

Cherokee Area Council, Oklahoma #469 History

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In 1907, just ten years after Bartlesville was founded and the same year Oklahoma became a state, the Boy Scout program began in England with an experimental camp on Brownsea Island, off the southern coast. In 1909, less than two years after the founding by Baden-Powell, a priest who was familiar with the Scouting program came to Pawhuska, Oklahoma and founded the first documented fully uniformed Boy Scout troop in America. The person who brought this was Rev. John Forbes Mitchell, and he came to serve at the St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Pawhuska. The local Bartlesville paper recorded a visit by this troop to Johnstone Park in 1911, noting that they hiked from Pawhuska to Bartlesville to show the Scouting program to the local youth.



The First Troop formed in Pawhuska, Oklahoma in 1909

The show obviously made an impact as in 1912, Troop 1 was founded at First Christian Church, becoming the first Boy Scout troop in Bartlesville. One of the members of this troop was Ed McClintock, whose father was the first Council President of the Cherokee Area Council. The early adult leaders for this troop included some key people in the community life. The troop got a charter

through the BSA after it formed on December 16, 1910. More on the history of this troop is provided in the Jan/Feb 1991 issue of Scouting magazine.

Another very early troop was formed in Vinita by James P. Fitch in 1910. He became the first Region 9 Executive and served in that capacity for 26 years. There is also information that a troop was formed in 1909 in Vinita by the Presbyterian minister Pershing.

Initially the councils were city councils, and these appeared throughout the area that became the Cherokee Area Council of 2010. Early city councils included Pawhuska, Bartlesville, Nowata, and Vinita. Each began numbering troops with Troop 1, so as these various city councils merged the troop numbers were changed to have unique troop numbers within the council. The council that began as the Bartlesville became a First Class Council on January 8, 1920 and eventually grew to include Craig, Delaware, Nowata, Osage, Ottawa, and Washington Counties. The councils run by volunteers were referred to as Second Class Councils and those who grew to hire a professional Scout Executive were referred to as First Class Councils. In 1925 that name of the council was changed to the Cherokee Council and in 1936 it became the Cherokee Area Council. The current council office is located in Bartlesville at 520 South Quapaw.

The first council camp was held in June of 1913 at Sand Creek falls, which today is still active as the council camp. Camp McClintock was named in honor of the first president of the Bartlesville council, H. H. McClintock, who served in that capacity for 17 years. This record has only been exceeded once, by Philip R. Phillips who served in the capacity of Council President for 20 years. Five Council camps have been used by Cherokee Area Council. In chronological order of opening, these are Camp McClintock, Camp George Potter, Cave Springs Camp, Camp Cobban and Camp Cherokee. Camp McClintock is the council camp today, with Camp Cherokee having served as the primary council camp from the 1950s until 2007.

The Scouting program was a program whose time had come, and between 1910 and 1920, troops began to form across the area. By 1920 Bartlesville had 10 Boy Scout Troops as follows:

- Troop 1 - First Christian Church*
 - Troop 2 - First Methodist Church*
 - Troop 3 - First Presbyterian Church*
 - Troop 4 - Epworth Methodist Church
 - Troop 5 - St. John Catholic Church*
 - Troop 6 - Church of God Sunday School
 - Troop 7 - Episcopal Church
 - Troop 8 - "Colored Troop" with Scoutmaster William Allen (active into the 1950s)
 - Troop 9 -
 - Troop 10 - Sea Scout Ship (only Sea Scout unit in Oklahoma at the time)
- * - Still active today through the same chartering organization

It is encouraging to see that African-Americans were included here, as well as American Indians, since this was unusual for that time and place. This growth of interest in Scouting during the 1910's caused the local Scouting Committee to consider becoming a formal first class council, which meant

that they had progressed to the point of hiring a professional Scouter. George G. Watson was asked to be the first Council Executive and H. H. "Ed" McClintock was the first Council President.



Early photograph of Bartlesville Troop 1 with drum and bugle corps

Not only had Scouting grown in northeast Oklahoma, it had grown rapidly throughout the world. Baden-Powell decided to have a World Jamboree gathering of Scouts in England in 1920. The son of the Bartlesville Morning Examiner newspaper owner, Malcolm W. ("Pete") Welty attended as one of 350 Scouts representing the United States. He had helped his mother operate the newspaper during World War I while his father and brothers were overseas, and had acquired writing skills unusual for his age. He kept a diary of the Jamboree, which has been published in book form and is available through the Bartlesville Scout office. This book records his friendship with another Scout in Troop 1, Philip R. Phillips and their adventures as cowboys at Phil's Uncle Waite's Hawkeye Ranch in northeastern New Mexico, which later became Philmont Scout Ranch.

H.A. "Pop" Brewer was originally a Scout in Illinois. As an adult in the YMCA program, he came to Bartlesville in 1921, and started a troop at the First Baptist Church, becoming the first Scoutmaster of the troop. He continued active in supporting Scouting in the area. After his wife's

death in 1948, he became the Ranger at Camp McClintock and served there until he retired at age 82. In honor of his great service to Scouting in this council, the Pop Brewer Campfire Ring was created at Camp Cherokee, a council camp near Grove, Oklahoma.

Rank advancement was not stressed strongly in the initial program, and it was in 1923 that the council had its first Eagle Scout, Keith Whiting, who was a member of Troop 1 in Bartlesville.

Sea Scouting was a part of the program in England from the initial experimental camp at Brownsea Island in 1907. In Bartlesville, it made its debut in the 1920 with the establishment of the SSS Legionnaire, the name of the "ship" that the Scouts invented. It was the first Sea Scout troop in Oklahoma. Every Sea Scout unit had their ship, whether it was real or imaginary, and there weren't any real ships around Bartlesville at the time. It may have seemed strange to many that a land-locked state was one of the early areas with a Sea Scout program. In January 1940, the ship's name was changed to the SSS Woolaroc. Scouts learned about operating a ship and the skills necessary for seamen. They frequently took trips to practice their skills on various ships.

The 1930's saw an incredible growth in the Scouting program, with a ten-fold increase in the number of Scouts active in the area. A major part of the growth was due to the introduction of Cub Scouting, which permitted younger boys to participate in the program. First Christian Church participated with a "trial Cub program" which was to assess the viability of the program. After a year they had a large Cub pack, and BSA decided to incorporate Cub Scouts into Scouting. In 1932, the First Christian Church built a rock Cub Scout building at Camp McClintock, which is possibly the oldest surviving Cub Scout building in the state.



James Lee Tarr
BSA Chief Scout Executive, 1979-1985

James Tarr was a member of Bartlesville Cub Pack 1, Troop 1, and Sea Scouts in the 1930's. He progressed to the rank of Eagle Scout and became Assistant Scoutmaster of the troop. Tarr was also a member of the Cherokee Area Council contingent to the first National Jamboree in Washington, D. C. during 1937. Scouting made such an impact on Tarr that he decided to make it his life career. In that career he rose to the top of the organization and served as BSA Chief Scout Executive from 1979 until 1985.

During the Depression, the program had a rough time financially. Boy Scouting in Oklahoma and the surrounding states survived this period due to the contributions of an early Bartlesville Scouter, Frank Phillips.

- He made several grants of \$100,000 to the Scouting program in these states to help support the Scout Executives, many of whom were working without pay in some councils.
- He realized the value of the Boy Scout program, and encouraged leadership from people in the corporation by giving employees time off with pay to participate in the program.
- He initiated matching grants to the program. His corporate model became one of the most advanced in its support of programs such as these.

Waite Phillips established his first home in Bartlesville bringing his new wife to start his career. He learned the oil business under the direction of his older brothers Frank and L.E. Waite provided great support for Scouting in 1938 with the donation of a large part of his ranch and a \$50,000 contribution to set up a headquarters at what became the Philmont Scout Ranch. Philmont has continued to give to Scouting, as thousands of Scouts and adult leaders go through the program each year. The Philmont hymn was written by John Westfall as a youth after a trek to Philmont Scout Ranch. He was a tireless Scouter who worked for Phillips Petroleum and retired in Bartlesville.

With the start of the World War II, Scouting took on another aspect, as Scouts worked to support "duty to country," and many young men joined the B.S.A. to get training and help support the war effort through various projects. Another program in Scouting made its debut during this era, called the Air Scouts. Bartlesville had an active Air Scout program. A small plane was used for the training, and Scouts flew to various places in neighboring states as a part of their Air Scouting program.

The first event of the council Order of the Arrow, a Scouting service organization, was held in February, 1946, at Camp McClintock. This organization started in 1915, and provides support for the camping aspect of the B.S.A. In the Cherokee Area Council, it provides strong support for the various council camps by helping to upgrade the facilities and promoting staffing camps.

In the 1950's, a strategic decision was made to expand our council camping facilities, and Camp Cherokee was purchased through the funding of Philip R. Phillips and L.E. Phillips, Jr., as a memorial for their father L.E. Phillips along with funding from Doenges. This camp was located on Grand Lake.

Bartlesville Troop 27 was chartered by the Washington County Association of Retarded Citizens. For many years this troop brought Scouting to an enthusiastic group that had not been previously served. The troop had several Scouts at Eagle Rank. Each Scout was allowed to achieve at his own

level. A difference from the usual program is that the upper age limit was removed so that members have a longer time to achieve their goals.

The first Wood Badge course was held in the Cherokee Area Council in 1974 at Camp McClintock. The Scoutmaster for this course was John Downy. The course number was SC-21, and Joe Long was a member of the Bob White patrol with the coach counselor being Rudie Janzen. They were both at the Wood Badge reunion in 2002 and brought the Bob White patrol flag with member's names, totems, etc. The second course was a couple of years later and was number SC-C77 also held at Camp McClintock. Other courses were SR-81 1994, SR-149 1995, SR-195 1997 (held at Will Rogers Camp as a cluster course), SR-307 1999, and SR-749 2006.

Lone Scouting was formed in 1915 by William D. Boyce for rural boys who did not have access to the Boy Scouts. This organization merged with B.S.A. in 1924. Lone Scouting brings the Scouting program to boys who are not close to a unit and operate without the aid of a troop. The Cherokee Area Council has a few Lone Scouts active in the area today. In 1975, the Lone Scouts of America held a meeting in Bartlesville to consider current and historical objectives. Louis Whitehair of Bartlesville was a Lone Scout and hosted this gathering. His Lone Scout memorabilia is currently on display at the Pawhuska Museum.

In May of 1977, Camp Cherokee was host to a dedication ceremony of a new building, the Order of the Arrow Visitor's Center. This was built by contributions of OA members and again the friendly assistance of Phil Phillips. The center also became home to the Scout Museum, with memorabilia from the 1910's to the present displayed in cases along the walls. Phil Phillips also donated funds for other buildings at the camp including the Ranger home, swimming pool, and the chapel.

The Scouting program of today has evolved over the last 87 years to serve urban and rural youth. The council supports the National and World Jamborees and sends contingents to the various high adventure camps. Bartlesville youth have been participating in these Jamborees, from the first World Jamboree in 1920 and first National Jamboree in 1937 to the present day. The council has seen a steady growth during the 1990's, and their historical "family values" orientation has come into vogue again. With the expansion of the Explorer Scout program as a co-educational program for youth fourteen and over, all youth can participate in the Scouting adventure.

Another addition to Scouting in Bartlesville was the introduction of the Learning For Life program in 1993. This program is used to bring values oriented curriculum into the schools, which is based on Scouting principles. It includes information from kindergarten through the 12th grade for both boys and girls. The focus is on values for the lower grades, personal strengths for mid-high, and resumes and career exposure for the upper grades.

In 1995, the Cherokee Area Council celebrated it's 75th Anniversary with a number of events. Bartlesville can be proud of the role that it has played in the development of the Boy Scouts of America. Contributions by the various people from Bartlesville have helped shape the B.S.A. program in a significant way.



2009 Council Key 3 Chris Cook, Donna Copeland, and Carol Whitebook (left to right)

Cherokee Area Council continues the Scouting traditions formed through the last 101 years of Scouting in the area. The council Key 3 are Council Executive Carol Whitebook, Council President Chris Cook, and Council Commissioner Donna Copeland. The council is served by two part-time paraprofessionals Randy Asbery and Wes Hurd. Full time office staff includes DeAnn Curtis and Marilyn Taylor. The council is composed of the Grand Lake District (Craig, Delaware, and Ottawa Counties) and the Osage Hills District (Nowata, Osage, and Washington Counties.) There are 19 Cub Packs, 22 Boy Scout Troops, 2 Varsity Teams, 6 Venture Crews, 3 Explorer Posts, and an active Learning for Life program in the schools.