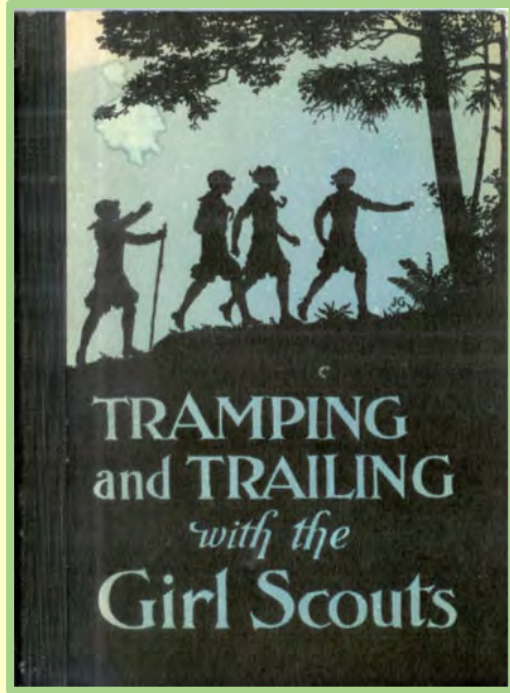


TRAMPING and TRAILING with the GIRL SCOUTS



Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum





Irresistible days occur at almost any season of the year when a desire wakes in every girl's heart to go adventuring over the hills, to feel the soft turf under foot, to smell the fragrant wood fire and to get into friendly touch with nature's enchantments.

In joyous answer to this call the Girl Scout goes tramping away from paved roads and the hum of out-of-doors with the responsiveness of her own high heart. She knows the rhythmic swing that puts the miles lightly behind her, the glory of an unfolding panorama, and the tantalizing beckoning of the horizon. With her patrol mates she has great fun facing wind and weather and cooking over open fires.

-From Tramping and Trailing With the Girl Scouts,
Girl Scouts, Incorporated, Revised 1930

From the very beginning outdoor activities such as hiking and camping have been an important part of Girl Scouting. Founded on March 12, 1912, the Girl Scouts of America organization has provided a variety of opportunities for being outdoors — as well as making friends, learning new skills, and serving others.

HOW did SCOUTING BEGIN?

In 1907, the acclaimed British General, Sir Robert Baden-Powell published *Scouting for Boys* and organized the first Boy Scout troops. The young scouts could learn the ways of army scouts. Scouting for Boys included chapters with titles such as Camp Life, Tracking, Woodcraft and Chivalry. Girls wanted to become scouts too, so the Girl Guides were soon created with Baden-Powell's sister Agnes in charge.



Right: Sir Robert Baden-Powell with President William Howard Taft in 1911. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division

Left: Juliette Gordon Low with her pet parrot, date unknown.



When Juliette Gordon Low met the Baden-Powells in England she was inspired by the new youth movement. With their support, she returned to the United States to begin Girl Guides here. In March 1912 Low telephoned a distant cousin, who was a good friend, and proclaimed, “I’ve got something for all the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!” On March 12 she gathered 18 girls and they were registered as American Girl Guides. The girls loved the new organization, but midway through the first year they asked if the name could be changed to Girl Scouts. “Scouts” reminded them of their pioneer heritage.

The time was right for scouting. Changes in the economy and the adoption of compulsory school and child labor laws meant fewer youths were working full-time. They were more available for activities with their peers, and some adults felt supervised organizations were needed to prevent delinquency.



By the beginning of the 20th century the growth of cities and industrialization had fostered a yearning for nature — wealthy urbanites sent their children to summer camps so they could experience “rustic living”. President Theodore Roosevelt’s extensive record demonstrates the popularity of nature at this time. During his presidency 150 National Forests, 51 Federal Bird Reservations, Four National Game Preserves and 21 Reclamation Projects were designated! Scouting promoted interest in the outdoors, wilderness and wildlife.



Camp Bradley, Maryland in the 1930s

GIRL SCOUTING COMES to ALEXANDRIA



The St. Agnes Girl Scouts as they appeared in the 1940 school yearbook.
Courtesy of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School Archives, Alexandria, VA



Helen Day

Courtesy of Bernice Lee



Edith Allen

Courtesy of Bernice Lee

The first Girl Scout troop in Alexandria was formed in 1935 at St. Agnes, an Episcopal school with a campus on Fontaine Street. One of the teachers, Hendricka Stebbins, was the leader. Over the years St. Agnes has sponsored Brownies for younger girls, Girl Scouts — composed of sixth and seventh graders, and Mariner Scouts for girls 14 years old and older.

The first troops for African American girls were started in 1939 by Hopkins House, a community center founded to support African American families. Helen Day was the leader for the Brownie troop — they met at Lyles-Crouch School. Mrs. Day was a teacher who had been involved in founding Hopkins House. Edith Allen, also on the staff of the community center, was the Girl Scout troop leader. Their meetings took place at the Hopkins House building on Gibbon Street. The organization later sponsored Cadette Girl Scouts, grades 7 through 9 — a new level of scouting offered in the 1960s.



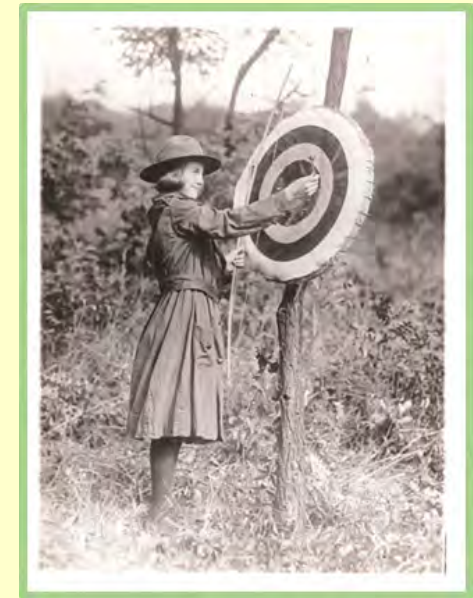
June 8, 1939 - These District 7 troops were “reviewed” by the King and Queen of England near the White House.

Girl Scout troops located close to each other formed area councils which supported troop activities by coordinating available leadership, facilities and funding. The Alexandria Council was established in 1938 but did not include African American troops. At this time all African American troops throughout the Washington area were under the auspices of the District 7 organization.

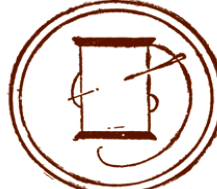
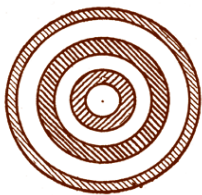
Today the Girl Scout Council of the Nation’s Capital includes all troops in Washington D.C., as well as troops from ten counties in Virginia, six in Maryland, and from five counties in West Virginia.

BEING a GIRL SCOUT

There have probably always been clubs — and youth organizations can provide a structure for young people to explore new things. Girl Scouting fostered self sufficiency by teaching both domestic tasks and knowledge and skills beyond the sphere of home life such as camping and woodcraft, physical fitness, citizenship training and career preparation. All scouts work on learning different skills by meeting the requirements for proficiency badges representing different subjects. For example, Archer, Electrician, Hostess, Junior Citizen, Needlewoman, Scribe and Wild Flower Finder are a sampling of the badges described in the 1932 Girl Scout Handbook.



Camp Bradley, Maryland in the 1930s



The meeting minutes of the Hopkins House board note some of their Girl Scout activities in the 1940s. One summer there was a day camp for scouts. Special celebrations included a party for the anniversary of Girl Scouts and a party sponsored by the Brownies in honor of their leader, Helen Day. Troop member Lillian Patterson remembers having cook-outs, taking hikes, visiting hospitals to sing carols, and participating in Girl Scout programs in Washington. She went on to become a leader, and a staff member for the national organization. As a professional Girl Scout, Lillian worked on developing new African American troops in northwest Florida.



Camp Pleasant 1947



The St. Agnes Girl Scouts produce the school's annual Candlelight Service at Christmas time. The school yearbooks note some of their activities over the years such as roller skating and arts and crafts, hiking, and cook-outs. Service projects have included making stuffed animals for the hospital, earning money to send clothing and blankets to children in Algeria, and making colorful scrapbooks for patients at Anderson's Orthopedic Clinic.

Camp Bradley, Maryland in the 1930s

GIRL SCOUTS out and about in ALEXANDRIA



Alexandria Girl Scouts parade in front of The Lyceum, ca. 1950.

Courtesy of the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital

Parading Girl Scout troops pause at the corner of Prince and St. Asaph Streets, ca. 1980s.

Courtesy of the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital

A troop from St. Mary's Catholic Church in front of Alexandria's Union Station in the late 1930's.

Courtesy of Jeanne Plitt



THE LITTLE HOUSE



A cooking demonstration at Little House, 1925.

Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress,
Prints & Photographs Division



The cornerstone for the Girl Scout “Little House” was laid by First Lady Grace Coolidge in 1924. Located at 1750 New York Avenue, Northwest, in Washington, the house was described as a modernized reproduction of the John Howard Payne home on Long Island. It was a gift to the Girl Scouts by the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. Troops from the Washington area visited the Little House to learn and practice domestic skills, or have a celebration. In 1935, the Girl Scouts from St. Agnes School were hostesses for a Halloween tea there — complete with a grand march by the costumed scouts. Little House was a place Girl Scouts could showcase their activities and host visiting Scouts and dignitaries. Bernice Robinson Lee, a member of the Hopkins House Girl Scouts, remembers singing with her troop for First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in the Little House living room. Indeed, Mrs. Roosevelt described her visit that October day at Little House in her widely published newspaper column, “My Day”.

**First Lady Grace Coolidge and Lou Henry Hoover
at Little House, 1925.**

Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress,
Prints & Photographs Division

GIRL SCOUTING as reported in the *Alexandria Gazette*

Girl Scout Shabos At Agudas Achim

Annual Girl Scout Shabos will be observed at the synagogue of Cong. Agudas Achim, 1400 Russell Rd., during the regular services this Friday night at 8:15 o'clock. The entire services will be conducted by Brownies and Girl Scouts.

Rabbi Selig S. Auerbach will speak on "Let The Flame Not Be Extinguished!" Following the services an Oneg Shabat will be held in honor of the Brownies and Girl Scouts and their leaders. All Jewish Brownies and Girl Scouts are expected to attend the services in uniform.

Services on Saturday morning (Shabos Zahor) will be conducted at 9 o'clock.

Daily services will be held Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m. Evening services at 7:30.

On account of the Purim holiday there will be special Purim services held this Sunday morning during the regular Sunday School period.

March 26, 1962



BAKE SALE CARES FOR CARE—Girl Scout Troop 167 recently made a donation to CARE as the result of a Washington's Birthday bake sale. Elizabeth Blunt, left, of CARE, is receiving the troop's contribution from Scout Janet Allen, 12, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Allen, 1104 Quincy St. Janet is a seventh-grader at George Mason School. (Photo by Eddie Allen)

Hallowe'en Tea

The twenty-four Girl Scouts of Troop 104, St. Agnes were hostesses at a Hallowe'en tea yesterday afternoon at the Little House, with members of their troop committee as guests, including Mrs. Helen A. Macan, Mrs. S. Lee Tucker, Mrs. Chas. Sarle, Mrs. Taylor Burke, Mrs. John F. Landis, Mrs. Walter DuBois Brookings, Mrs. Lewis Payne, and Mrs. Vernon Bundy, as well as the troop officers, Captain Henrika Stebbins, Mrs. Donald Roberts and Mrs. Marian Cabell, lieutenants. After a grand march of the Scouts in costume the committee awarded Miss Nancy Washington the first prize as the most attractive, Miss Miss Barbara Hulfish, the prize as the most original and Miss Barbara McFarlane honors for being the funniest. Miss Molly Thompson was chairman of the refreshment committee, assisted by Miss Marianna Kyle and Miss Patty Sarle.

November 2, 1935

March 15, 1957

TRAMPING and TRAILING for OVER 100 YEARS



More than 50 million American women participated in Girl Scouting during their childhood. Today, there are 2.5 million Girl Scouts—1.7 million girl members and 750,000 adult members working primarily as volunteers.

Were you a Girl Scout? Are you a Girl Scout? Perhaps you participated in another club, or a team, when you were growing up. Take a moment and reflect on your participation in youth organizations and what those experiences meant to you.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GIRL SCOUTING

Girl Scouts of the USA, www.girlscouts.org

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, www.gscnc.org

Ann Robertson, *Girl Scout History Project*, www.gshistory.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This online presentation was drawn from a 2009 gallery exhibition. Staff gratefully acknowledges archivist Julie Lineberry for making the resources of the Girl Scouts of Nation's Capital available, and for assisting with exhibition development.

We also thank the following for their collaboration and support:

Joyce Ames
Laura Beach
Amy Bertsch
H. Anne Bolen
Barbara Craley

Jennifer Lane
Bernice Lee
Paul Levett
Alden O'Brien
Lillian Patterson

Jeanne Plitt
Susan Reynolds
Newbie Richardson
Robert Schurk
Kristin Young

The DAR Museum
Hopkins House
Local History and Special Collections,
Alexandria Library
St. Stephens & St. Agnes School





TRAMPING and TRAILING with the GIRL SCOUTS

Online Exhibition, March 2021

Alexandria History
Museum at The Lyceum

