William Dickson Boyce
June 16, 1858 – June 11, 1929



W.D. Boyce was born near Pittsburgh, PA. As a boy he worked on his family's farm and spent his free time along the Allegheny River or exploring the woods near his home. He took a job teaching school when he was only sixteen years old, but he also worked for a time at a coal mine and a lumberyard. He went to college for two years in Ohio and worked for the school paper, but there is no record that he graduated.

Boyce had only just started his career in journalism before moving to Chicago in 1881. His publishing business prospered in placed like Winnipeg, Canada, and in the Dakota Territory, but he ultimately returned to Chicago. In 1887 he launched the *Saturday Blade*, a weekly national newspaper primarily for rural and small-town readers. Thousands of young boys were recruited to sell the *Blade* in their hometowns.

On the success of this and other ventures, Boyce became extremely rich. He dabbled in politics and knew many of the nation's most prominent leaders. In search of adventure (and to boost interest in his papers) he organized a series of expeditions to exotic destinations. On one such trip to Africa in 1909 Boyce encountered Scouting.

Boyce had traveled by way of London, and while in that city became lost. A young man helped him find his way and then refused a tip, explaining that Scouts did not accept payment for doing good turns. Boyce was intrigued and the young man led him to the Scout Headquarters to learn more. When he returned to America a few months later he decided to incorporate the BSA. He secured a charter from Washington, DC on February 8, 1910.

Around this tie other newspaper publishers were experimenting with boys clubs as a way to build their businesses, but when Boyce was approached by representatives of the YMCA about combining their efforts, he agreed to help. While most of the organizational duties fell to the YMCA Boys Work Secretary, Edgar M. Robinson, Boyce supported the movement financially.

By 1912 Boyce had ceased his active involvement in Scouting, but in 1915 he started a new movement for rural boys, Lone Scouting, that merged with the BSA in 1924. In 1926 the National Council of the BSA awarded Boyce the third Silver Buffalo for his service to youth. Today the W.D. Boyce Council in central Illinois bears his name.

James Edward West
May 16, 1876 – May 15, 1948



James E. West, son of James Robert and Mary F. Tyree West of Tennessee, was born in Washington, DC. The elder James is believed to have died before his son's birth, and Mary died of tuberculosis when her son was only six. Young James was sent to live at an orphanage that he continued to call home until November of 1896.

Shortly after arriving at the orphanage he became very sick and spent nearly two years in a hospital. This illness left him partially crippled and reliant on crutches to walk, but he overcame his handicap in time.

In spite of the many difficulties in his life he never grew discouraged. He worked extra hard at the orphanage, tending the furnaces, raising chickens, and managing the laundry, all while going to school full-time. He even helped to organize an orphanage library.

In 1900 he enrolled in law school and also took a job with the YMCA. He became an advocate for young people, worked to promote playgrounds, helped to establish a special court for juvenile offenders, and organized a White House Conference on Dependent Children. So deeply did he believe in the cause of juvenile justice that he once volunteered his services to defend a boy accused of stealing a car – West's own! (He won the case.)

By late 1910 the BSA was only just getting organized and needed to hire a permanent, full-time managing secretary to administer the operation. West was recommended for the position, and although he was reluctant to move his family, he traveled to New York to meet with the Executive Board. He agreed to take the job for six months, and started on January 2, 1911. Those "six months" as managing secretary, then Chief Scout Executive, lasted until February 1, 1943. Then even though he retired, he continued to serve as the movement's "Chief Scout" until his death.

West's contributions to the BSA are beyond measure. He helped to draft the Scout Oath and Law, to develop the rank and recognition programs, to launch *Boys Life* magazine, and to enforce high standards on the Scouting profession. He even represented the BSA on the International Committee for Scouting. In 1926, he received the 21st Silver Buffalo Award in recognition of his service to boys.

CAMP TUCKAHOE
NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



THE FATHERS OF SCOUTING

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FIVE GREAT MEN WHO LAUNCHED THE BSA

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Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell
February 22, 1857 – January 8, 1941



"B-P," the son of Baden and Henrietta Powell, was born in London, England. Baden, an Oxford professor, died in 1860, leaving his wife to raise their seven children. She later changed the family name to "Baden-Powell" to honor her deceased husband.

Young B-P attended Charterhouse, an elite boarding school for boys, where he excelled in drawing and dramatics. Upon graduation he failed to gain admission to Oxford University, so he tested for a commission in the Army and scored very well. He became a cavalry officer.

At this time Britain ruled over a vast empire, and over the next thirty-four years B-P served in India, Afghanistan, Malta, and South Africa. He became known for books on hunting and military scouting, but his greatest fame came from the Siege of Mafeking (1899-1900) during the Boer Rebellion in South Africa. B-P and his troops outlasted a superior force for 218 days until relief came. His leadership and ingenuity during the siege captured his country's imagination and made him a national hero. After the rebellion he accepted responsibility for training a South African police force before returning to England.

B-P had grown concerned that the young men of his day were not being properly prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood. Too many boys were growing up in crowded cities and adopting bad habits. Inspired by other boys clubs (like William Smith's "Boys Brigades") and encouraged by the enthusiasm many boys had shown for his books, B-P proposed his own scheme for Scouting for Boys in 1907. That August he held the first Scout Camp at Brownsea Island and his first Scout Handbook appeared in 1908.

Troops immediately appeared all over England and spread to the USA and elsewhere almost as quickly. B-P retired from the army in 1910 to devote himself fully to Scouting. He later developed special programs for younger boys (Cubs) and young men (Sea Scouting and Rovering). He and his sister Agnes created the Girl Guides, which his wife, Olave, later led. As Chief Scout of the World he convened several World Jamborees to promote peace.

King George V made him a baron, "Lord of Gilwell," in 1929. When the BSA created the Silver Buffalo award in 1926, he received the first. Today the Baden-Powell Council along the NY and PA border bears his name.

Ernest Thompson Seton
August 14, 1860 – October 23, 1946



Born Ernest Evan Thompson in England, Seton's family moved to Canada when he was six years old. By Seton's account he spent much of his youth in the woods to escape the attentions of his abusive and unloving father. Seton's conflict with his father later led him to change his name.

He attended schools in Toronto and then earned a scholarship to study art in England, but poor health caused him to return home after only two years. He moved to Manitoba to take up farming with his brothers, but he spent most of his time studying nature and drawing pictures. He soon became an internationally recognized artist, lecturer, and writer, and spent time in Paris and New York.

In 1902 Seton wrote a series of articles on woodcraft for the *Ladies Home Journal*. Those articles were compiled into a single book, *The Birchbark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians*, that was published in 1906. This book established a program for boys to learn about Native American life and skills. The "Woodcraft Indians" very closely resembled the BSA in its method of organization, badges of recognition, and outdoor spirit.

This is not a coincidence since B-P read The Birchbark Roll in 1906 and the two men met and corresponded to share their ideas. B-P borrowed some of Seton's ideas when he wrote the first Scout Handbook. Although B-P recognized and praised Seton's contributions, Seton could never get over the idea that B-P had stolen his idea for a movement for boys and then taken credit for it.

Nevertheless, Seton merged his Indians with the BSA in 1910. He was elected to a five year term as "Chief Scout" (the same title B-P used in England). He played a major part in writing the first American Scout Handbook and contributed regularly to *Boys Life* magazine.

Unfortunately, Seton frequently clashed with other BSA leaders, especially James E. West. Many patriotic Scouters wondered why the BSA had appointed a British citizen to be Chief Scout. In 1915, Seton's affiliation with the BSA ended very bitterly. Seton then revived his Woodcraft Indians and expanded the organization to include both boys and girls from ages "4 to 94."

But the BSA did not forget Seton. In 1926 he received the seventh Silver Buffalo Award. Today, the Greenwich Council in CT has a camp named after him.

Daniel Carter Beard
June 21, 1850 – June 11, 1941



Dan Beard was born and grew up in eastern Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. His father, an artist, moved to New York in search of work when Dan was only 15 years old.

As a boy he loved to roam the woods near his home, and he was especially fond of stories about early American pioneers (which he called "Knights in Buckskin"). He followed in his father's footsteps by developing his artistic talent and moving to NY.

Dan briefly worked as a surveyor but began to earn his living as an author and illustrator. In 1882 he published *The American Boy's Handy Book*, a manual for all sorts of outdoor activities that is still in print. Yet he did not attempt to organize boys into any movement at that time. Dan was personally selected by Mark Twain to illustrate several of his books, including *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and the two became friends.

In 1905, as the editor of *Recreation* magazine, Dan created "The Sons of Daniel Boone," an organization for boys based on the skills and imagery of the frontier. He later lost the rights to that name to another magazine, but he continued his movement by changing its name to the "Boy Pioneers."

This organization was very similar to the later Boy Scouts and Dan argued for the rest of his life that he was the true father of Scouting. This created some hard feelings between him and some of the other early Scout leaders, but he never let those personal problems prevent him from contributing his best efforts to the success of Scouting.

Dan merged his Boy Pioneers into the BSA when it started in 1910. Dan was chosen to be the first National Scout Commissioner and he held that position until he died. This position proved to be mostly ceremonial, but Beard fulfilled his duties well. In 1919 he began the practice of leading annual pilgrimages to the grave of President Teddy Roosevelt, the first and only Chief Scout Citizen. It was after this first pilgrimage, when many scouts had collected acorns as souvenirs, that the BSA encouraged the planting of memorial "Roosevelt Trees."

The National Council of the BSA awarded him the first and only gold Eagle Badge in 1922. In 1926 he received the sixth Silver Buffalo. Today his memory lives on in the Dan Beard Council in Cincinnati, Ohio.