

History of Washita Lodge #288

On a crisp February night in 1946, the first formal act of the Order of the Arrow occurred at Boy Scout Camp McClintock. The Tap Out and following Ordeal ceremony was the first action that ultimately resulted in the formation of the Washita Lodge #288. Four men that have now faded away from memory were the first ceremonial characters and principle organizers for this OA Lodge. These men were H.C. Gilbert (Scout Executive serving as Allowat Sakima), Ted M. Clymer (Scout Field Executive serving as Meteu), William (Bill) Nelson (Scoutmaster of Troop 14 serving as Nutiket), and J. H. McBride (Bartlesville Public Schools serving as Kitchkinet).

The first youth members of Lodge #288 were the following:

- C.W. (Pappy) Alexander T-47
- Phil Benny Drisko Bartlesville Ship
- Phil Teter T-2

Surprisingly, compared to present day inductions, there were more adults inducted than youth. Most likely the reason for this was so these troop leaders could properly conduct OA elections within their troops at a later time. The first adult members of our lodge were the following:

- E. O. Cloud Scoutmaster T-2
- J. C. Grisette Ship Skipper
- R. Lawson Scoutmaster T-11
- Joe F. Long Scoutmaster T-42
- W. F. Morton Scoutmaster T-47
- W. N. Palmer Scoutmaster T-33

The only nourishment during this first Ordeal was a rye crisp and peanut butter. Part of the Pre-Ordeal at that time included a cup of water (from the icy Sand Creek) being poured over a bare chest. Originally Lodge #288 was named Sequoya. However, at that time a Sequoya Lodge already existed (Sequoya Lodge 184, Johnson City, Tennessee). According to "Pappy" Alexander, our first Lodge Chief, lodge members spent eight hours arriving at the choice of Washita as the new name. Washita was chosen as the lodge name because of the Washita Indians and the Washita Mountains in Oklahoma.

The bison was chosen as the totem for several reasons. A totem symbolizes the spirit of the tribe or clan. The American bison served Indians very well... providing domestic animals, food, shelter, and clothing. It represents the spirit of this Lodge very well - a brotherhood dedicated to serving others. Additionally the bison is generally associated with the American Indians by most people, helping to show that the spirit of Washita Lodge is closely associated with an Indian heritage.

From 1946 to 1953 very little is known about the activities of the lodge other than who was lodge chief. To the best of our knowledge there were no publication printed or records kept from this time period. Records show that the lodge was publishing the

Washita Warrior by 1953. This first known issue announced that current chief Ron Walls was elected Chief of Area 9C, as well as chapter information. *The Warrior* would continue to be the main publication of the lodge to the present day.

Aside from lodge publications, many other notable traditions surfaced in 1953. From this time up until 1980 could be considered Washita's renaissance years owing to the large numbers of Vigil Honor nominations and the scope of projects and innovations of the lodge during this period of time. It was in 1953 that Scout Field Executive John Westfall (author of the Philmont Hymn) introduced the Wisumahi Ceremony into the lodge. The Wisumahi was adapted from the Mitigwa Dancers Explorer Post of Des Moines, Iowa, and was written by Westfall himself when he was a Scout of 15 years old.

The Wisumahi was placed in between the tap-out and the Pre-Ordeal ceremony. Its purpose was to strengthen the traditions of the Order and the lodge. It worked quite well, as the symbolism of the Pre-Ordeal ceremony was not as developed as the present ceremony. Wisumahi is a Lakota word meaning arrowhead. During the ceremony candidates would learn the symbolism of the different parts of the arrowhead. The Wisumahi was used until around 1980, when the Pre-Ordeal was revised into its present day format.

In 1954, Westfall suggested and introduced our most unique tradition. At this time, the use of claws and coup beads was introduced, to encourage more participation in the lodge. Our beads and claws are a visible symbol of our lodge's role in Scouting. There were a number of beads in the beginning, and more have been added or changed as the Order has evolved.

The claws were based off of the practices of the Mic-O-Say Indian Dancers of Kansas City. Along with the introduction of the claws and beads, there was also the beginning of Elevations, which were denoted by painting the tips of the claws. This was also based off of Mic-O-Say, and has only been altered twice since its inception. The original elevations were Firebuilder/Drummer (Red), Runner (Yellow), Keeper of the Sacred Bundles (Green), and Medicine Man (White). A non-elevation color, gold, meant that the member was a member of the Tribal Council. These elevations were introduced, ironically, so that the odd jobs around camp would get done. Many of the duties of these elevations are things that no one really wanted to do, so these jobs were made an honor to have. As Westfall said, "Make it an honor, and they'll jump to do it."

Original Coup Beads (1953-54)

Red Round	1 year summer camp
Yellow Round	3 years summer camp
Green Round	(Originally Taskmaster- Changed to Elangomat in the 80s)
Red Tube	Lodge Chief
Blue Tube	Lodge Vice-Chief
Yellow Tube	Lodge Treasurer
Green Tube	Lodge Secretary
Orange Tube	Chapter Chief
Orange Round	Chapter Vice-Chief
Blue Round	Chapter Secretary
Violet Tube	Sachem (Adult Advisor)
Violet Square	Past Sachem (Past Adult Advisor)

Blue Square	Allowat Sakima
Red Square	Meteu
Yellow Square	Nutiket
Orange Square	Kichkinet
Green Square	Tribal Council Member

Additions

1965

Black Disk	1 year OA
White Disk	3 years OA
Red Disk	1 year dance team

1974

Silver Round	Arrowman of the Year
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1981

Blue Disk	3 years summer camp staff
White Round	Pre-Ordeal ceremonial part



Chief Bob Sullivan

1998

Green Disk	Any National Training (includes NJLTC, NLS, Wood Badge, etc.)
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1999

Orange Disk	Section Officer or CVC
Clear Disk	Eagle Scout

The exact year of introduction of the following beads is unknown at this time.

Yellow Disk before 1981)	1 year summer camp staff (best guess would be a few years)
White Cube	Chans (Brotherhood Nimat)
Black Round	5 Eagle/Arrow of Light ceremonies
Violet Round	Originally, denoted a Wisumahi Ceremonial Part - Later changed to Tap Out (most likely created very soon after the original beads were established)

In 1957, the tap-out was changed. Having previously been a “snatch-him-in-the-dark” routine, it was brought out into the open. Scouts now participate in the tap-out standing in a semi-circle, hoping that they will be chosen for our Order.

From the beginning, Washita #288 has been a major force in service to the council. In 1962/1963 the lodge helped build the “new” ranger’s house at Camp Cherokee. In 1976 the lodge took on its greatest project, the Visitor’s Center Museum at Camp Cherokee. Rudie Janzen, the lodge adviser at the time, contacted over 700 past members of the Lodge to solicit support for the project. Rudie was told by lodges much larger than Washita that this was too big a project to attempt. He formed a committee and moved forward with the project, having a model of the proposed OA building constructed. Lodge members who contributed to the fund received recognition for their support of this project.

The funds were accumulated, and as they were ready to proceed, Lodge member Philip R. Phillips stepped forward and provided funds for the further expansion of the project to a larger building. After contracting for the foundation, Lodge members completed the rest of the building project. Only the best woods and materials were used for the building. Today, this Visitors Center & Museum provides a real link to the past, with hundreds of rare scouting items on display. At Camp Cherokee summer camp each year, the Thursday night's parent's program is enhanced by this center as scouts get to show their parents around in the museum. Other major service projects of interest include the Pop Brewer fire ring at Camp Cherokee (early 1990's), the dock at Camp Cherokee (1993) and the Camp McClintock Chapel (1997).



2004 National Order of the Arrow Conference

Washita Lodge 288 History Display

Southern Region Grand Champion

Lodge Timeline

Date	Event
April 1945	<i>Cherokee Area Council is granted a charter for an OA Lodge.</i>
February 1946	<i>Lodge 288 holds its first induction ceremony. This first ceremony was open to the general public.</i>
1953	<i>The Wisumahi ceremony is introduced.</i>
1954	<i>Claws and elevations are introduced to increase lodge participation.</i>
1957	<i>The tap-out is changed to present-day format.</i>
1958	<i>Jay Janzen creates the first Traditions and Symbols of Washita Lodge. The booklet contains information such as Objectives of the OA, Requirements for Membership (and method of election), Ranks and Positions, Traditions and Symbols, Activities, and Lodge Administration.</i>
1963	<i>The original 4 chapters fold. Tribal Council Members-At-Large replaces the Chapter chiefs.</i>
1969	<i>After Cherokee Area Council consolidates its 4 districts into 2, the lodge establishes chapters based on the new district boundaries.</i>
1973	<i>The silver-bordered 25th anniversary patch is offered for \$1 out of the Warrior (3 years after the 25th anniversary!). These patches were one per life.</i>
1976	<i>The Visitor Center Museum is built. Chief Bellinger initiates this history, and Chief Tabler finishes it.</i>
1978-80	<i>The lodge stops its use of the Wisumahi ceremony, due to the improved format and greater symbolism in the Pre-Ordeal. The Wisumahi has lived out its useful life, and the Pre-Ordeal now covers what it was previous missing.</i>
1989	<i>Daren Herndon is elected as South Central Region Chief.</i>
1990	<i>The 75th anniversary of the OA.</i>
1994	<i>Rob Berner is elected as Southern Region Chief.</i>
1996	<i>The 50th anniversary of our lodge is celebrated by conducting the 1946 ceremony at Camp McClintock. Joe Long Jr. acts as the candidate. As in the first ceremony, the 50th anniversary ceremony is open to the public.</i>
2000	<i>Work begins on the new OA ring at Camp McClintock under the leadership of Sean Urban and Bob Crume. The Ring is dedicated to C. W. "Pappy" Alexander, William (Bill) Nelson, and Joe Long. The Lodge History is brought up to date.</i>
2004	<i>2004: Washita wins third straight NOAC Spirit Award at Iowa State</i>

Lodge Chiefs of Washita Lodge 288	
1946-48	Charles W. (Pappy) Alexander (2)
1948-50	Greg Walls (2)
1950-51	Jerry L. Robertson
1951-52	Hugh A. Walls
1952-53	Wm. E. (Bill) Lindsay
1953-55	Ron Walls (2)
1955-56	David Lucas
1956-57	Doug Johnson
1957-58	Jay Janzen
1958-61	Chester "Chet" Brooks (3)
1961-62	Darrel Fry
1962-63	James M. "Jim" Rogers
1963-65	Allan Edmonds (2)
1965-66	Tom J. Dugger
1966-67	John Croley
1967-68	Ronald J. Rohmiller
1968-69	George L. Hill (2)
1970-71	Allen C. Lea
1971-72	Reed A. Rohmiller
1972-73	Ron Edmonds
1973-74	Barry Sonnenfeld
1974-75	Daniel C. Hitzman
1975-76	Frank Bellinger
1976-77	Allan Tabler*
1977-78	Gordy Cotner
1978-79	Gordy Cotner/Phil Rodenburg
1979-80	Tod Williams
1980-81	John Lauchner
1981-81	Andy Parrett**
1981-83	Kevin Gisi (2)
1983-85	Joe 5 Lee III (2)
1985-86	Lee Hadden
1986-87	Ronnie Lawson
1987-88	James D. "Jimmy" Rutter IV
1988-89	Mike P. Carter
1989-90	Greg Funk
1990	Chad Harper+

1991	Craig Harper
1992	Robbie Berner
1993	Evan Best
1994-1995	Charles Neff
1996	Jeremy "Toad" Lenertz
1997	Steve Weaver
1998	Tanner Breen
1999	Bob Crume, Jess Kane++
1999-2000	Sean Urban
2000-2001	Justin Long
2001-2003	Bob Sullivan Jr., Scott Robin#
2003-2004	Scott Robin, Sam DeFrees##
2004-2005	Brett Thomas
<p>*Tribal Council votes to hold the annual election at Spring Conclave beginning in 1977 and every year after. This makes Chief Tabler's term only 8 months long. (Begins in October, 1976 and ends in May, 1977). Terms now go from Spring Conclave to Spring Conclave, with installation on the day of election.</p>	
<p>** Chief Parrett, elected in May 1981, resigns via the September <i>Warrior</i> because of work and school schedules. Lodge Vice-Chief Kevin Gisi becomes Lodge Chief.</p>	
<p>+Tribal Council votes to hold the annual election at Fall Fellowship beginning in 1990 and every year after. This makes Chief Chad Harper's term only 8 months long. (Begins in May, 1990 and ends in December, 1990). Terms now go from Winter Banquet to Winter Banquet, with election at the Fall Fellowship and installation at the Winter Banquet.</p>	
<p>++ Bob Crume is elected chief of Section SR-3A. Upon his resignation from lodge chief on June 17, 1999, Jess Kane is installed as his successor. At the 1999 Fall Fellowship, the lodge approves an amendment stating that the newly elected officers take office at the end of the Fall Fellowship. Terms now run from Fall Fellowship to Fall Fellowship, with a ceremonial installation at the Winter Banquet.</p>	
<p># Bob Sullivan is elected vice chief of Section SR-3A. Upon his resignation from lodge chief on August 23, 2003, Scott Robin is installed as his successor. Robin would later be official elected by the lodge for a full term as chief.</p>	
<p>## Scott Robin is elected chief of Section S-3. Upon his resignation from lodge chief on June 12, 2004, Sam DeFrees is installed as his successor.</p>	

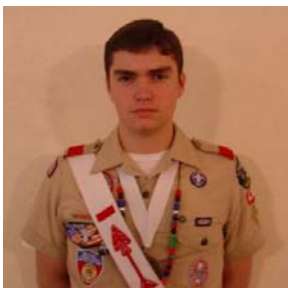
OA Lodge Lay Advisors

There are many years missing, which includes names and dates.

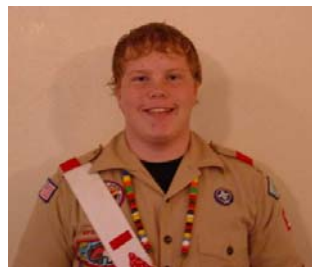
1946-48	T. M. Clymer
1948-50	William Nelson
+/- 1951	John H. Henger
1950-52	A. R. Lawrence
1952-54	Loren Steel
1954-80(?)	W. Rudie Janzen
198(?) - (?)	Jim Clingenpeel
19**-90(?)	Ford Griggs
199?-96	Mark Wilburn
1997-99	Bill Alexander
1999-present	Jim Lewis



Chief Scott Robin



Chief Sam DeFrees



Chief Brett Thomas



Lodge Lay Advisor Jim Lewis
holding Washita Lodge's third
straight NOAC Spirit Award