reaction to a yellow-jacket sting, a dislocated shoulder, a suspected spinal injury sustained in a fall off a cabin porch, and a case of acute appendicitis. When Newt took the role as camp doctor in the summer of 1960, he noted some unusual (and potentially dangerous) medications and supplies from a much earlier era. These included silver nitrate solution, dichloride of mercury tablets, atropine tablets, and a long hypodermic needle (the type used for intracardiac injections). The hypodermic needle did serve one useful purpose. Campers who presented with homesickness tended to get well quickly when the needle appeared while discussing their symptoms.

Daily cabin inspections were an ancillary duty of the camp doctor. During the afternoon, the doctor walked the line of thirty-three cabins,



Newton MacCormack in the medical dispensary, 1960. Courtesy of Alex MacCormack, personal slide collection.

peering inside each one, with the goal of determining the "neatest" and the "messiest." The "neatest" received a small American flag to fly from its porch for the day and the "messiest" was announced as a "pig-pen" at the evening meal.

In 1953 Conrad Warlick became camp doctor when the person in that position left abruptly for violating camp rules. Conrad remembers the ready availability of physicians in Tryon when called for advice—specifically, a series of fractures that supplied a steady stream of orthopedic cases.

In terms of medical emergencies, Bruce Warlick recalls a very confident "know-it-all" Scout in the 1930s who boasted that he could pick up a poisonous snake (Bruce remembers the snake was a rattlesnake

but copperheads were much more common on the campgrounds). The outcome was predictable, resulting in an emergency trip to Tryon for treatment. Evidently, after skinning and cooking, the snake provided a tasty morsel for several adventuresome Scouts. The author does not remember a single poisonous snakebite during the 1950s, although copperheads, occasionally sighted along the paths and near facilities, created much excitement. The drill was for a Scout to cry "SNAKE!" to alert the camp naturalist, who would identify the snake and remove it, using a "snake stick," to a safer location.

The counselors, all Eagle Scouts between the ages of fourteen and nineteen, were essential to the spirit and success of the camp. They loved camp life and stayed extra weeks as campers in a "service troop" for two or more seasons before becoming staff. As Eagle Scouts, they were role models for the younger Scouts progressing up through the ranks. Some served for only one season but others returned for three or four seasons. The list of responsibilities was wide-ranging and included cleaning latrines and shower houses, teaching subjects for merit badges, organizing camporee and field-day competitions, and assisting with the opening of camp in early June and the closing in late August. Sterilizing and shelving dishes after each meal, arranging evening skits and song-fests, lifeguarding at daily swim periods, and being cast members in the Hiawatha pageant were other activities.

Working at PBSC was not a lucrative summer job. First-year counselors received no pay, and second-year counselors usually received a small honorarium of \$50 at the end of the summer. Those with more experience and responsibility received several hundred dollars. At the end of each summer, Bud and Lily Schiele treated counselors to a two-day motor excursion to nearby natural attractions such as Chimney Rock, Natural Bridge, and vistas in the higher mountains.

Since Scoutmasters stayed with their troop members in the patrol cabins, the counselors lived together, two to a stall, in the long "staff quarters" above the assembly lodge.

Counselors were mainly from the larger towns in the council rather than smaller rural communities. Most were college-bound, and a number served as commissioned officers in the military after college. They became teachers, college professors, civic and business leaders, accountants, contractors, bank executives, ministers, physicians, engineers, and lawyers. Based on comments at counselor reunions (from the per-



Post camp counselor trip to Chimney Rock; Bud and Lily Schiele are pictured with several counselors, 1940s. Courtesy of Don Crawford, personal slides donated by Piedmont Council Headquarters.



Inside view of Staff Quarters: touches of home but no radios. Courtesy of Alex MacCormack, personal slide collection.

spective of sixty years later), the lasting friendships and important life lessons gained from their days at PBSC continue to be valued. Simply stated, the rather demanding environment, with high expectations and responsibilities, was solid preparation for the transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

The North Carolina mountains have long been home to a number of excellent private summer camps for the sons and daughters of affluent families. However, between 1920 and the 1950s options for boys and girls from families of more modest means were largely limited to small church camps and church conference centers like Ridgecrest, Montreat, and Lake Junaluska. In this context, PBSC provided an affordable and quality opportunity for the sons of farmers, textile workers, furniture makers, mechanics, and shopkeepers to go to camp alongside boys from middle- and upper-income families. This fulfilled Bud Schiele's stated goal of having "boys from fine city homes, boys from modest homes, boys from cotton mill communities, and boys from rural and farm homes come together on a common ground, all committed to the same ideals and principles as Scouts."¹

Churches and textile mills sponsored most Scout troops. A large town like Gastonia had a number of troops, while a small rural community might have only one. Troop sizes ranged from about eight to thirty boys, and each troop attended camp for one week in the summer. Boys who elected to stay longer transferred to a service troop, which was also a de facto training experience for future counselors.

Every Monday morning during the ten-week season, approximately two hundred boys arrived in vintage church buses, flatbed trucks with side panels, and an assortment of family cars and station wagons for their week of camp. Some were seasoned veterans of previous summers; others were younger, wide-eyed "first-timers" filled with excitement and anxiety, as this was often their first experience away from home. Their ages ranged from eleven to sixteen. Many did not know how to swim and had never been in a canoe or rowboat. Making their own bunks, keeping their clothes neatly stowed, experiencing cabin and dining table inspections, washing their own dishes, sleeping on straw-filled cloth "ticks," using communal showers and toilet facilities, and answering to a regimented daily routine of meals and activities required some personal adjustments.

Carl Poston, mentioned in chapter 5 as one of five brothers who all

attained the Eagle rank, described his excitement as a twelve-year-old in anticipation of attending camp for the first time: "Two weeks before departure, I was so excited I could hardly eat. I packed and unpacked the borrowed suitcase many times. On Sunday, before leaving for camp on Monday, the excitement took away my appetite. On Monday morning, we loaded our suitcases on the mill truck. Then the 16 Scouts climbed around the luggage for the three-hour drive. As the truck squealed to a stop, I saw the flags, assembly hall and the cabins located in a line several hundred yards from the road. I got a top bunk in cabin number 15."² He also mentioned that Mr. R. T. Legrand, general manager of the Shelby Dover Mill, always made sure that each Scout had the \$5 needed to pay the camp fee.

Some campers came from small, rural communities with unique names reflecting local culture and history—Rhodhiss, Iron Station, Nebo, Hildebran, Ellenboro, Ranlo, Casar, Icard, High Shoals, Lattimore, Granite Falls, Hiddenite, and Lawndale, to name a few. Others came from towns like Morganton, Marion, Shelby, Hickory, Newton, Conover, Valdese, Mooresville, Statesville, Kings Mountain, Gastonia, Belmont, Rutherfordton, Cherryville, Spindale, Taylorsville, Lincolnton, Forest City, and Lenoir. Surnames (recorded in a merit badge instruction log) speak to their Scotch-Irish, English, and German ancestry from the first settlers in western North Carolina: Miller, Moore, Scruggs, Killian, Ledford, McDade, McMurray, Clontz, Klatte, Froneberger, and Huffstetler.

In the 1950s Scouting filled a need to keep boys stimulated and challenged during the summer months. Even for those who worked during the summers, either on the farm or in some other capacity to help support the family, it provided a welcome change of pace and an opportunity to interact with peers at troop meetings and at camp. The cost of a week at camp was certainly affordable at \$1 per day.

During each season in the 1950s, over two thousand boys attended camp—a remarkable accomplishment in terms of exposing young minds and bodies to the physical, mental and moral benefits of Scouting. By 1955 over fifty thousand Scouts and leaders had attended the camp since its establishment in 1925.

At the center of camp was the large assembly lodge with a stage, Bud Schiele's office, and a canteen for postcards and personal items. The second floor of the structure served as the counselors' quarters. Other



The assembly lodge viewed from lakeside. SMNH&P

buildings were the dining lodge and kitchen complex, medical dispensary, nature museum, craft and woodworking shops, rifle range, and separate cabins for the camp ranger's family, the cooks, the assistant director's family, and the Schieles.

Three live poisonous snakes, two rattlesnakes named Hitler and Mussolini, and a copperhead named Esmeralda, were in display boxes beside the nature museum. The snakes resided in the Gastonia headquarters in the winter. A news article about the camp in 1939 described the snakes and reported that a four-foot alligator lived in the lagoon near the dining lodge.³ This must have been true, because the Turner document mentions Lily Schiele feeding the alligator, named Rastus, with meat on the end of a long pole. How, and for how long, the alligator survived in Lake Lanier is an unanswered question. He was not around in the 1950s.

The beautiful Kistler Memorial Amphitheater was the site of the Hiawatha pageant and other special assemblies. Situated on a gently sloping bank and overlooking a small cove filled with water lilies, it created a special atmosphere. The rows of stone seats looked down on a grass-covered performance area, with a large teepee flanked by two vin-

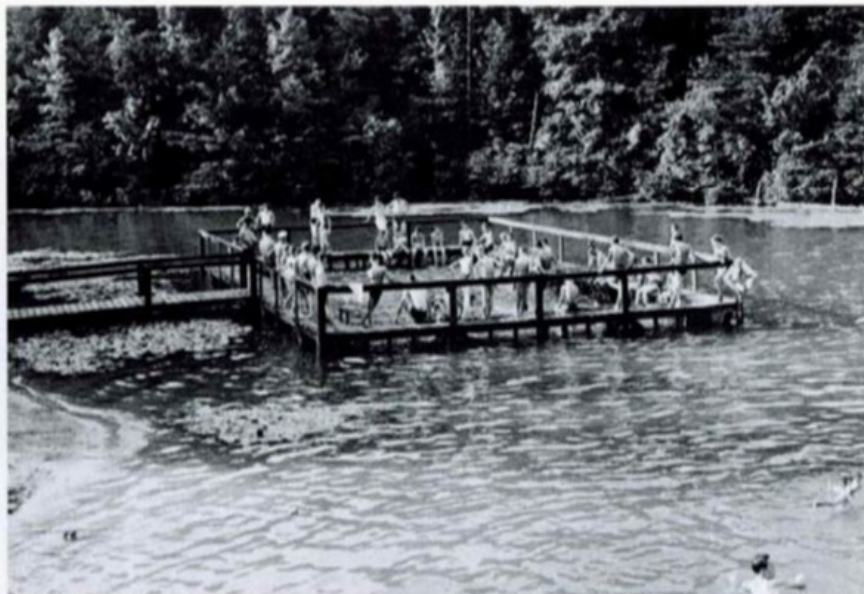


Kistler Memorial Amphitheater. SMNH&P

tage log blockhouses. Above the rows of seats, a control booth contained the sound and lighting systems for pageant performances.

Bruce Warlick remembered that the original amphitheater in the mid-1930s had the two blockhouses, a central teepee, and wooden benches for spectators. There is no record of the date of its construction, but it was probably sometime in the late 1920s to early 1930s. Its primary purpose was as a site to stage Indian-themed performances.

In 1943 the Morganton Kiwanis Club donated funds to upgrade the amphitheater to honor the memory of John Frederick Kistler, a civic leader and aviation enthusiast. Mr. Kistler, along with his wife, died at the age of twenty-eight when a small plane he was piloting crashed in Morganton on 21 October 1934. The sudden loss of this promising young man from one of Morganton's most prominent families prompted a community-wide response of respect and mourning. On the day of his funeral, schools and businesses closed and the Boy Scouts attended the funeral "in a body."⁴ The upgrade replaced the wooden benches with neat rows of stone seats, provided rock walkways and steps along the sides of the spectator area, improved the sound and lighting system, and built a control booth above the seating area with an adjoining bathroom



The "crib" used to teach beginners to swim. SMNH&P

for female spectators. In 1951 additional improvements increased the spectator seating capacity to accommodate the large number of visitors at the Thursday night performances of Hiawatha.

A defined nature trail extended from beside the dining lodge into the surrounding woods to a small spring. Maintained for campers to explore in their spare time and for teaching purposes by the camp naturalist, it reflected Bud Schiele's strong interest in the study of nature.

The waterfront had a shallow enclosed wooden area called the "crib" for beginner swimmers, a fixed platform twenty yards out in the lake with diving tower and four diving boards, a "tag" board to monitor campers checking in and out of the waterfront, and secure areas for canoes and rowboats. In addition to small two-man canoes, there were twelve eight-man "war" canoes. The camp waterfront was marked off from the rest of the lake basin by an overhead cable strung from shore to shore.

The campers and Scoutmasters stayed in the thirty-three "patrol" cabins (each with eight bunks) that formed a perimeter above the center of camp. Three shower house and latrine structures were spaced in proximity to the cabins.



Swimming area with diving tower. SMNH&P



Tag board system. Silver side of tag designated out of area; red side, still in area. Counselors carefully monitored the system as boys entered and departed the waterfront. SMNH&P

During excessively dry summers, forest fires are a distinct hazard in western North Carolina. To protect cabins and other camp structures, Mack Durham's staff created a hundred-foot-wide fire line behind the perimeter of cabins. At irregular intervals during the camping season, the camp bugler sounded "fire call" to signal a fire drill. In response, the campers and counselors formed a bucket brigade directed at a small, controlled brush burn along the fire line.

Various improvements in the camp facilities, along with the purchase of new equipment, continued in the 1950s. A Report to the Executive Council dated 19 October 1954 states, "Improvements made to the camp during the year include the installation of a 16,000 gallon water storage tank which has solved the problem of our water supply, the purchase of a new gas bake oven, and the purchase of two new canoes and two new rowboats."⁵ Prior to installation of the storage tank, the amount of water for the camp's needs depended on the capacity of a water line from the town of Tryon.

The national BSA Camping Committee preferred for summer camps to have campers sleeping in tents instead of cabins, and cooking over campfires instead of eating meals prepared by a cooking staff. However, Bud Schiele realized that having cabins and cooking staffs as part of an organized campus provided more time in a short week to focus on basic Scouting skills and individual advancement. As mentioned in chapter 5, the camp routines and activities remained remarkably consistent from 1920s to the 1950s.

From "First Call" in the morning to "Taps" at night, bugle calls signaled the daily activities. Newton MacCormack, a talented cornet and trumpet player, was camp bugler throughout most of the 1950s. He sometimes preferred playing calls on his cornet instead of the bugle. As a result, the notes, broadcast in four directions through a large megaphone (situated on a pole in the ground near the camp museum building), were beautiful, clear, and strong. The meaning of the various calls soon became second nature to new campers. Early each morning the bugler would wait for a whistle call from Bud Schiele, stationed at the dining lodge, as a signal to blow "Mess Call" and "Assembly" to bring the campers to breakfast. (Newton's detailed description of the daily schedule as signaled by bugle calls is in appendix B.)

As indicated above, the schedule each day had the boys fully engaged in a variety of interesting and challenging Scouting activities. Merit



Bugler and observers at bugle megaphone. SMNH&P

badge instruction by the counselors included the same subjects listed in chapter 5 except for blacksmithing. Scoutmasters worked with their younger troop members on meeting the requirements for the ranks of Second Class and First Class. At designated times during the week there were troop camporee competitions and individual athletic events. In short, there was little time for idle chatter or mischief making.

After breakfast on Tuesdays through Fridays, signaled by "Officers Call," Bud Schiele met with troop leaders in the craft lodge to go over the day's schedule and any other pertinent camp business. On Sunday evenings, he met with the counselors for the same purpose. Bill Whisnant recalls, "If we had a good week in Bud Schiele's eyes, he would tell us that the week had gone 'wonderfully well'—of course that's what we all hoped he would say." These meetings suggest an efficient management style designed to keep all operations of PBSC on track.

The first three nights of each week had counselor and troop skits and songfests featuring Scouting songs. On Monday night, the counselors staged several skits for the entertainment of the campers. The acting was terrible and the plots and punch lines worse, but laughs were plentiful. Songfests kicked off the skit nights with words to standard Scout



Morning church service in Kistler Memorial Amphitheater. SMNH&P

songs (*Trail the Eagle; Over Hill, Over Dale; Let Me Call You Buddy; Our Boys Will Shine Tonight*; and others) projected on the stage curtain with glass "lantern" slides.

The Hiawatha pageant on Thursday nights was a highlight each week. (See chapter 12 for a full discussion.)

Friday nights featured the Court of Honor to award merit badges and advances in rank earned during the week. This was a solemn and formal occasion, with Bud Schiele, seated at a table on the assembly lodge stage, conducting the proceedings. A main goal of the week at camp was for each Scout to make progress in advancement by earning a merit badge (swimming, lifesaving, marksmanship, woodworking, nature study, etc.) or by completing requirements for Second- and First-Class ranks.

In the early 1950s there was a church service on Tuesday mornings before breakfast in Kistler Memorial Amphitheater. Scouts, in full uniform, filled the audience section looking down on the central area. A portable organ to accompany hymns occupied a spot on the grassy area near one of the blockhouses and a podium was in place for the speakers. On an early bright summer morning, the beauty of Kistler, overlooking

the lake with rising mist over blooming water lilies, was truly inspirational. Appropriately enough, the hymn "I Come to the Garden Alone" was a favorite for the service. For unknown reasons, this service disappeared from the schedule by the mid-1950s.

The athletic Field Day each Wednesday morning was a popular event where boys, by weight groups, competed as individuals in the 50- and 100-yard dashes, the running broad jump, the running high jump, and the swim race. The track events took place on the athletic field, with sawdust landing sites to cushion jump competitions and marked start and finish lines for the dashes. The swim race was a 20-yard sprint from the front edge of the diving platform toward a finish line marked by a counselor holding a cane pole line near shore. With the thrashing arms and splashing water, picking out the first three place winners was sometimes guesswork at best. The three boys with the highest point totals from all events received medals at the Friday night Court of Honor. But the emphasis was on participation instead of winning, and boys without athletic prowess had the satisfaction and challenge of taking part and doing their best.

A troop camporee was held on Friday mornings beside the athletic field, with troops trying to best each other in basic Scouting skills like fire-by-friction, flint and steel fire, a knot-tying relay, a water-boiling contest, a string-burning contest, first aid skills, signaling, and tent pitching. Scoutmasters and counselors judged and assigned points for each event.

On Friday afternoons, the camporee competition concluded with the war canoe race. Each troop picked its biggest and strongest eight boys to man their canoe, and counselors served as coxswains for the ten to twelve entries. The canoe race was serious business. For the troops, winning the overall camporee often depended on points earned as one of the top three finishers in the race. For the counselors, placing first enhanced one's reputation as an expert coxswain. To maintain a level playing field in pairing troop canoes with coxswains, counselors picked canoe numbers from a hat.

The competitors started at the diving platform, paddled vigorously to the mouth of the cove toward a landmark called Pierson's Pier, circled two stationary rowboats, and then, fueled on adrenalin and bravado, raced back to the finish line with whatever energy remained in the tank. From the excitement and cheering on shore, a visitor might think that a



Start of the Field Day swim race event. SMNH&P



Fire by friction event in camporee. Courtesy of Cherryville Historical Museum, Cherryville, North Carolina.



Start of canoe race, early 1940s. SMNH&P

major regatta was in progress. The counselor-coxswain in the winning canoe, ceremoniously thrown in the lake by the other counselors, had bragging rights for at least the next week.

The cooking staff prepared excellent meals under the limitations of Lily Schiele's rather frugal menus. According to several collective memories, the offerings were hotdogs and baked beans for Monday lunch (Bud Schiele always warned the new campers to "chew their hotdogs well so they would not 'bark' later"), country-style steak on Thursday night, macaroni and cheese for Friday lunch, and some type of white fish for Friday dinner. Bread pudding was a favorite dessert. Breakfast alternated every morning between French toast (served with apple butter instead of syrup) and scrambled eggs (with tiny bits of bacon mixed in for flavor). The favorite meal by far was traditional shepherd's pie for Saturday lunch. The menu for each meal never varied all season.

Before entering the dining lodge for dinner, each camper was required to drop a letter or card into an entrance mailbox to make sure that the folks back home received some news. Scouts bought stationery and postcards in the canteen. Most of the cards were quite brief ("Dear Folks, I'm having fun and rode in a canoe today. Love, Johnny") but sufficed to meet the requirement. The entire meal process was highly organized and efficient. Each table seated eight boys and the food came out on a large tray placed at the head of the table.

At the end of the meal, a crew of Scoutmasters inspected the tables. The cleanest table, dismissed first, was awarded a small American flag. The messiest table earned the "Hog Flag" and was the last table dismissed. When dismissed, each boy proceeded to the dishwashing shed where he washed his dishes in a long metal sink, rinsed them, and then delivered them to a team of counselors for sterilization in a steam-heated metal tub of boiling water. The dishes (a plate, bowl, and cup made of white china) were sturdy but did not bounce if dropped on the cement floor of the dining lodge. Breaking a dish was an unpleasant experience for the camper and counselors alike because immediate restitution required a counselor to deduct 50 cents from the camper's \$1 canteen card.

Remarkably for an unscreened building, the dining lodge did not have a problem with flies and other insects during meals. A series of fly traps placed in the trees around the building worked very well. Flies, attracted by odors to the jar-like traps, could check in but could not check out. Fortunately, the unpleasant task of emptying and maintaining the traps was the responsibility of Mack Durham's crew.

Water Safety in the 1950s

The two general swim periods each day were a favorite activity for all of the campers, and protecting their safety was the responsibility of the waterfront director and counselors. American Red Cross swimming and diving guidelines dictated the protocols and included a buddy system with frequent checks, a tag board for checking in and out, and lifeguards, some with bamboo canes in rowboats and others standing on the diving platform. One counselor was selected to serve as waterfront director each summer. He attended a Red Cross camp in Brevard in early June to qualify as a water safety instructor, which permitted him to teach Red Cross junior and senior lifesaving courses. The counselors practiced weekly drills, working as a team to find a "lost buddy" in eight feet of murky lake water. Rapid retrieval of a rock-and-straw-filled dummy, hidden previously by the waterfront director, was the goal. In the entire history of the camp there were no drownings or near-drownings—a remarkable record.

Some counselors went beyond the Red Cross lifesaving courses and earned the BSA lifeguard certification, which required completion of

a course manual and mastery of specific water rescue activities. On successful completion of the course, the award was a handsome square "BSA Lifeguard" patch worn on the right side of the bathing suit. One requirement was being able to strip down to one's bathing suit from being fully clothed (long pants, buttoned shirt, and jacket) in ten seconds before entering the water for a rescue. Of course, shirt buttons flew off in the effort. Evidently, the BSA received enough complaints from mothers about torn shirts that the ten-second disrobing requirement is no longer in effect.

Walking the Straight and Narrow

In the 1950s Bud Schiele was in his sixties. In any setting related to the council or PBSC, he was clearly the leader and his word and decisions carried respect and authority. He was approachable and friendly, but it was clear that the safe and efficient operation of the council and PBSC was always foremost in his mind. In short, he was not very tolerant of poor performances.

Bud Schiele made it clear that the Scout Oath and Law were the guiding principles for behavior and decorum at PBSC. The expectation was for Scouts to have good manners at all times. Distractions and rude behavior such as laughing, booing, fidgeting, and talking loud during assemblies crossed the line and resulted in immediate discipline—placement of an offender in front of the entire assembly made a strong impression. To make his point, he sometimes used the expression "A person who 'boos' another person couldn't touch a snake's belly with a 50-foot pole." Unacceptable behavior by a troop or its Scoutmaster (vulgar language, cursing, excessive noise after "Taps," smoking, stealing, etc.) might result in expulsion from camp and an early trip home.

Staff members were not exempt from the rules. In the early 1950s the camp doctor and several Scoutmasters slipped out of camp one night. On their return, they found that Bud Schiele had waited up for them to hand out immediate walking papers.

From Pit Latrines to Flush Toilets in the 1950s

In 1952 the camp made the conversion from pit latrines to flush toilets. Prior to the conversion, counselors had the responsibility of treating the

pit latrines by "slinging" liquid creosote (a distillate made from coal tar) down into each latrine—a memorable experience. Creosote is a wood preservative used on railroad ties and telephone poles, and at PBSC it was used to preserve the wooden supports under the latrines. The idea was to prevent collapse of the latrine infrastructure—clearly a bad outcome for some unlucky user. The messy, odiferous job rotated among the counselors. In retrospect, scrubbing the many flush toilets that replaced the pit latrines was not much of an upgrade in terms of job satisfaction.

For one week each summer, a troop of campers from the North Carolina School for the Deaf in Morganton was in camp. From earning merit badges to competing in athletic Field Day and Troop Camporee competitions, the deaf campers always led the way, giving credence to the Scout motto "Be prepared." Their positive and patient manner won many friends and gave the other campers some insight into the coping ability of persons with significant disabilities. The deaf boys always brought sign language cards and seemed to enjoy teaching the fundamentals of signing to the others.

A little-known secret from the natural world is that a species of scorpion, the Southern Devil Scorpion (*Vaejovis carolinianus*), is found in North Carolina, specifically in Polk County and around Tryon. The small scorpion will sting if provoked. Fortunately the sting is not dangerous, but as some overly curious campers discovered, it is painful. Another rather unusual inhabitant of the area is the velvet ant (in reality, a wingless female wasp), which is an impressive insect due to its bright color and size. The camp naturalist enjoyed demonstrating these creatures to the campers, along with various snakes, turtles, lizards, and other flora and fauna.

The rifle range, in a ravine on one side of the athletic field, consisted of an open shed with four firing positions and target stands backed by a steep bank. The rifles were standard .22-caliber target rifles, kept in locked cabinets in the camp museum when not in use on the range. Paper targets provided by the National Rifle Association (NRA) recorded the expertise of the campers in achieving qualifications for NRA medal awards and certificates. In the 1950s the NRA promoted gun safety and enjoyed a positive national reputation. The Boy Scout organization allied with the NRA in marksmanship and gun safety, as it did with the Red Cross for water safety.

At least once in the 1950s, a touring trick-shot artist representing

the Remington Arms company gave a shooting exhibition at PBSC. His ability to hit small objects thrown in the air and to shoot accurately from various positions was simply amazing. He created an impressive memento by using bullets fired from a distance to create an image of the head of an Indian chief on a large metal sheet. The sheet gained permanent residence on a wall in the back of the assembly lodge.

Severe polio epidemics in western North Carolina in 1944, 1948, and 1952 significantly shortened the camping season for those summers. In 1944 state health officials recommended closing summer camps in all parts of the state because by 1 June there had already been 318 cases and 14 deaths.⁶ An article in the *Burlington Daily News-Times* reported, "From Gastonia came the announcement that the Piedmont Boy Scout camp on Lake Lanier near Tryon would be closed immediately because of the prevalence of polio in nine of the eleven counties of the Piedmont Council area." The epidemic in 1944 was particularly severe throughout the Piedmont counties and caused a major crisis in caring for the many infected children. Hospitals in Charlotte and Gastonia filled and had to turn away patients. However, the citizens of Hickory rose to the occasion by constructing temporary care facilities almost overnight. The "Miracle of Hickory" is a proud accomplishment for the city.⁷

Shem Blackley remembers that when camp closed early in 1948, the counselors stayed an extra week on a special work detail—hiking into the nearby woods to cut down locust trees with crosscut saws. Locust trees provided logs needed for constructing several new cabins over the winter. Obviously, Bud Schiele figured that the early closure provided at least one benefit—the unexpected availability of a compliant workforce. Besides, working with large crosscut saws for a week was a character-building exercise.

Some former Scouts remember having their stay at PBSC extended during polio epidemics because the camp seemed safer than being in the local community. However, in severe epidemics, the influx of several hundred new boys each week also increased the exposure risk, so closing camp was the safer option. Fortunately, the Salk vaccine became available in 1955 and polio no longer posed a threat.

After the troops departed on Saturday mornings, the counselors cleaned and restocked the showers and toilets, washed the large kitchen garbage cans, made sure the cabins and activity buildings were ready for the new arrivals on Monday, updated certificate and merit badge

records, and dealt with any other obvious needs. By noon, things were in order and the rest of the weekend was relatively relaxed.

Saturday night was special, as counselors and service troop campers had permission to go into Tryon. Saturday afternoon preparations included soap and cold-water showers and the wearing of clean uniforms. The group hiked several miles through the woods and past St. Luke's Hospital into Tryon for a movie and visits to the two drugstores (Owen's and Misseldine's) for refreshments and miscellaneous items. Tryon was a very sedate town on Saturday night and the excursion was strictly limited to a one-block area on the main street that contained the theater and drugstores. Conrad Warlick remembers that the movie "was always a western and there was also a segment of a serial which was shown each week." For "sanitary" reasons, Lily Schiele required that all purchased treats and drinks be served in disposable paper containers with plastic utensils. Regardless, being in town was a very special event for young men generally excluded from the outside world—for the entire summer, each counselor had only one weekend visit home. Also, there was no access to radios or the new medium called television.

There was no hot water at PBSC for campers and counselors, so real "soap-and-water" showers were generally limited, by personal choice, to Saturday afternoons prior to the hike to town. Daily swims in Lake Lanier, plus a cold shower on Saturday, seemed to meet the letter of the Scout law "A Scout is clean."

On weekend afternoons, counselors could take the two-man canoes out into the main basins of the lake. The small canoes were in sharp contrast to the powerful inboard motorboats pulling water skiers. The boats belonged to the owners of the many lakeside cottages on other parts of the lake. Generally, passing encounters on the open water were friendly, but occasionally a Chris-Craft could not resist "buzzing" a canoe, causing the paddlers to brace for high waves over the gunnels. The motorboat and water-skier folks and the Scouts represented different ends of the Lake Lanier summer culture—each probably simultaneously envious and curious about the other.

A brief church service on Sunday morning featured hymns played on a portable organ and possibly a few readings or remarks from a traditional Protestant orientation. Because there were very few Catholic and Jewish families in the council area, no regularly organized services in

those faiths occurred. To respect the Catholic ban on eating meat on Fridays, fish replaced meat at the Friday evening meal.

Harry and John Rosenberg from Gastonia were two Jewish boys who attended PBSC in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Harry was in the service troop and John, his older brother, was a counselor. Harry remembers that Lily Schiele arranged a place and time for them to have Friday night services, conducted by John, when several Jewish boys were in camp. One summer, Bud Schiele asked John to be the camp chaplain. The main responsibility was to meet with any incoming Scoutmasters each Monday who were ministers and plan a weekly vesper service in Kistler Amphitheater. A Jewish chaplain working with Protestant ministers to plan services was certainly unique.

The back-story of the Rosenberg family, as Holocaust survivors, is quite remarkable. John and Harry were born in Magdeburg, Germany, in the 1930s as Adolf Hitler was rising to power. Their father was a teacher and an assistant to the rabbi in the synagogue. John, seven years old at the time, remembers the "Night of the Broken Glass" (Kristallnacht) on 11 November 1938, when Nazi thugs destroyed the synagogue and burned the holy books. The authorities took their father to a concentration camp at Buchenwald and released him after seventeen days, stipulating that the family had thirty days to leave Germany. Because of relatives in Holland, they relocated there and lived in a designated refugee center. After one year, they managed to secure passage on a ship to the United States. Their ship to safety was the last ship to leave Holland with refugees before the German Army invaded the country.

The family arrived in New York City, subsequently moving to Spartanburg, South Carolina, for three years and then to Gastonia. Their father learned the textile business from the ground up and worked in management at a textile mill in the Gaston County town of Lowell. John and Harry went to the public schools of Gastonia and both became Boy Scouts in a troop sponsored by the Associated Reform Presbyterian Church. Both have had very impressive careers. John became an attorney and has a national reputation for his work in civil rights and social justice. Harry earned a PhD in statistics and was chief of the Mortality Statistics Branch at the National Center for Health Statistics in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Special times each weekend were Sunday lunch, with fried chicken,

mashed potatoes, green beans, and cherry pie, and Sunday afternoon, when family visitors might arrive. Girlfriend visitors were rare because the long summer of isolation tended to be hard on relationships. On Sunday evenings, Bud Schiele conducted a short staff meeting with the counselors to review the past and upcoming weeks.

Several policies held the outside world in abeyance so that campers could focus exclusively on Scouting activities—radios, board and card games, and personal athletic gear were not allowed. In addition, there were no tennis courts or ballfields. Not allowing radios was the 1950s equivalent of outlawing smartphones today. Bud Schiele believed that such pursuits were distractions from the real purpose of camp.

From 1925 through the 1950s PBSC had weathered the hardships of the Great Depression, the rationing and shortages of World War II, and the feared polio epidemics. Successfully coping with the postwar changes of an improved economy with family cars, transistor radios, and adolescent cultural changes heralded by television and rock and roll presented new challenges in keeping boys interested in Scouting in the coming years.

At nine o'clock on each Friday night, the mournful sound of "Taps" (followed by "There's No Place Like Home") echoed across the camp, signaling the end of the day and the last night in camp. As the final notes drifted away, replaced by the nighttime chorus of bullfrogs, tree frogs, and crickets, it's likely that some of the boys had a new appreciation for the values of Scouting as a way of life. If so, the week was indeed a worthwhile investment for them, their leaders, and their communities. Bud and Lily Schiele would be smiling.

Bill Whisnant was very impressed by the remarks made by Lily Schiele at the last staff meeting of the 1957 camping season. This was, of course, the last season at camp for the Schieles, since Bud retired the next March. Bill paraphrases the remarks as follows:

Bud's thoughts most certainly were noteworthy but I just don't recall what he said. But that was OK because when Lily spoke following his remarks, I think she was able to capture the essence of their life philosophy in just a few words. As I recall it, she paused for a moment before casting her eyes toward the lagoon and the remains of a large oak tree that had come to rest in the water. She then asked, "Do you see that old oak tree over there in the water? It used to be a magnificent oak,



Canoes heading home with Hogback Mountain and Rocky Spur in the background. SMNH&P

a home for birds, and a source of food for squirrels and protection for all of the other nearby plants and animals needing it. But if you think its life has ended, you need to look closer. Look at the turtles who now have a place to sun themselves, the ferns a place to take root, and the host of other creatures who have an environment in which they can thrive. But most importantly, look at the new light on the forest floor and the young oaks that have begun to grow in its place." Her remarks made it clear that she believed in the existence of a life cycle in which nothing ever really dies. Instead, everything lives on, with each generation preparing for and nurturing the next. Through us, the young oaks, they would live on.

PBSC after the 1950s

Bud Schiele retired in 1958 at sixty-five. In 1960 the camp was renamed Schiele Scout Reservation in honor of both Bud and Lily Schiele. The Piedmont Council leaders and Bud Schiele recognized that Lily Schiele was a full partner in all of his successes. She was his rock and sounding



Bud Schiele in Scout executive uniform, circa 1958. SMNH&P



Lily Schiele: Bud's support in all activities. Also camp dietician, Indian lore instructor, and costume designer, director, and narrator of the Hiawatha pageant.

board, constantly at his side on the countless road trips to meetings, events, and Courts of Honor and at camp each summer. She was also the creative force behind the very successful Hiawatha pageant. Bud referred to her as "Lady" and in one interview said, "No. I couldn't do it without her."

The camp continued on Lake Lanier as the Piedmont Council camp until 1981, when it closed and all camping activities moved to a much larger tract of land in nearby Rutherford County. The world had changed and new ideas and programs to keep boys interested in Scouting replaced the old-school Scouting traditions of the Schiele era.

Gene J. Jones, an experienced professional Scout executive, followed Bud Schiele as the Piedmont Council chief Scout executive. Prior to coming to Gastonia, he was a deputy regional Scout executive based in Atlanta, serving four southeastern states. As an Eagle Scout and former Scoutmaster, he had experience in Scouting that ran deep. The transition in council leadership proceeded well, as Mr. Jones had a genial manner and employed a management style similar that of his predecessor.



Bud and Lily Schiele and dog, Buttons, at PBSC, mid-1950s. Courtesy of author.

Counselors in the late 1950s and early 1960s enjoyed working under him and saw little change in the program at PBSC.

Private owners bought the Lake Lanier land with plans for development, but to date no significant development is evident. Some of the cabins and larger buildings are still present, serving as tangible but vanishing reminders of times gone by.

Segregation in the Piedmont Council

THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL BSA organization in the early years on the inclusion of African American boys and men was passively negative, and statements by leaders clearly implied a bias against efforts to facilitate African American membership. From 1910 to the early 1920s degrading African American stereotypes appeared in some BSA literature and in comments at national meetings. The official policy was one of "self-determination" whereby local councils decided whether to allow African American troops.¹

By 1925 the organization became more assertive and formed an interracial service committee with the goal of promoting the gradual formation of African American troops in the South. A generous foundation grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation funded this initiative.² In 1932, at the annual meeting of the national council, one of the "outstanding developments" reported was "an increase in Interracial Scouting."³ In 1926 the BSA had 248 African American troops and 4,923 Scouts. The following year, it hired a full-time executive to oversee the extension of Scouting to all types of underserved populations—Native Americans, African Americans, and migrant groups in large cities. Prior to the 1920s there were isolated African American troops around the country. In 1911 Elizabeth City, North Carolina, had an African American troop that was the first in the country.⁴ There were also, in 1916, African American troops in Louisville, Kentucky. However, these and other early troops faced opposition, and remaining active was difficult.⁵

While progress occurred in extending Scouting to African American boys, it came with some serious restrictions. Local councils made all

of the rules concerning the amount of freedom and visibility allowed African American Scouts and relegated their experience to second-class status. Uniform restrictions, limited access to pools and camps, barriers to rank advancement, and few public service opportunities created a difficult environment in which to benefit from the ideals of Scouting.⁶ In addition, thoughtless demeaning of African Americans in jokes and skits was present in Boy Scout camps and troop meetings from the 1920s through the 1950s.⁷ Even at PBSC in the 1950s, counselors staged a "blackface" skit without a concern being expressed by anyone.

During Bud Schiele's years as Scout executive, the BSA position noted above was in complete harmony with the social mores of the segregated South: proceed cautiously and preserve the status quo. There is no record of Bud Schiele's personal position on the issue. Certainly, within the BSA organization and given the racial environment of the segregated South, he had little independent latitude in the matter.

The Turner document gives some details about African American Scouting in the Piedmont Council: "During the early years of Mr. Schiele's work here as Scout Executive, a black man came to visit him every Monday to try to get his troop of boys into the Boy Scouts. This man, James Adams, later known as 'Brother Jimmy,' was very persistent and was determined to get this group of boys into the BSA. In 1926, James Adams became the first Negro Scoutmaster and his troop was the first Negro troop in the Piedmont Council."⁸

A "Scouter's Bulletin" from Bud Schiele to "Scouters of the Colored Troops" in 1934 indicates that additional African American troops had been formed between 1926 and 1934 in the council territory. The bulletin was a reminder to the African American leaders of "certain standards for all troops in the Piedmont Council," and a checklist of standards was included. It also urged them to attend a "special Camp Training Conference for Negro Scouters" in Greensboro the next month.⁹ Similar bulletins stressing the expected levels of performance in troop activities and accountability also went to the white troop leaders.

A modest number of African American troops formed during the 1930s in counties other than Gaston. One example is the small community of Bostic in Rutherford County that formed an African American troop in 1935. A white Scoutmaster from nearby Forest City and the council district commissioner assisted in the effort and a group of white "prominent Bostic citizens" sponsored the troop.¹⁰

By 1938 there were sixteen African American troops and plans were to have a one-troop camp at Lincoln Academy that had facilities for swimming.¹¹ In 1940 "14 Negro troops and 148 Negro Scouts and leaders attended the Negro Council Camp at Lincoln Academy,"¹² and that site was used until Camp James opened several years later.

Lincoln Academy, near Kings Mountain in Gaston County, has an interesting history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the American Missionary Association, sponsored by Congregationalist churches in New England, sent a number of female teachers to isolated and economically deprived regions on the South to establish churches and schools for African Americans and whites. One of these teachers was Emily Caroline Prudden (1832-1917) from Connecticut, who between 1884 and 1917 started thirteen schools in western North Carolina. Lincoln Academy, one of the most successful, began in 1888 as an elementary and secondary school for day and boarding African American girls. Over the next decade it increased enrollment and added facilities despite initial resistance from local white citizens and economic hardships.¹³ In the 1920s it transitioned to the public school system of Gaston County as a segregated school and was the first black school accredited in North Carolina. It closed in 1955 and students moved to nearby schools in Gaston County.¹⁴ As mentioned above, the availability of Lincoln Academy facilities allowed some African American Scouts to have a summer camp experience.

However, the road ahead for African American Scouting in the council was not welcoming. A Piedmont Council document in the early 1940s states, "There shall be no joint activities of Negro and white Scouts under any circumstances. . . . Negro Scouts cannot wear the uniform for one year and then only patrol leaders with First Class rank and then only with approval of the local district committee."¹⁵ Such regulations were common in the southern councils and made it clear that African American Scouts did not receive the same privileges as their white counterparts.¹⁶

In 1941 the African American community in Gastonia raised money and purchased land at Crowder's Mountain to establish a camp named Camp James. In 1944 the council hired James Adams as the first African American Scout Executive.¹⁷ Through his efforts there were 36 African American troops and 720 enrolled Scouts by 1950, and Camp James hosted 18 troops and 250 Scouts during the 1950 season.¹⁸ However, by

1954 the number of troops was down to 29 and enrolled Scouts to 495, and attendance at Camp James was only 200.¹⁹ A Scout from Gaston County was the only African American Scout in the council to attain the Eagle rank in 1954. Also, the majority of other ranks attained and merit badges earned by African American Scouts were in Gaston County. The more distant counties of Burke, Caldwell, Iredell, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford reported only a modest number of advancements and earned merit badges. This probably reflects the proximity to James Adams and Camp James, where there was more support and encouragement than in the more distant counties.

Fundraising for African American Scouting focused on the churches that sponsored the troops, but in 1954 the churches in some counties raised no funds. James Adams continued to lead African American Scouting during the 1940s and 1950s, but there is no information on his tenure or on the financial status of African American Scouting during the later 1950s.

In the segregated South of the 1950s, the influx of Hispanics and other ethnic groups was years away. Obviously, the difficult process of acceptance, understanding, and respect between races and cultures within the framework of the Piedmont Council would have to wait another several decades. However, civil rights for African Americans became a national issue with the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954. The decision launched the first stage of the African American struggle for justice and equality—a bitter struggle that continues today. After *Brown v. Board of Education*, national BSA leaders assumed a wait-and-see position regarding continued segregation of troops in the South.

Brad Nesheim, a retired professional Scout executive who served in the Piedmont Council from 1976 to 1985, recalls that as a Scout in Gastonia in the 1960s he never saw any African American Scouts at district or council events. It is likely that the attitude expressed in the Piedmont Council report mentioned above—"There shall be no joint activities of Negro and white Scouts under any circumstances"—was still prevalent in the 1960s.

In 1970 segregation finally ended in the Piedmont Council when the African American Carver District merged with the other districts and Camp James was designated the Council Training Camp.²⁰ However,

Brad remembers that some African American Scouts elected to remain in their African American church-sponsored troops.

Reflecting on his many years of service in southern councils, Brad credits the BSA for its efforts to bring Scouting to minority and underprivileged youth. Reaching African American youth in the South has been a difficult task because of the tensions created when a program introduced from the outside has different priorities and goals from those of African American community leaders and families.

In the fall of 2018 the author visited Ed Feemster, Scoutmaster of Cherryville Troop #323, to view memorabilia and records at the troop headquarters building. Ed is black, but only one of the twenty-six Scouts in the troop is black. The other troop in Cherryville has no African American Scouts at all. Ed's two sons were the first black Scouts in the troop to achieve the Eagle rank. Troop #323 is very active under his leadership. When asked in a later telephone conversation about the difficulties in recruiting African American Scouts today, Ed responded that competing priorities, such as organized sports, are a factor. However, we both agreed that the answer is more complicated than sports and requires more introspection and analysis than possible in a brief telephone conversation.

Scouting and American Indian Culture

THE FINAL EXPANSION and acquisition of the western United States from after the Civil War through the 1880s involved subjugation of the various American Indian tribes that had lived in those lands for thousands of years. The process involved bloody military actions and often misguided government decisions with the goal of controlling the tribes on white men's terms. This resulted in moving tribes to reservations, confiscating large portions of their native lands, and establishing boarding schools to "civilize" their children and diminish their cultural attachments. Land confiscation enabled more settlers to move to the western territories, thereby uniting the country from coast to coast. In effect, the United States government and its Bureau of Indian Affairs created a series of small Trails of Tears reminiscent of the Cherokee relocation to Oklahoma earlier in the century.

As the country continued the turbulent transition from a self-sufficient agrarian society to industrialization in the latter half of the nineteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century, a new cultural sensitivity toward the American Indian emerged. American artists created images of dignified and serene Indian subjects. Longfellow's epic poem "Song of Hiawatha" (1855) became relevant to this awareness and regained popularity. Magazine articles and books stimulated renewed interest in the outdoors and nature, with which the American Indian was often associated.

Ernest Seton, an author and advocate of American Indian culture and the virtues of the natural world, worked with the BSA in the early years. His influence caused American Indian imagery to be a part of the pro-

cess of teaching boys to appreciate the natural world through camping and learning outdoor skills and survival techniques.¹ The Indian motif expressed itself in the form of totem poles, "war" canoes, plays and skits with Indian characters, introduction of an Indian Lore merit badge, creation of fraternal societies such as the Order of the Arrow, and invited performances by traveling groups of "real" Indians to demonstrate tribal dances and attire and to tell Indian-themed stories. In Boy Scout camps where groups of boys lived together learning woodcraft, canoeing, fire by friction, swimming, pathfinding, and other related outdoor skills, specific aspects of Indian culture blended easily into Scout culture.

Bud and Lily Schiele appreciated nature, and this appreciation included a rather idealized concept of the American Indian that was, as noted previously, in harmony with the times. Their interest started early and proceeded to a higher level throughout their adult lives. Photographs in the archives of the Schiele Museum show Lily Schiele as a young girl in an Indian-style dress. She mentioned in an interview that she and Bud were married kneeling on an Indian blanket. While working for the Philadelphia Commercial Museum in 1916, Bud spent six weeks in New Mexico collecting Indian artifacts for the museum.

Early Indian motifs at PBSC in the 1920s included a totem pole and "war" canoes. The totem pole arrived in June 1926 "with the Thunder Bird perched on top of its station near the main bunkhouse."² The fate of the PBSC totem pole is unknown. In 1928 a publicity release for PBSC stated, "Frank Swaney, a Cherokee Indian, will be at the camp to teach Indian lore. Frank attended the Haskell Indian School of Lawrence, Kansas."³ The Schieles probably met Frank between 1919 and 1920 when Bud was the Scout executive in Lawrence. There is no record of when Frank was a student at the Haskell Indian School or of his activities at PBSC in the summer of 1928.

In the 1930s a second American Indian spent time over several summers at PBSC and maintained a lifelong relationship with the Schieles. Wilbert Edward "Blue Sky Eagle" Hunt was from a family associated with the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico. Peter Nabokov, professor of American Indian studies and world arts and cultures at UCLA, chronicles the fascinating story of the family in his book *How the World Moves*.⁴ Three of Edward's older brothers attended the Haskell Indian School; whether or not they knew Frank Swaney is unknown.

Wilbert attended the Albuquerque Indian School until 1927 when, at



The Hunts at the Smithsonian, 1928. From left, Phillip Sanchez, Wilbert "Blue Sky Eagle" Hunt, Edward Proctor Hunt, Marie Hunt, Henry "White Robe" Hunt. Courtesy of National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

twenty, he left school to accompany his father, mother, one brother, and another young Indian man to Oklahoma. His father, Edward Proctor Hunt, had signed on to the "Wild West" Miller Brothers entertainment enterprise based in Oklahoma. The family assumed the role of "show" Indians; Edward took the show name of Big Snake and Wilbert became Blue Sky Eagle. They toured with Miller Brothers in Europe and the United States in 1927 and 1928. In late 1928 Edward Hunt, assisted by Wilbert and another brother, traveled to Washington to relate the stories of the creation myths of the Acoma Pueblo to ethnographers at the Smithsonian Institute. Professor Nabokov's book presents a detailed analysis of the ramifications of these sessions with conservative members of the Acoma Pueblo and provides context about the cultural implications of the myths.

With the economic concerns of this period, Edward, based on the families' experiences with the Miller Brothers tours, realized the enter-

tainment value of their skills in presenting American Indian culture to audiences in the form of storytelling, tribal dances and ceremonies, and Indian wardrobes and crafts. Therefore, the family began booking engagements across the country to perform at schools and churches, civic organizations, and gatherings of Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts were one of the most readily available and enthusiastic audiences and indeed the troupe made its way to North Carolina and the Piedmont Council in 1929.⁵ A local newspaper reports, "Boy Scouts attended the Indian dances and demonstrations held under the auspices of the Piedmont Council at Gastonia High School Auditorium on Saturday night April 27. Chief Big Snake and his party of Pueblo Indians from Acoma, New Mexico delighted the audience of 1000 Boy Scouts and their parents and friends."⁶ Two weeks later, the family performed for Boy Scouts in Asheville. The five family performers included Blue Sky Eagle, and the program presented demonstrations of the Eagle dance, Corn dance, Buffalo dance, and War dance.⁷

From this background, Wilbert "Blue Sky Eagle" Hunt shared a long relationship with Bud and Lily Schiele. Whether this relationship started with the performance in Gastonia or from earlier associations is unknown. It is also possible that it began when Frank Swaney and three of Wilbert's brothers attended the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas, about the same time that Bud Schiele was a Scout executive in Lawrence.

Bruce Warlick remembers Wilbert at PBSC over several summers between 1934 and 1938. A newspaper article refers to a Fourth of July celebration at the camp in 1935: "At Piedmont Boy Scout Camp a separate all-day program will be held to which all are invited. At ten o'clock, a demonstration will be given in lifesaving, canoeing, etc. At the same time, some Indian customs will be shown by Chief Blue Sky Eagle, Indian councilor."⁸ Bruce recalls that Wilbert lived in a teepee across the road from the Schieles' cabin and wore Native American everyday dress. Evidently, the campers were thrilled to have a "real" Indian in camp. Working closely with Lily Schiele, he taught and demonstrated Indian lore, including individual and tribal dances, construction of headdresses and other attire, beadwork, storytelling, and various other customs. Lily Schiele was an apt student, and many of the dances integrated easily into the Hiawatha pageant that started twelve years later.

There is one photograph in the Schiele Museum archives of a man

painting designs on a teepee at PBSC. The photograph is not dated and the man's face is not visible, but his hair and shirt suggest that he is Native American. It's surprising that there are not numerous photographs of Blue Sky Eagle during his time at PBSC, because he appears in many photographs with the family performers and was certainly not camera-shy. Counselors in the 1940s and 1950s remember Lily Schiele referring to his presence at PBSC. However, Bruce Warlick has the distinction of actually having known him in the mid-1930s.

After serving in World War II, Wilbert joined one of his brothers in Santa Fe as an artisan of Indian jewelry. One summer in the 1950s, the Schieles gave the PBSC counselors a post-camp season gift of beautiful silver and turquoise cufflinks made by Blue Sky Eagle.

Wilbert died in 2007 at the age of one hundred. A telephone conversation in 2018 with his eighty-nine-year-old nephew, Eddie Hunt, revealed that Wilbert's relationship with the Schieles extended into the early 1970s, when Eddie would drive him to Gastonia and the Schiele Museum for several days of storytelling and demonstrations of tribal dances and Indian culture. The group also brought craft items and jewelry to sell.

The Hiawatha Pageant

THOSE WHO WERE PART of the Hiawatha pageant at PBSC, either as spectators or as participants, were probably not familiar with the long legacy of Hiawatha pageants across the country starting in the early 1900s. As noted in chapter 11, even as the assimilation efforts of the federal government continued into the twentieth century, an idealized image of the American Indian entered the public consciousness. Longfellow's poem, forty-five years after publication, provided a powerful literary tableau for this movement. The performers in the first staged production of the "Song of Hiawatha," in 1901 in Michigan, were Native Americans from local tribes. In 1905 a fifty-year tradition of performances started at Petoskey, Michigan, a summer resort area utilizing railroad transportation to attract people from Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, and other large Midwestern cities. Native Americans performed at Petoskey using a script composed of verbatim passages from the poem.¹

From these upper Midwest beginnings and riding the wave of the idealized and symbolic Indian, independent productions started in various settings all over the country. In 1913 Hollywood produced a silent movie version.² Students in Indian boarding schools staged productions for community groups. In North Carolina, the Poe Society (1914) of East Carolina University and the private Reynolda School (1919) in Winston-Salem performed versions of the pageant.³ The East Carolina University archives have a copy of the complete script, but the authorship is not clear. There is no script for the Winston-Salem production, but the archive of the Reynolda House Museum has a performance program crediting the arrangement to F. E. Moore. There are other men-

tions of F. E. Moore in reference to Hiawatha passion plays, indicating that Moore may have been a national consultant to local productions.

A statement in the Reynolda School program written by Moore reveals the attraction of "Song of Hiawatha" pageants to literary societies and wealthy patrons: "As a means of presenting the legends, myths, and customs of North American Indians, in concrete dramatic form, Longfellow's 'Song of Hiawatha' has been chosen. In some instances it has been found expedient to condense the form of that used, but in no case has any change been made to the original poem so that Hiawatha is presented here as an authentic reproduction of Indian Folk Lore." In other words, the educated classes viewed the pageants as a worthy means of honoring and preserving the concept of the idealized American Indian.

The exact transition timeline from the Indian lore and dances taught by Blue Sky Eagle in the mid-1930s to Indian-themed performances, culminating with the staging of the Hiawatha pageant, remains unclear. After the Schieles' retirement, a script surfaced for a play titled *Quest of the Evil One*. The faded pages have no attribution for author or date but the existence of the script suggests a previous life at PBSC. When prompted, Conrad Warlick thought the name familiar, which indicates a time between the late 1930s and early 1940s.

A news article reporting the last performance of Hiawatha in August 1957 supports this supposition: "Pageantry had an early beginning at the camp and several [pageants] were presented until about ten years ago [when] a majority of folks suggested [to Lily Schiele] that Hiawatha be continued from year to year."⁴ It appears that earlier efforts included less polished versions of *Hiawatha* along with other scripts like *Quest of the Evil One*. Conrad distinctly remembers playing the part of the Great Spirit in *Hiawatha* in 1946. Therefore, it appears that *Quest of the Evil One* was a precursor to the final version of *Hiawatha*. The Blue Sky Eagle dances and Indian attire could easily blend between different pageants.

Lily Schiele certainly knew about productions of *Hiawatha* in other parts of the country, including in Boy Scout camps. As her knowledge and skill in Indian lore increased between the 1920s and the 1940s, and with the experience gained from staging Indian-themed pageants, she probably decided in the early 1940s to proceed with planning for *Hiawatha*. Indeed, her vision of staging *Hiawatha* likely influenced the



Indian pageant, probably late 1930s to early 1940s. SMNH&P



Hiawatha, Nokomis, and Minnehaha in pageant scene, 1950s. SMNH&P



Counselors in costumes prior to rehearsal, 1950s. Courtesy of Piedmont Council Headquarters.

amphitheater improvements made in 1943 with the funds that led to naming it Kistler Memorial Amphitheater.

The Hiawatha pageant presented each Thursday evening at PBSC from 1946 through the summer of 1957 represented the high-water mark of the Schieles' passion for Indian culture. It featured expertly made authentic Indian attire down to the smallest detail and a variety of tribal dances and action scenes in the setting of beautiful Kistler Memorial Amphitheater. The amphitheater, adjacent to Lake Lanier, provided an impressive outdoor stage with a large teepee and two log blockhouses. Lily Schiele, using a script based on Longfellow's poem, narrated the action from a booth above the audience seating area. The authorship of her script remains a mystery and the location of any surviving copies is unknown.

Lily meticulously planned and directed the pageant, and PBSC counselors served as cast members. The counselors arrived the first week in June to prepare the cabins, waterfront, and other facilities for the opening of camp and to rehearse for the pageant. Lily assigned costumes and specific roles for action scenes, speaking parts, and individual and group

dances. Daily rehearsals under her exacting standards kept the counselors on task and ensured that the production would be a success. Converting pale white boys into Indian braves and warriors required that they sunbathe on the roof of the assembly lodge at noon, lathered in a suntan oil and iodine mixture and wearing brief undershorts dyed tan to wear under loincloths.

The pageant consistently received positive reviews from visitors and reporters for local papers. In fact, the council enlarged Kistler in 1951 "to accommodate the growing number of parents, friends, and the public who attend the weekly Indian pageant each Thursday night."⁵ The lake-side setting, the authentic costumes and dances, and the moving passages of Hiawatha's mission and travails, so effectively narrated by Lily Schiele, created an enjoyable and impressive outdoor drama. It certainly created pleasant lifelong memories for the counselors who were a part of it. Selected passages of the script remain in their memory, like "He could shoot ten arrows skyward, and the tenth had left the bowstring ere the first to earth had fallen," and most still remember how to do the "double toe heel" dance step.

Jason McDaniel, a counselor in 1958, 1959, and 1960, remembers a pageant called *The Medicine Bow* replacing *Hiawatha*. The Indian costumes and dances from *Hiawatha* adapted easily to the new pageant. The author of the script was Foster Fitz-Simons, and the title page bears the inscription "Written especially for the Piedmont (N.C.) Council of the Boy Scouts of America." Bill Whisnant remembers that Fitz-Simmons was a UNC faculty member and that he received \$200 for the script.

The portrayal of Native Americans and their culture by other ethnic groups declined in the late 1960s and 1970s as Native Americans began to establish and reclaim their own cultural identity. Indeed, a Hiawatha pageant today with white performers would be a serious violation of cultural sensitivity.

Epilogue

IN 1924 BUD SCHIELE ACCEPTED the daunting challenge of bringing the Scouting movement to a large area of the western North Carolina Piedmont. The area, dotted with several small cities but mostly with small towns and rural communities, was tough terrain for introducing new concepts and ideas. In effect, his job was akin to that of a business CEO tasked with establishing profitable stores in a new territory. His organization, however, was of course different, in that the adult volunteers worked without pay, and the measure of success was not profits but the number of boys enrolled, their advancement, their community service, and the quality and number of the adult volunteers.

From today's vantage point, it's obvious that Bud Schiele had a clear understanding of the mission and the challenges it entailed. He started by developing a network of relationships with key individuals in the churches, civic clubs, schools, textile mills, and newspapers across the Piedmont area. The result, achieved gradually, was a remarkable transformation, as the potential value of Scouting began to take hold. Appointment of committed council and county officers, training sessions for Scoutmasters and troop committee members, monthly Court of Honor meetings in each county, and the establishment of an outstanding summer camp solidified the gains.

Bud Schiele firmly believed that Scouting, underpinned by the Scout Oath and Law, made a difference in the lives of young boys by providing discipline, structure, positive role models, and self-confidence. Earlier chapters describe how he kept his focus, displayed exceptional leadership, and established a strong network of inspired adult leaders at the

council and community levels. He earned the respect and admiration of council presidents and Scoutmasters alike—all the while making the benefits of Scouting available to boys of all social classes. His remarkable legacy stands alone in terms of excellence and accomplishment.

R. A. Stout, a former director of the Schiele Museum, wrote in a tribute following Bud Schiele's death, "Rarely an individual will become a legend in his own time. R. M. Schiele was such a man. He was a man totally dedicated to service to others. A perfectionist of the highest order, he believed 'If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right.'"¹

A concise and very insightful tribute was paid at a celebration in 1949 of the first twenty-five years of the Piedmont Council. Mr. Kay Dixon, the first president of the Piedmont Council, stated, "I think that 25 years ago we got the right man in the right job at the right time."²

Retirement in 1958 at the age of sixty-five concluded the first phase of Bud Schiele's remarkable career. However, the second phase was equally remarkable. A superb naturalist and wildlife photographer, he worked for several years (1959–60) as a ranger-naturalist for the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. He then devoted his life to the creation of a nature museum in Gastonia. This came to be the highly acclaimed Schiele Museum of Natural History—but that's another story.

Former Scouts in the Piedmont Council area have fond memories of Scouting and of attending camp at Lake Lanier, and they value the experiences as important influences that provided personal direction and moral guidance in their formative years. Certainly, Scouts in the Piedmont Council during the Schiele era reaped the benefits of his commitment and leadership and of the dedication and hard work of numerous adult volunteer leaders. From local troop activities in home communities to experiences at PBSC, the program emphasized, as much as possible, the tenets of the BSA organization. In that regard, thousands of boys received regular indoctrination in the Scout Oath and Law with the expectation that they enter young adulthood with a stronger moral compass, more self-reliance, and better leadership ability. Most Scouts who spent significant time in active status probably feel this is true.

Of course, assessing the long-term influence of Scouting on millions of boys is a difficult task and is the purview of professional academics. The point is that men of strong conviction believed in the Scouting movement and saw it as a way to build character and citizenship in their time. The life histories of Scouts from the Schiele years lend support to their conviction.

Appendix A: Chronology of Piedmont Council

- 1908 Lord Baden-Powell publishes *Scouting for Boys* in May.
- 1908 Kings Mountain troop formed at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church receives British charter.
- 1910 BSA organization incorporated in February.
- 1910 Hickory Troop #1 forms and receives BSA charter.
- 1913–1917 Troops form in Iredell, Catawba, and McDowell counties but many become inactive without a council organization.
- 1916 Congress grants a federal charter to the BSA providing copyright protection for all aspects of Scouting. Representative Yates Webb of Shelby introduces the bill in Congress requesting the charter.
- 1923 Piedmont Council established to serve Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Polk, and Rutherford counties.
- 1923 R. M. "Bud" Schiele hired as first Scout executive. He starts work in January 1924.
- 1923 Catawba River Council established to serve Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, and McDowell counties.
- 1925 Piedmont Boy Scout Camp (PBSC) opens first season on Lake Lanier.
- 1926 Catawba River Council Scout Executive certifies two troops at the North Carolina School for the Deaf in Morganton.

- 1926 Catawba River Council becomes defunct due to financial difficulties.
- 1926 James Adams, an African American man in Gastonia, forms the first African American troop in the Piedmont Council.
- 1927-1932 PBSC adds new facilities and equipment with much support from local civic clubs.
- 1927 Frank Swaney, a Cherokee Indian from Oklahoma, teaches Indian lore at PBSC.
- 1930-1932 Counties in the former Catawba River Council gradually transition (after demonstrating local leadership and fund-raising ability) into the Piedmont Council.
- 1932 Piedmont Council selected to host regional (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida) Boy Scout Leaders Training School at PBSC.
- 1934-1935 Wilbert Edward "Blue Sky Eagle" Hunt teaches Indian lore and tribal dances at PBSC.
- 1934-1950 PBSC continues to add new facilities and equipment and to purchase more land around the cove where the camp is located. Thirty-seven lots acquired in 1939 and thirty-five more in 1944. Permanent diving tower built in 1939.
- 1935 The Piedmont Council is incorporated.
- 1939 A new council headquarters building in Gastonia opens.
- 1941 Fundraising started by African American community to establish a camp at Crowder's Mountain near Gastonia.
- 1941 PBSC amphitheater upgraded and named in honor of Frederick Kistler of Morganton.
- 1941-1946 Several Indian pageants and performances presented at PBSC, including *Quest of the Evil One* and possibly earlier versions of *Hiawatha*.
- 1943 James Adams hired as the first African American Scout executive.
- 1943 PBSC dining lodge burns; campaign to fund and construct new facility is successful for the opening of the 1944 season.
- 1944-1952 Polio epidemics in the western Piedmont counties shorten the PBSC camping seasons of 1944, 1948, and 1952.
- 1945 Piedmont Council Trust Fund established.

- 1946-1957 Lily Schiele stages the signature version of the Hiawatha pageant that runs each summer on Thursday nights through 1957.
- 1948 A. C. Warlick becomes assistant Scout executive. He transfers to another council after five years and J. T. "Tommy" Rankin becomes assistant Scout executive.
- 1950 Stationary diving platform constructed at PBSC to replace existing floating raft.
- 1950-1957 The Piedmont Council experiences steady growth in enrollments, numbers of troops, attendance at PBSC, and financial security.
- 1951 Kistler Memorial Amphitheater has additional improvements to accommodate the increased number of visitors to the Hiawatha pageant.
- 1952 Pit latrines replaced by flush toilets.
- 1954 Installation of a sixteen-thousand-gallon water storage tank at PBSC alleviates water shortages.
- 1957 PBSC acquires 126 acres of adjoining land behind the row of cabins, including Jake's Mountain.
- 1958 Bud Schiele retires in March. Mr. Gene Jones, an experienced Scout executive, replaces him.
- 1960 PBSC renamed Schiele Scout Reservation in honor of Bud and Lily Schiele.
- 1970 The Carver African American district is merged into the other districts and Camp James becomes the Council Training Camp.
- 1981 Schiele Scout Reservation moves to a larger site in Rutherford County. The site and facilities on Lake Lanier are purchased by private interests.

Appendix B: PBSC Bugle Call Schedule

(As recalled by Newton MacCormack, camp bugler in the 1950s)

6:30 A.M. *First Call/Reveille.* These two bugle calls signaled that it was time for campers to get up, visit the latrines and shower houses, and get ready for breakfast. Since there was not supposed to be any talking or noise at all between "Taps" the night before and "First Call," there was often a barrage of loud greeting of the new day emanating from the cabins.

7:00 A.M. *Mess Call/Assembly.* As in the military services (the origin of all bugle calls), "Mess Call" is synonymous with Meal Call. Although not "official," many bugle calls have acquired lyrics over the years. Some of these contain crude language. For "Mess Call," one lyric (commonly quoted at PBSC) begins with "Soupy, soupy, soupy, come and get your beans. . ."

At PBSC, the bugle call "Assembly" signaled that it was time for all campers to gather in the assembly lodge. For meals, after a Troop-by-Troop reporting of whether all members were present, there was an orderly procession to the dining lodge.

8:15 A.M. *Officers Call/Sick Call.* Mr. Schiele and his assistant camp director would meet each morning with the troop leaders to discuss various camp items of interest.

"Sick Call" signaled a time when campers with non-urgent medical complaints could report to the medical dispensary.

9:00 A.M. *Assembly* (for Scout Craft period) [I don't recall that there was a special bugle call representing Scout Craft per se]. After troop roll call, each counselor responsible for teaching a particular merit badge or rank topic escorted his group of Scouts to the appropriate site for his class.

10:10 A.M. *Recall.* This was a signal for all Scoutcraft activities to cease and for the campers to return to their cabins and prepare for swim period.

10:30 A.M. *Swim Call/Assembly.* After gathering in the assembly lodge, campers would proceed to the waterfront for swim period.

12:00 P.M. *Mess Call/Assembly.* By this time, the campers had checked out of the waterfront, returned to their cabins, and dressed for lunch. As with breakfast, they first gathered in the assembly lodge and then proceeded to the dining lodge for lunch.

After lunch, campers could go to the canteen in the rear of the assembly lodge if they wanted to buy candy, postcards, etc. Then there was a rest period until the afternoon Scout craft period.

2:10 P.M. *Assembly* (for Scout Craft period).

3:20 P.M. *Recall.*

3:40 P.M. *Swim Call/Assembly.*

6:00 P.M. *Mess Call/Assembly.* Once a week, after supper (often while many campers were still visiting the canteen), the bugler would sound "Retreat" and "To the Colors" at the two flagpoles between the dining and assembly lodges. These bugle calls were signals for all campers and counselors to stand at attention while the American and BSA flags were lowered.

8:00 P.M. *Assembly.* Each evening there was a program as described in chapter 9.

9:30 P.M. *Call to Quarters.* After the evening assembly, Scouts returned to their cabins. By the time "Call to Quarters" sounded they were supposed to be either in or headed for their cabins.

9:40 P.M. *Taps.* This is probably the best-known bugle call of them all. At PBSC it meant that all talking by campers was supposed to end for the day.

On Friday nights, it was customary for two buglers to sound "Echo Taps." At PBSC this involved a second bugler, at some distance from the first bugler, repeating "Taps" after the first bugler had finished. Then, sometimes a performance of the song "No Place Like Home" was sounded by one of the buglers playing a cornet or trumpet.

Notes

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The story of the Boy Scouts in the foothills of western North Carolina is one of innovation, strong leadership, and persistence in the face of enormous challenges. From its beginnings in the small community of Kings Mountain in 1908, the Scouting movement in the eleven counties overseen by the Piedmont Council gave opportunities for learning and growth to many young North Carolinians in the mid-twentieth century.

Scouting's achievements in the western North Carolina foothills owed much to the efforts of R. M. "Bud" Schiele and his wife, Lily. Their managerial skill and cultivation of local support from businesses, churches, and community leaders were critical to the growth of Scouting.

Boy Scouting in the North Carolina Foothills, 1908–1958 recounts the many changes that affected Scouting over the years, from increasing urbanization to wars to the civil rights movement. It focuses especially on the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp, active on Lake Lanier from 1925 to 1981. Little-known documents from local archives and the recollections of former Scouts, many now in their seventies and eighties, bring the story to life.



Harvey Hamrick is a retired pediatrician living in Chapel Hill with his wife, Ann. In the 1950s, he spent five summers as a counselor at the Piedmont Boy Scout Camp near Tryon, North Carolina. The process of researching and writing this book was a creative outlet for his occasional unfocused energy—a benefit much appreciated by Ann.

HAMRICK PRESS

ISBN-13: 978-0-578-57663-3



51495

9 780578 576633