

BRIDGES & TRAILS

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL SCOUTING MUSEUM  ISSUE 1, 2012



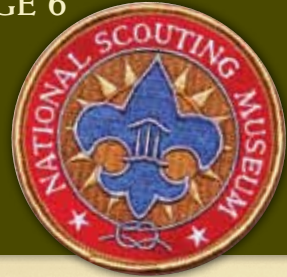
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THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA AND LITERATURE FOR YOUTH: 1910-1935

by Corry Kanzenberg, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

At the turn of the twentieth century, America witnessed a wave of urbanization as settlement rapidly advanced westward. While more individuals sought employment and residence within cities, concerns arose among the populace that American boys would grow up detached from the out-of-doors. The Boy Scouts of America formed as a means by which to provide outdoor education and build character, and they saw it as their duty to provide quality reading material that further emphasized their ideals.

The first major publication of the Boy Scouts was the 1910 *Boy Scouts of America: Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life-craft*, co-written by Ernest Thompson Seton and Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell. The *Handbook* quickly became the best-selling volume for American boys, with 100,000 copies sold per year through 1914 (Mathews, F.K., 1914, 223). As the popularity of Scouting grew over the decades, the book was revised and reprinted, and by 1935, the *Handbook* had sold five million copies. In a ceremony conducted at the White House, the five-millionth *Handbook* was presented to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Murray, W.D., 1937, 404).

From the moment the organization was first founded in America, publishers began to produce books that benefited from Scouting's popularity. Scouts were featured in over one hundred full-length novels published between 1911 and 1914 (Holsinger, M.P., 1989, 178). Innumerable books that used the Boy Scout name were published without the official endorsement of the organization. Many of these were nickel-novels that fictionalized Scouts in stories of adventure, heroism, and bravery. Titles included *Boy Scouts on Motorcycles* (1912), *Boy Scouts on War Trails in Belgium* (1915), and *Boy Scouts in a Submarine* (1912), among others. A handful of authors dominated the market by writing serialized novels exclusively for one publishing house. G. Harvey Ralphson

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Images (from top to bottom), book covers for Pee-Wee Harris: *As Good as His Word*, Roy Blakeley in the *Haunted Camp*, and Tom Slade at *Black Lake* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh.

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YOU AND THE MUSEUM...

by Rick Bragga, Museum Committee Chairman



The National Scouting Museum is more than just a Scouting attic filled with great Scouting treasures and memorabilia. It's also: a fine art museum, a children's museum, a historical records center and finally, a venue at which to have events. That variety of activity requires a wide range of volunteer support. I am privileged to chair the national committee of volunteers that is responsible for helping to set direction, provide oversight, and implement programs on behalf of the museum.

There's a place for you at the National Scouting Museum. Where do you fit? Here are just a few possibilities:

- Docent – a volunteer who gives tours and assists in museum operation
- Visitor – either in person or online
- Ambassador – know and tell the museum's story and provide feedback from those you meet
- Liaison – connect and engage with your council's or other local Scouting museums and serve as a link between them and the national museum
- Historian – work with troop and other local Scouting historians to develop their positions and promote the heritage and visibility of Scouting throughout your community
- Supporter – give what you can, when you can. Scouting museums, local and national, need more than just memorabilia and time; we also need contributions.

Help us to preserve and promote the value and history of the Boy Scouts of America. If you have suggestions or ideas of how we can improve the National Scouting Museum or achieve greater impact, please email me at photoeagle@nesa.org. 🌟

All the best,

Rick Bragga

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Janice Babineaux, Executive Director



In addition to financial support that the National Scouting Museum receives from members like you, it is also fortunate to have the support of volunteer docents and a national volunteer committee. We have a wonderful team of dedicated docents, some of whom you have met through the pages of this publication. They come into the museum each day and help deliver a quality museum experience to our visitors and our outreach audiences. The National Scouting Museum committee is a standing committee of the BSA National Executive Board. It too consists of several committed volunteers who come together several times a year, from various locations throughout the U.S., and contribute their experienced leadership to help guide the current and future work of the museum.

Beginning with this issue, *Bridges & Trails* will feature a message from our National Scouting Museum Committee chairperson. Our current one, Rick Bragga is a Distinguished Eagle Scout. He has been active in Scouting for over fifty years and has received numerous Scouting awards and recognition including the Silver Antelope and the Silver Beaver. As well, Rick has a wealth of experience and expertise in many types of charitable organizations.

The National Scouting Museum is indeed fortunate and appreciative to have such a wide base of support in its mission to preserve the legacy of Scouting and promote the movement to future generations. As always, thank you for your continued support and for all you do for Scouting! 🌟

J. Babineaux

2012 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL	14	Pinewood Derby race
MAY	12	Cub Scout Push Cart Derby
JUNE	14	Flag Day Celebration
JULY	16	Israeli Scouts Performance
AUGUST	11	Eagle Scout Heritage Celebration
SEPTEMBER	29	Bike Safety Day
OCTOBER	20	55 th Jamboree-on-the-Air

IN THE SPOTLIGHT—GALE FOLLETT

by Gale Follett, Museum Docent

In October 1974 my then 7-year-old son Bill said he wanted to be a Cub Scout. I called the Narragansett Council office in Providence, Rhode Island, and the receptionist asked me where we lived. I said Charlestown, she said we don't have a pack there. I said I will start one AND I will be a leader! Three days later the DE was at my door and as they say, "...the rest is history"; Pack 15 Charlestown RI was chartered to the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit.

For 9½ years I had the time of my life with my two sons, Bill and Chris, and their friends (my Cub Scouts) as the COR, CC, DL, and even Webelos Leader (women were not permitted to be a WL, CM, or SM during the 1970s). In 1975 we started Troop 15, also chartered by the same church.

In 1982 William E. Follett Jr. became an Eagle Scout and in 1983 I was commissioned a Professional Scouter, the Special Scouting Executive in Narragansett Council. My son Christopher J.C. Follett passed his Eagle Board of Review in 1985, making me the proud mother of two Eagle Scouts! In 1986 I was promoted to Senior District Executive and during my 9½-year tenure in Rhode Island I worked at the 1985 and 1989 National Jamborees, directing the Handicapped Awareness Trail.

Also during my very happy years in Rhode Island, the Special Scouting Division designed and constructed the Donald H. Cady Accessible Campsite for Scouts with physical and mental challenges, at Yawgoog Scout Reservation.

The National Supply Division brought me to Irving, Texas on November 1, 1992, as the first female National Sales Representative. And for 5½ years I served the 39 Councils and 115 Scouting Distributors in New England and New Jersey. What a surprise I would have such a territory! Once again I worked National Jamborees, 1993 and 1997, as Manager of the Mini-Marts in the "famous" Trading Post C, having the pleasure of 21 days, each time in a "well-appointed" GP Medium tent with five other ladies.

With the reorganization of the Supply Division in 1998 I was transferred to Columbus, Ohio, to manage the Simon Kenton Scout Shop. I enjoyed the position but missed my many friends in Dallas, prompting me to take early retirement in July 1999 and move back to Plano, Texas.

After two years of trying other careers I re-entered the profession I loved the most and once again became a Senior District Executive in the Longhorn Council on November 1, 2001. I moved to Tarrant County and served Roadrunner and Silver Star Districts until my real retirement on November 1, 2007. During those years I made lifelong friends and served as Business Manager for the three Council Camps: Sid Richardson Scout Ranch, Worth Ranch, and Tahauya Scout Camp. Texas is sure bigger than Rhode Island! The weekly visit to all three was over 375 miles round trip!

Currently I am a proud member of the Roadrunner District Committee, serving as 2011 Rally Chairman, as well as a Committee Member of Troop 509 Hurst, Texas.

In February of this year my grandson Ben Follett received his Arrow of Light in Pack 13 Cumberland, Maine, and joined Troop 58 Cumberland-North Yarmouth along with his father, Bill.

I know that for the last 37 years Scouting has been a moving force in my life! Knowing that three of my nephews are also Eagle Scouts, along with the thousands of boys and girls my efforts may have helped in some small way, my Scouting career has been a JOY! All because of what a 7-year-old wanted to do in 1974. 🌟

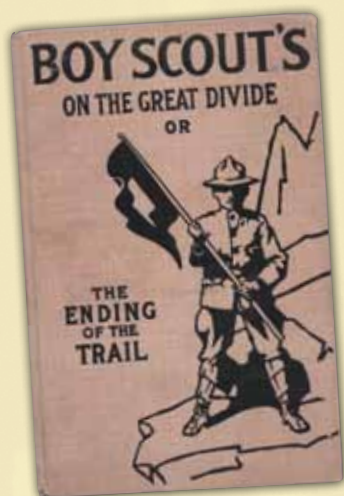


THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA AND LITERATURE FOR YOUTH: 1910-1935

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wrote twenty such books for M.A. Donahue & Company between 1911 and 1916, completing as many as five novels in a single year. Donahue also published twelve Boy Scout novels by the fictitious "Major Archibald Lee Fletcher," in 1913, which were actually ghostwritten by Ralphson (Holsinger, M.P., 1989, 178). Between 1912 and 1919, the Saalfield Publishing Company released twenty-four titles credited to Colonel George Durston, another fictional author. This series was in fact compiled by four ghostwriters.

The leadership of the organization was critical of these books, which did not embody the ideals of their brand nor the spirit of Scouting that they wished to promote. In *Boy Scout's* [sic] *On The Great Divide* (Fletcher, A.L., 1913), for example, Scouts on a campout use revolvers to thwart off a band of adult foes. Additionally, Scouts of the unauthorized novels, especially Ralphson's, disliked the outdoors and held little respect for nature in general, indiscriminately killing bald eagles, bears, and other game, typically with guns. Overall, the books were undesirable to the Boy Scouts of America for their reckless and lowbrow portrayal of Scouts. But as Scouting captured the imagination of Americans, the Boy Scouts capitalized on the fiction market themselves, and used their power to influence a generation of young readers.



Boy Scout's on the Great Divide or The Ending of the Trail, 1913

Rather than allowing outside publishers to continue exploiting the Boy Scout image, the organization created a Library Department to help launch the Scouts into their own publishing endeavors (aside from the already best-selling *Handbook*). In 1912, they hired Franklin K. Mathiews, a Baptist minister, to oversee the new department and fill the role of Chief Scout Librarian. He was charged with altering the problematic image of Scouting created by unauthorized books on the subject. He denounced nickel-novels on Scouting, and with limited success, encouraged booksellers and publishers to pull the titles from their lists (Holsinger, M.P., 1989, 179).

In 1913, Mathiews and West began leading the Boy Scouts into new publishing enterprises, and a Library Commission was formed, comprising nationally noted librarians and academicians. In that year's annual report, Mathiews explained, "To protect our Movement and to help anxiously concerned parents and educators to meet the grave peril of the 'nickel novel' and the menace of mediocrity and viciousness found in other cheap juveniles, the Library Commission of our Movement was organized . . ." (Boy Scouts of America, 1914, 61-62). The Commission was to select a series of books focused on adventure and heroism for republication under the organization's name. Known as the *Every Boy's Library*, the first twenty-five books in the series were issued in partnership with Grossett & Dunlap in 1913. At a cost of fifty cents per volume, the books were intentionally inexpensive so that families could afford them. A number of rereleased classics were included such as Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*, *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper. Several books were published for the first time in this series, including *The Boy Scouts of Black Eagle Patrol* by Leslie W. Quirk. The front matter of each book included an introduction by West. In his message, he noted that the Boy Scouts felt obligated to nurture boys' minds with quality literature, which augmented their program of outdoor activity (West, J., 1913, v-vi).

The first editions of the *Every Boy's Library* sold over 71,000 copies six weeks after their initial publication (Boy Scouts of America, 1914, 62). In its second year, the *Every Boy's Library* saw the sale of 175,000 books (Boy Scouts of America, 1915, 62). The Boy Scouts were the recipients of much critical acclaim for their work with children's literature, and Mathiews was invited to speak before the National Education Association and the American Library Association.

The Library Department also reviewed manuscripts from outside publishers, thereby enabling them to halt the production of volumes that could have portrayed Scouting in a manner disagreeable to the organization. In the *Annual Report* for 1914, Mathiews decried pulp nickel-novels on Scouting, or what he referred to as "The Menace of the Cheap Boy Scout Story Books" (Boy Scouts of America, 1915, 63). His impassioned writing provided outlandish and unverifiable examples of the ways in which publishers commissioned and marketed these unauthorized books on Scouting. He claimed that one author of a popular Boy Scout series was committed to an asylum for the insane, another wrote books under the guise of twelve different names, and still others authored twenty-five to fifty cheap books in a single calendar year. Much to Mathiew's dismay, even a press agent for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was alleged to

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have written pulp novels on Scouting. In response, the price of *Every Boy's Library* books was dropped from fifty to twenty-five cents per novel, in order to directly contend with the prices of newly bound volumes of unauthorized Scout literature (Boy Scouts of America, 1915, 59-64).

By 1916 the Library Department was considered an integral part of the organization as a whole. Ten additional titles were added to the *Every Boy's Library*, and total sales for the books numbered 268,748 over two and a half years (Boy Scouts of America, 1916, 64). Using the Scout-owned magazine, *Boys' Life*, as another venue from which to promote their mission, the Library Department began regularly contributing as many as fifty book reviews per issue. This allowed Mathiews and his team to gain further control over the books that were marketed to Scouts, as *Boys' Life* circulation reached 100,000 subscribers by 1917, and continued to grow significantly in the years that followed.



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt Receiving BSA Handbook, 1935

Toward the end of 1915, the Library Commission hired authors who could produce new serialized books on Scouting under their auspices. Percy K. Fitzhugh's *Scouting Along the Mohawk Trail* (1913) found success with its initial publication in the *Every Boy's Library*, and subsequently Mathiews invited the established journalist and author of children's literature to write a series of fictional Scout books. These became known as the *Tom Slade* series, of which nineteen novels were produced. The character of Slade, a poor boy from Bridgeboro, New Jersey, was cast as a Huckleberry Finn type, whose life was changed by Scouting. Frequently finding himself in trouble, Slade is saved in each novel by falling back on his commitment to the Scouting program. So well-liked was the series that it stood second in popularity only to the *Tom Swift* series by Victor Appleton (Holsinger, M.P., 1989, 180). Sales of the books helped to curb the prevalence of nickel-novels and other "trashy books" (Boy Scouts of America, 1919, 118) deemed unsuitable for youth by Mathiews and his team. In light of the broad success of the *Tom Slade* series, Fitzhugh authored additional Scouting novels. In 1920, the first books from Fitzhugh's *Roy Blakeley* series were published. In 1922, he introduced the *Pee-Wee Harris* series, which would grow to fourteen novels. To this day, Harris is still familiar to Scouters through a popular monthly comic strip featured in *Boys' Life* magazine.

In addition to the *Every Boy's Library* and other initiatives, the Boy Scouts endorsed fiction that they viewed as worthwhile literature for children, citing the pressing need for quality juvenile fiction in America. The Library Department also provided booklists to parents and schools. In 1915, the Library Department introduced the first national book week. This was initially known as "Safety First Juvenile Book Week," then "Good Book Week," followed later by "Children's Book Week" (Murray, W.D., 1937, 404). The Boy Scouts partnered with the American Library Association and the Parent Teachers Association to launch this annual reading program in order to promote quality literature for youth, and it is still celebrated each year.

During the Great Depression, the Boy Scouts lost ground in the publishing business, as the collapse of Wall Street paralyzed the book market generally (Holsinger, M.P., 1989, 181). When the novelty of Scouting itself waned after its first two decades in America, so too did the novelty of fictional Boy Scout tales. The Chief Scout Librarian remained a fixture at the organization through 1935; Mathiews used his role to influence the motion picture industry and promote reading among youth by partnering with libraries and schools (Boy Scouts of America, 1930, 186-187). That same year, the Library Department was replaced by a Reading Program Service, whose central purpose was to develop annual lists of literature deemed worthwhile for children (Murray, W.D., 1937, 406).

So successful were books on Scouting that millions of authorized and unauthorized publications alike were circulated among American boys between 1910 and 1935. The influence of the Boy Scouts of America on children's literature cannot be underestimated during the early years of the twentieth century. From the phenomenal success of the Boy Scout *Handbook* to the fictional literature produced and endorsed by a focused and determined Library Department, the sheer volume of their output in this realm is impressive. 🌟

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NSM Ornament
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NSM Playing Cards
Item# 610658
\$8.57



NSM Salt & Pepper Shakers
Item# 520603
\$12.95



NSM Golf Ball
Item# 520617
\$2.95



NSM Cap
Item# 612990
\$14.99



Wooden Pick Up
Sticks
Item# 520788
\$8.00



NSM Pen & Pencil Set,
with case
Item# 520616
\$34.95



NSM Cub Scout
Belt Loop
Item# 613024
\$1.79



NSM Traveler Tumbler
(purple, silver, or red)
Item# 610664
\$15.95



NSM Hiking Staff
Medallion
Item# 613063
\$4.99



NSM Magnet
Item# 613062
\$6.99



NSM Toothpick Holder
Item# 610660
\$4.99



NSM Mouse Pad
Item# 610659
\$6.94



NSM T-Shirt
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\$8.99-11.99



NSM Belt Buckle
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\$14.99



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Item# 610661
\$3.75



NSM Carabiner with Keychain
(blue, red, green, orange, or silver)
Item# 613118
\$1.29



NSM Wristband
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Item# 520779
\$1.25

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ITEM	ITEM#	PRICE
<i>BADEN-POWELL: The Two Lives of a Hero</i> by William Hillcourt with Olave, Lady Baden-Powell (not pictured)	340990	\$45.99
NSM Blue Optic Mug (not pictured)	612909	\$6.99
NSM Black Cap (not pictured)	612990	\$14.99
NSM Window Cling (not pictured)	612932	\$2.99
NSM Domed Sticker (not pictured)	612933	\$3.99



Vintage Game Tin —
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