

Doctoral Thesis
College of Commissioner Science

THE HISTORY OF SEA SCOUTS IN AMERICA
AND
THE CURRENT STATE OF SEA SCOUTS IN
MIDDLE TENNESSEE COUNCIL

By

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Preface-

I have been a Scout leader for over 16 years. I have enjoyed my tenure in various leadership positions in Packs, Troops, Crew, Ships, District, and Council. However, as a Sea Scout leader I have found myself continually having to explain what Sea Scouts is. Most everyone you run into indicates that they have never heard of Sea Scouts despite the fact that Sea Scouts just celebrated their 100th anniversary. It is a wonderful program, and if more people knew about it, I have no doubt its membership numbers would be stronger. It is my hope, by selecting Sea Scouting as my thesis topic, to further advance the Sea Scouting program by making others aware of its presence in their communities.

DOCTORAL THESIS

Sea Scouts is a little-known program which is a part of the Boy Scouts of America. Many in the Boy Scout community are unfamiliar as to the nature and purpose of the Sea Scout program, or more likely, oblivious to its existence in any form. The Sea Scouts program, while small in numbers, is active in Middle Tennessee Council.

Lord Sir Robert Baden-Powell began the Scouting movement in 1908 in England. Then in 1910, two important changes came to Scouting. First, Boy Scouts of America was founded in the United States. Second, Lord Baden-Powell decided that the older Scouts should have the opportunity to learn about boat management and seamanship. So, with the help of his brother, Warington, Sea Scouts was officially launched. In order for a boy to qualify to join, he had to be a first-class Scout or above, which is why the Sea Scout emblem is the Boy Scout First-Class emblem superimposed over an anchor. (see Appendix image) Warington Baden-Powell wrote a book called *Sea Scouting and Seamanship for Boys*. Consequently, Sea Scouting in America was founded in 1912. Arthur A. Carey of Massachusetts was appointed Chairman of the National Council Committee on Sea Scouting. A pamphlet came out in 1915 to help direct leaders as to which seamanship skills to teach.

“From 1912 to 1917, Sea Scouting struggled through a difficult period. And yet, with little or no national guidance, it managed to grow. In addition, G. V. L. Meyer,

Secretary of the Navy, in February 1913, encouraged the development of Sea Scouting and extended the cooperation of the Navy Department.” The Sea Scout program was encouraged to thrive by the armed services and especially the Department of the Navy. In 1917, Sea Scouting was greatly bolstered when James Austin Wilder became Director of the Department of Sea Scouting of the Boy Scouts of America. He organized the Sea Scouts and generated the first Sea Scout Manual in 1919. This is when Sea Scout units began to be called ‘ships’ and began using the terms of skipper, mate, boatswain, crew, etc.

The adult leadership in the ship is similar to Venturing. The advisor in Venturing is the same in leadership duties to that of skipper and the associate advisor is the same as mate. The ship also operates under a committee with a committee chairman and committee members. The youth leadership in the ship is again similar to Venturing. The ship’s boatswain is similar in leadership duties to that of a crew’s president. The ship also has two boatswain’s mates, one in charge of program and one in charge of advancement. A crew’s secretary would have the same responsibilities as a yeoman, treasurer and purser would be equivalent, as would the crew leader position. The ship would also have a storekeeper which would be similar in nature to a crew’s quartermaster; keeping track of ship’s equipment. One role that would be different is that of specialist, who is a youth instructor.

The next several years would find Sea Scout membership changing (mostly for the better) as the program became better known. Commander Thomas J. Keane was a

great supporter of Sea Scouting, and he revised the Sea Scout program in the mid 1920s. He is responsible for many of the advancement requirements the youth complete even today, and he also revised the uniforms to match those of the United States Navy, which most Sea Scouts continue to wear today. Under his leadership, Sea Scouts went from 85 ships to 123 ships, an increase of almost 50%, in just one year. He later became the national director of Sea Scouting. “One of T.J. Keane's earliest projects was organizing the first Antarctic expedition to include a Scout. The Scout, Eagle Scout and Able Sea Scout Paul Siple of Erie Pennsylvania, ably participated in Admiral Robert Byrd's expedition of 1928-29.”

During World War II, Sea Scouts had a membership of over 27,000. Like all facets of Scouting, Sea Scouts were very involved in the war effort. “Thousands upon thousands of former and active Sea Scouts joined the Navy and made a tremendous impression on Admiral Chester Nimitz, who sincerely believed that Sea Scouts were better trained and better equipped to help the Navy win out over the enemy and the elements.”

Post-war Sea Scouts attended National Jamborees, and Ships around the United State began holding competitions known as rendezvous and regattas. These competitions are still well attended and well received today. Today, one event looked forward to by Sea Scouts since it was initiated in 2002 is the Sea Scout national sailing championships. This competition is known as the *William L. Koch International Sea Scout Cup* or the ‘Koch Cup’ for short, is named for William Koch, a famous

yachtsman and National Committee member, who has given much support to Sea Scouting. The Koch Cup competition includes Sea Scout competitors from the United States and abroad.

The older-boy programs in Boy Scouts of America were changed by order of the National Committee, and all young men who were 14 years of age or older and registered with the Boy Scouts of America became known as Explorers. Consequently, on September 1, 1949, the Sea Scouts officially became known as *Sea Explorers*. While new names were added to the roles of leadership, for nearly a quarter of a century very few changes were made to the program.

In 1971, a new National Sea Exploring Committee was formed with Morgan F. Fitch, Jr. as Chairman. The following year, Sea Exploring (along with all other phases of Exploring) officially became coed. For the first time in 62 years, females were a part of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Exploring program was again revised in 1998 and was folded into the Learning for Life Exploring program and the new Venturing Division. Sea Exploring was placed in the Venturing Division and was renamed *Sea Scouts*. A new 10th edition of the *Sea Scout Manual* was published in 2000, which extensively revised the content and organization of the handbook, as well as updating advancement and uniforming standards. Currently, Sea Scouts operate under the 12th edition of the *Sea Scout Manual* published in 2012.

Sea Scouting today is little-known, but there are Ships throughout the entire United States. While most ships are located on the coastal United States, the largest ship boasts over 100 members and is located in Kansas. It is associated with a university sailing team.

There currently 15,000 registered Sea Scouts across the nation. Sea Scouting on the national level is headed by Director of Sea Scouting, Keith Christopher (BSA professional) and the National Commodore is Charles D. Wurster (BSA volunteer). The National Boatswain is Connor Rieve. I had the pleasure of meeting the National Boatswain at National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC) this year, and in a brief conversation he indicated to me at that time that Sea Scouts is strong and thriving. The SSS Albatross, a ship out of California, has been named the National Flag Ship for 2012. (see Appendix photo) Flag Ship is an honor given based on certain criteria and selected by National Sea Scouting.

A brand new web page is under construction for Sea Scouts and will be available in the coming months (see the first link on the bibliography page). Additionally, there is also a regional boatswain and commodore. Barry Ekle is the Southern Region Commodore, and is the Southern Region Boatswain. They serve a one-year term of office for these positions from June 1st to May 31st of each year. For Middle Tennessee Council, George S. Warde is Council Commodore and Gina Beckman is Council Boatswain. Upon interviewing George Warde, he stated, "We are a growing segment of Middle Tennessee Council. Even now, additional ships are in the process of starting up;

two are in the works now.” He went on to say, “With the opportunities we are offering, growth is inevitable.” He added, “ With the additional training and support offered by the Coast Guard, Power Squadron, and the Safe Boater classes offered by Tennessee Wildlife Resources (TWRA), we will see more trained scouts and leaders in our ships.” Lastly, Commodore Warde stated, “Sea Scouting is program driven; the more we offer the more we’ll grow”.

For a land-locked state, Sea Scouting in Middle Tennessee Council is doing well, with five active Ships (see the second link on the bibliography page for a link to all 5 local ships). As stated previously, the Council Commodore is George S. Warde of Ship 360 and the Council Boatswain is Gina Beckman of Ship 851. In addition to the ship’s numeric designation, ships may choose a name for their ship, e.g. Ship 360 is called Sea Scout Ship (SSS) Cumberland, and they may design their own unique patch to represent their ship. (see Appendix image) No historical data is available regarding a prior history of Sea Scouts in Middle Tennessee Council; however, Ship 851 was founded in 1993 by Andy and Cathy Griswold and has had continuous membership since that time. In recent years, Sea Scouts of Middle Tennessee Council have sailed in the Apostle Islands in the Great Lakes, sailed in Florida on more than one occasion, attended a centennial celebration in Illinois, participated in a sailing regatta in Atlanta, Georgia (and local regattas such as the Tennessean), and several have earned their open water dive certification. Sea Scouting recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, and Middle

Tennessee Sea Scouts hosted a national event at Harbor Island Yacht Club in celebration of this milestone. (see Appendix photos)

Ships are youth led and run as much as possible. Developing friendships and social skills in addition to leadership skills is an important function of the program. In addition, the youth members learn many practical and useful skills such as fiber glassing and painting the hull; heeling the boat when it has fun aground or to clean the bottom; knot tying and line handling. I am a Mate on SSS Cumberland, and an ordinary meeting often entails an opening, rigging boats, going for a sail if there is any wind at all, discussion of upcoming events, and a closing. During sails, the youth work on their sailing skills, advancement, or they may walk the boom or have squirt gun wars. Arg! Repel all boarders!

Sea Scouts is youth led; there are several leadership positions to be filled by youth members in Sea Scouts. The Ship is run by the Ship's Boatswain. The Boatswain has two Boatswain's Mates to assist, one in administration and one in program. The Ship also has a Yeoman to keep up with secretarial duties, Purser to keep track of funds, and a Storekeeper in charge of the Ship's equipment. As needed a Ship may also have Crew Leaders (much like a Patrol Leader) and Specialist who teach a specific nautical emphasis. The unit leader in a Ship is the Skipper and other assistants are called Mates. The Ship also has a Committee Chairman and Committee. Sea Scouting has four ranks: Apprentice, Ordinary, Able, and Quartermaster. Sea Scouts can also complete specific requirements to earn the Small Boat Handler pin or the

Qualified Seaman pin. In addition, if a Sea Scout completes two weeks (14 nights) onboard ship, either consecutively or seven overnights, they can be awarded a Long Cruise patch to be worn on the uniform. (see Appendix image)

The Quartermaster award is the highest rank in Sea Scouts just at the Eagle award is the highest rank in Boy Scouts. The primary difference is that there are very few Quartermasters. Quartermaster is a rarity indeed; as best can be ascertained, as of October 2012, no Quartermaster Award has ever been earned in Middle Tennessee Council. Some of the requirements to attain the rank of Quartermaster include: piloting and navigation skills (including dead reckoning); yacht racing; engine repair; recognition and use of International Code flags and pennants (as seen on cover page); swimming/BSA Lifeguard; first aid; marlinspike seamanship (splicing, knots, etc.); boat handling; heavy weather precautions; seamanship; and environmental stewardship of waterways. In addition, the Sea Scout is required to complete a project like that required for the Eagle Scout rank.

Sea Scouts also have the opportunity to go to Sea Base in Florida, one of Boy Scouts of America's high adventure bases which offers sailing, scuba, fishing, and many other water adventures. While none of our Middle Tennessee Council Sea Scouts has attended Sea Base several Sea Scouts have attended Philmont. Three Middle Tennessee Council ships were represented in a trip to Pensacola, Florida wherein they chartered four boats for a week and formed their own high adventure program. This gave the Sea Scouts tremendous amounts of opportunity to complete rank requirements

in the unique (for Tennessee) setting of the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, when a sudden storm arose, they put their training to work, sought a sheltering eddy, set sea and anchor watches, and rode out the storm safely and without incident.

There are many educational, training opportunities for you and adults in Sea Scouts. Youth may take Venturing's Introduction to Leadership Skills for Crews (ILSC), Woodbadge (if over 18 years of age), Safety Afloat, Safe Swim Defense, Tennessee Boater Safety Certification, and Seal training. Seal training is an intense, week-long, hands-on sailing and leadership course offered at the national level. Adult leaders must take training in Venturing Leader Specific, Sea Scout Leader Specific, Youth Protection, and This is Scouting. They may also take Woodbadge, Powderhorn, and/or Sea Badge. The current Sea Badge Underway course involves both in class and hands-on sailing components. Sea Badge is offered in various regions throughout the year. (see Appendix photos)

Uniforming for Sea Scouts is very similar to that worn by the United States Navy. Most Sea Scout ships wear the traditional Sea Scout uniform, which is virtually the same as the U.S. Navy uniform. Dress whites/crackerjacks are the preferred uniform for official functions and Bridges of Honor. The work uniform of a Sea Scout is frequently the blue shirt and dungarees worn by sailors or a "Class B" shirt of their own design. The adult leaders may wear Navy whites or even salt & peppers (an older Navy design with black pants rather than white).

As Sea Scouting has the benefit of being under the Venturing umbrella, Sea Scouts have participated in many aspects of the Venturing program, including Rendezvous, Summit, Klondike, and membership on the Venturing Officers Association. In addition to earning Sea Scout awards and advancements, Sea Scouts can earn Venturing awards as well. Many Middle Tennessee Council Sea Scouts have earned Venturing Bronze, Gold, and Silver Awards. In past years, the Venturing Leadership Award was presented to William Crawley, Cory Walker, Melissa Paris, George S. Warde, and Gina Beckman, indicating a close relationship between the Sea Scouting and Venturing.

Sea Scouting has its roots firmly planted in the best traditions of the Boy Scouts of America with its origins established by Scouting's founder, Lord Sir Robert Baden-Powell. The skills Sea Scouts are learning; leadership, seamanship, stewardship, and friendship are just as vital today as they were one hundred years ago. Sea Scouts are few and far between but are maintaining Scouting's ideals and the purposes of Venturing.

The Sea Scouts promise is as follows:

As a Sea Scout I promise to do my best:

To guard against water accidents;

To know the location and proper use of the lifesaving devices on every boat I board;

To be prepared to render aid to those in need;

To seek to preserve the motto of the sea, *Women and children first.*

CONCLUSION

The Sea Scout program has been a part of the Boy Scouts of America for one hundred years, almost since its inception. Yet there is very little awareness of this program despite the fact that it offers youth high adventure opportunities. Visitors are often caught with a 'sailor's grin' when they are given the helm and the boat is heeled over nicely, which in short means they are having the time of their life. It seems counter intuitive to reconcile the joy we see in those who participate and the low membership numbers involved nationally. It is my fervent hope that the Sea Scout tradition will remain for another one hundred years and the traditions of the sea will continue to live on through our youth.

Fair Winds and Following Seas.

APPENDIX

(Images & Photos)



Youth Positions First Picture Below and Adult Positions Second Picture Below:



Photos from the 100th anniversary celebration at Harbor Island Yacht Club in Hermitage District:



Below: Sea Badge Conference SR-32 in Covington, Georgia (Barry Ekle, Regional Commodore, George Warde, Council Commodore, Toni-Lee Crawley, Mate)



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Additional Information

The candidate offers the following as her list of positions and accomplishments:

Scouting Resume of Toni-Lee Crawley

Cub Scouts:

1995-1997: Tiger Leader
1997-1998: Wolf Leader
1998-2000: Tiger Leader
2000-2001: Wolf Leader
2001-2002: Bear Leader
2002-2004: Webelos Leader

Boy Scouts:

1999-2005: Troop 360 Committee Member
2003-2011: Troop 293 Assistant Scoutmaster (Founder Award)
2011-present: Troop 302 Assistant Scoutmaster

Venturing:

2004-2006: Venturing Crew 294 Associate Advisor (Founder Award)

Sea Scouts:

2006-Present: Sea Scout Ship 360 Mate (Founder Award)
2007-Present: Sea Scout Ship 851 Committee Member

District:

1998-2001: Roundtable Staff
2001-2006: District Commissioner
2006-2008: Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner
2008-Current: Unit Commissioner
2008-2011: District Committee - Training Chairman
2012-Current: District Training Committee Member
2000-Current: Merit Badge Counselor
1999-2004: Day Camp Program Director
1997-1998: Day Camp Den Leader (Tidewater Council)

Order of the Arrow:

2005: OA Ordeal Member
2005-2012: OA Associate Adviser Atohuna Chapter
2012-Present: OA Adviser Atohuna Chapter
2006: OA Brotherhood Member
2003-2010: Merit Badge Counselor at Winter Camp (except 2004)
2008-Current: Built trails at Latimer (2008(2X), 2009, 2010(2X), 2011, 2012) = 7 times
2010: Wa-Hi-Nasa Lodge 2010 Brotherhood Adviser
2010: Wa-Hi-Nasa Lodge Concessions Adviser for Conclave at Boxwell
2010: MTC Jamboree Service Staff
2011: Wa-Hi-Nasa Lodge 2011 Chapters Adviser
2011: Vigil Honor

2012: Wa-Hi-Nasa Lodge Trading Post Adviser

2012: NOAC participant

Middle Tennessee Council:

1999-2006: WLOE Staff

1999-2006: Cub-N-Family Commissioner Staff

2003-Current: Council Jamboree Commissioner Staff

2000-2011: Merit Badge Counselor at Cumberland Merit Badge University (CMBU)

2004-2005: Merit Badge Counselor at Tennessee Tech University (TTU MBU)

1998-2011: PowWow and/or University of Scouting Staff (Instructor)

2012: University of Scouting Registration Chairman

2013: University of Scouting Registration Chairman

2006 & 2011: OLS Staff

Honors & Awards:

2004: Received Silver Beaver

2001: Received Long Rifle

1998: Cub Scouter Award

1999: Tiger Den Leader Award

2000: Cub Scout Roundtable Staff Award

2001: Den Leader Award

2002: Commissioner Arrowhead Honor

2003: Webelos Leader Award

2004: Den Leader Coach Award

2006: Commissioner Key

2005: Boy Scout Leader Award

2006: Venturing Leader Award

2009: Sea Scout Leader Award

2009: District Committee Key

2010: Distinguished Commissioner Award

2012: Long Cruise Award

Special Training:

2003: Woodbadge (MT-48)

2008: Sea Badge

2009: Powderhorn

1999: National Camping School

2000: Boy Scout BLT

2004: Boy Scout OLS

2008: Bachelors of Commissioner Science

2009: Masters of Commissioner Science

2010: Currently working on Doctorate of Commissioner Science thesis

2008: University of Scouting – Venturing Bachelors

2009: University of Scouting – Boy Scout Bachelors

2010: University of Scouting – Venturing Masters

2012: University of Scouting – Venturing Doctorate

And most importantly I am the proud mother of **3 Eagle Scouts!**