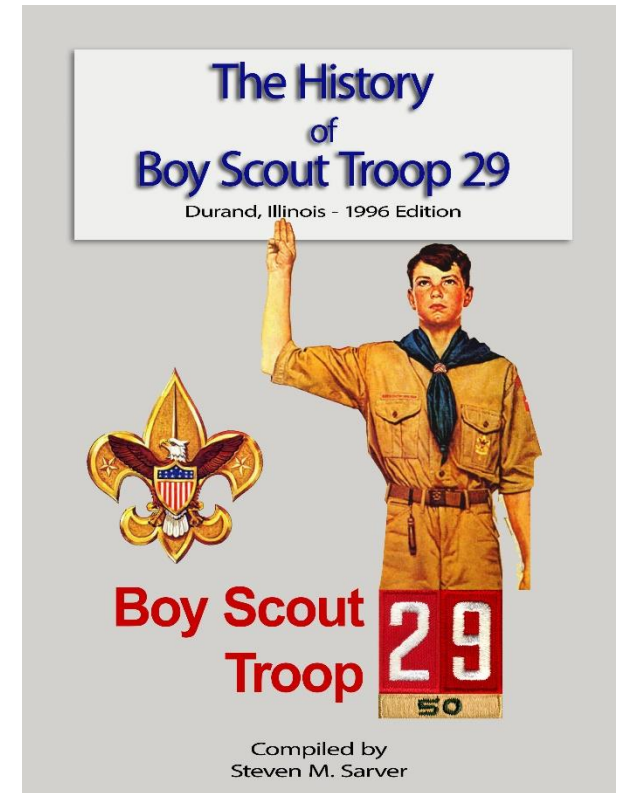


# Writing Your Unit History



Steve Sarver • 815-751-5186  
scouts@sarverman.org



# About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

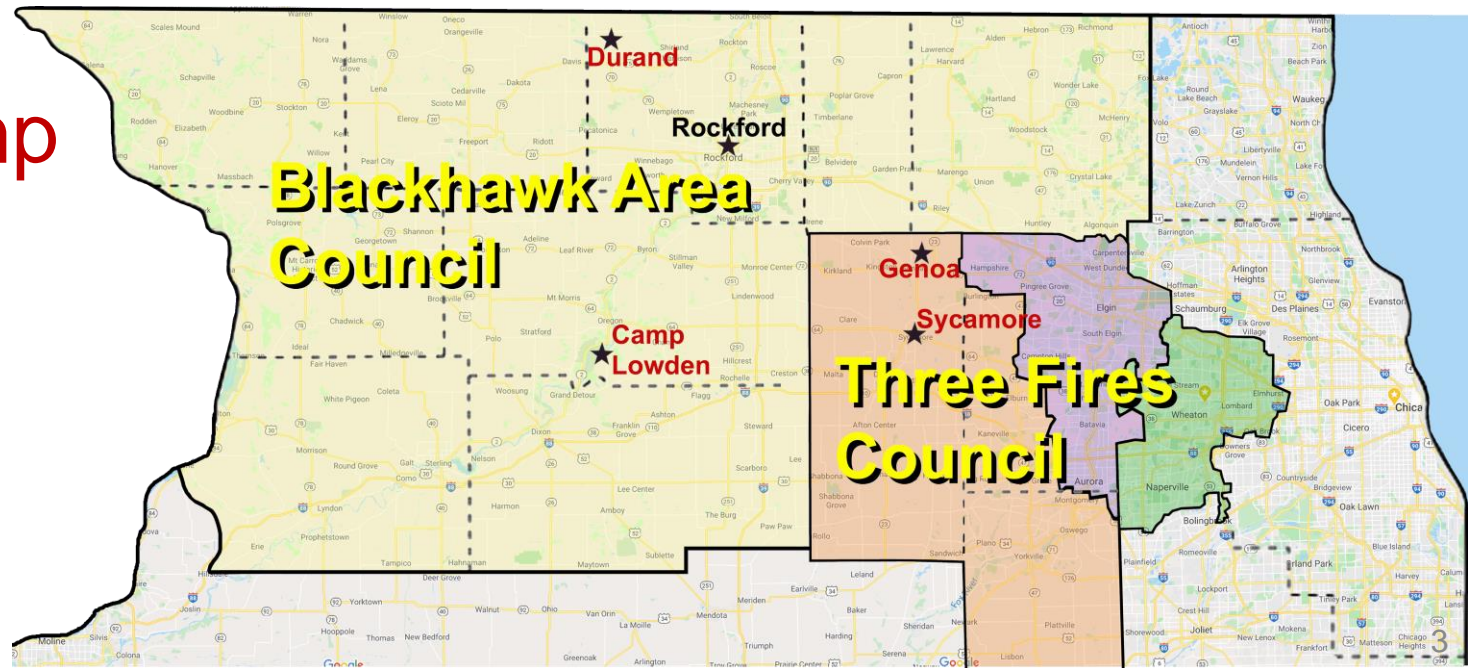
- 47 years in Scouting
- Cub Scout and Boy Scout
  - Arrow of Light
  - Eagle Scout
- Adult Leader
  - Troop Committee
  - Asst. Scoutmaster
  - Den Leader
  - Cubmaster
  - Wood Badge Staff



Steve and Cindy Sarver, 1978

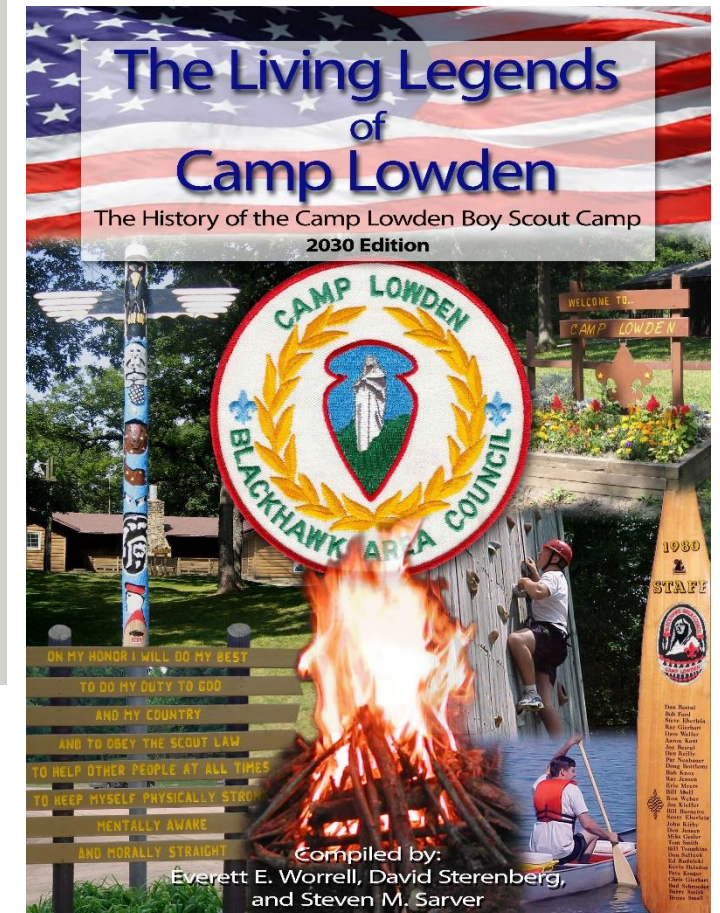
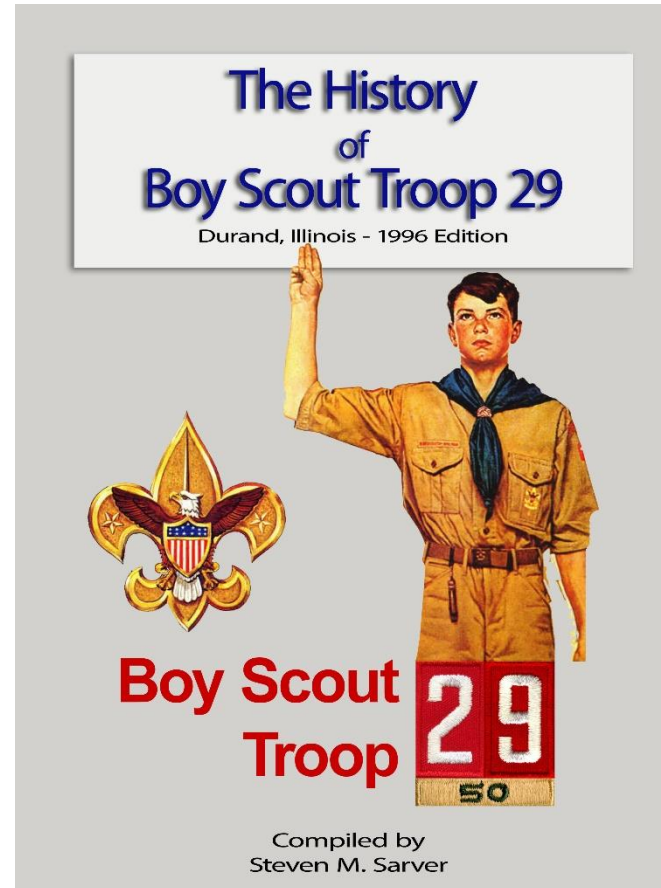
# About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

- Originally from Blackhawk Area Council
  - Hometown troop and pack
- Three Fires Council
  - Founded Cub Scout pack
- Camp Lowden Scout Camp
  - Historian



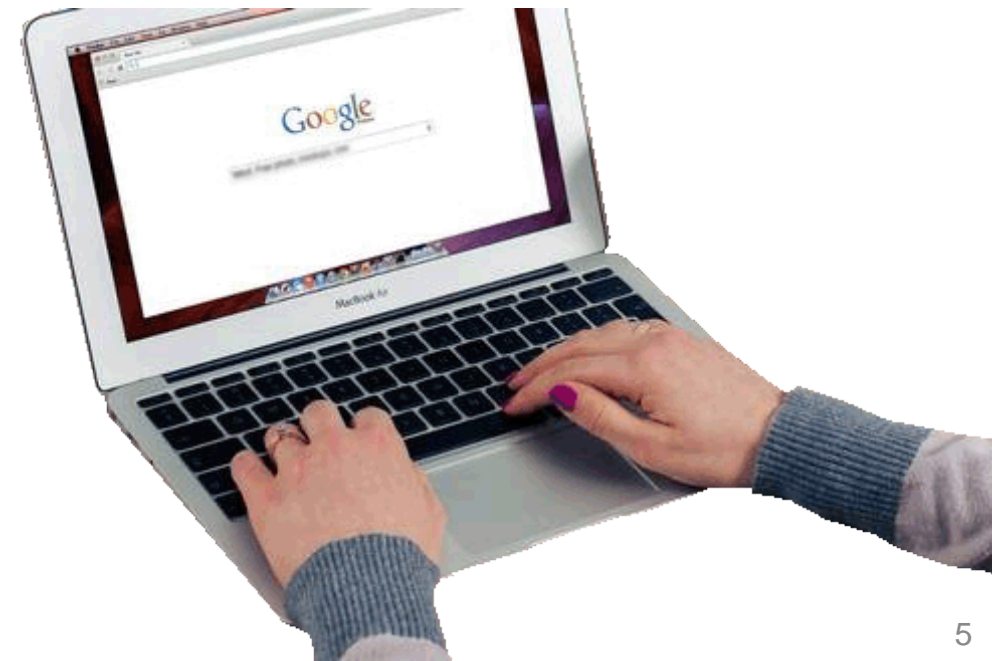
# About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

- Wrote hometown Troop's history
- Success at troop level
  - Gave me confidence to do Camp Lowden history



# On My Web Site – [sarverman.org](http://sarverman.org)

- This presentation
- Handouts
  - Possible outline for your unit history
- And more!



# How many of you...

- Have unit history completed?
- Have not completed or have not started?



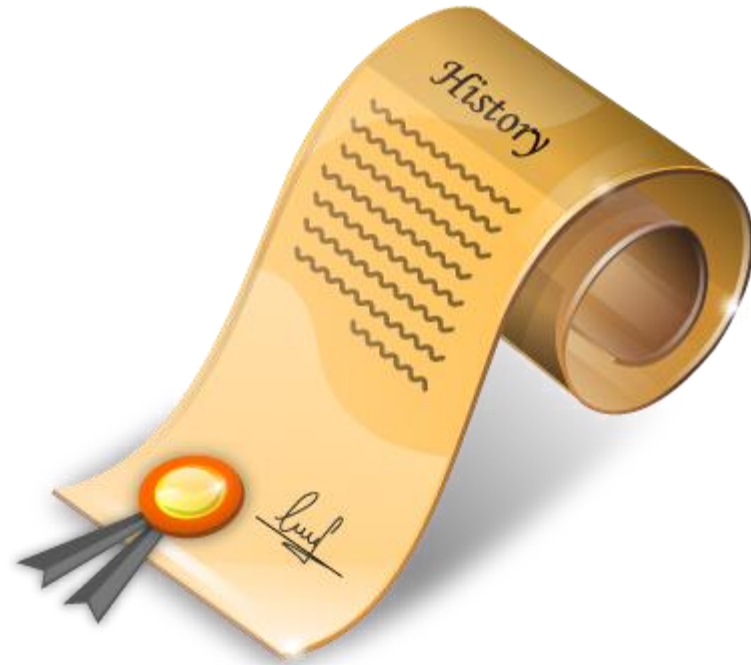
# Writing Your Unit History - Outline

- How to get information
- Where to get information
- Questions to ask
- Cross-check /  
validate information
- Organizing the history
- Marketing
- Photos



# What Is “History”?

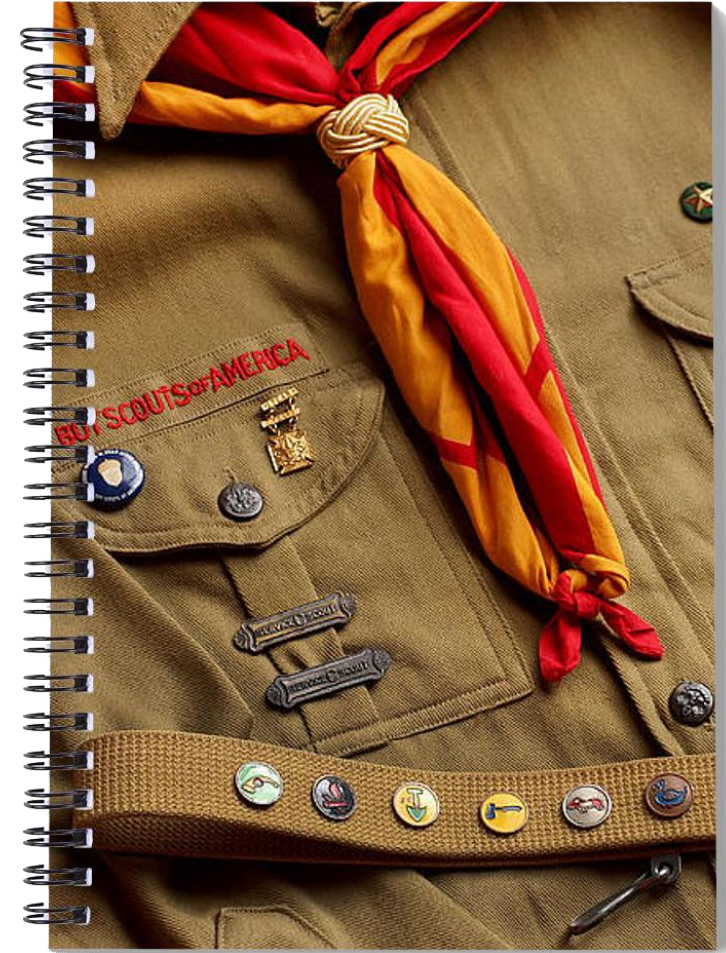
- Events that have already taken place
- Collection of stories and memories
- Think of “history” as boxes of treasures ready to be unlocked and revealed
  - You just have to find the boxes! 😊





# Why Have a Unit History?

- Scouts, Scouters, and parents should be conscious of what unit has done in past
- They should understand that they are living part of ongoing history of unit



# What Should Be Included in History?

- Copy of original charter (if available)
- Major events
  - Big fundraisers / traditions
  - Interesting hikes, campouts, etc.
- Any connections to real-world events
  - Vietnam, 9/11, etc.



# What Should Be Included?

- **Lists!**

- **Leaders**

- Scoutmasters / Cubmasters
- Committee members
- Etc.

- **Eagle Scouts**

- Dates earned
- Service project write-up

- **Order of the Arrow members**

- Including induction dates for each honor attained



# What Should Be Included?

- **Lists!**
  - Camp staff members
  - Jamboree participants
    - National and/or world
  - Major high adventure participants
    - Philmont
    - High adventure bases
    - Etc.
  - Interesting tidbits
    - Troop 2810, Sycamore, Illinois



# What Should Be Included?

- Complete roster of all Scouts in unit
  - Scout councils
    - Geared toward youth of today, not past
    - Not really geared to help units with history
    - However, if you ask specific questions they may be able to help
  - Council “should” be able to provide copies of old charters, or lists of those on old charters

# What Should NOT Be Included

- Anything that violates Scouting America policies
  - Especially youth protection
- Items not appropriate to Scouting movement
- Any memories, stories, reflections, etc., that might be misconstrued or frowned upon by today's society
  - Even if such things were acceptable at the time



# Where to Get “History”?

- “History” is rarely found...
  - ...in only one central location
  - ...with one individual
- You have to look in multiple locations
  - Newspaper articles
  - Church bulletins
    - Esp. if your unit is or has been chartered to a church
  - Programs
    - e.g., Eagle Scout courts of honor, unit anniversary celebrations



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- People, People, People!
- Seek out folks that remember when “history” was still “current events”
- Everybody has story to tell!





# You Want History? Ask for it!

- Take the time
  - Example #1
    - “I wish I took the time to ask my (grand)mother about her life before she died.”
  - Example #2
    - Steve’s son learned about Depression from great-grandmother



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Questions for former Scoutmasters**

- Why did you become Scoutmaster?
- What year(s) did you serve?
  - [note: this helps complete your “Scoutmaster list” or to verify existing list]
- Who were some of other adults who helped out?
- Where did troop meet?
- What were some of activities that troop did?
- What were your favorite Scouting memories?



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Questions for former Scoutmasters**

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- What were your favorite Scouting memories?



*Who else might have information that we should be talking to?*

# You Want History? Ask for it!

## • Questions for Eagle Scouts

- When did you earn your Eagle Scout?
  - [Helps complete “Eagle Scout list” or verify existing list]
  - Official “date earned” is not same as Eagle court of honor
- How many merit badges did you earn? What were your favorites and why? Did you earn Eagle palms?
- Who were some of other Scouts and adults who helped you on your Scouting trail?
- Whom did you look up to? Why?
- What were some of activities that troop did?



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Questions for Eagle Scouts**

- What summer camp(s) did you attend?
- What are your favorite camp memories?
- Are you member of Order of the Arrow?
- What are your favorite OA memories?
- What were your favorite memories from Scouting?
- What was best advice you ever received in Scouting?
- Are you involved in Scouting now?



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Questions for Eagle Scouts**

- What summer camp(s) did you attend?
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*Who else might have information that we should be talking to?*

# You Want History? Ask for it!

- You will no doubt unearth some great stories!

*“One day in 1972, Dan Walker [candidate for governor] came to Durand. The Scouts joined him on a hike to the next town over. Upon arriving, Walker gave each Scout a signed red bandana.”*



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- You will no doubt unearth some great stories!
  - From a former Scoutmaster:

*“I never learned how to swim as a boy. When the Scouts took swimming lessons, I joined them.*

*The next year a boy fell out of the boat and was struggling. Had I not learned how to swim, I would have not been able to rescue him.”*





# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Specific questions to targeted audience**
  - Who was involved in formation of our unit?
  - Why was our unit formed?
  - What information do you have about former troops in our town?
    - Some troops may have folded due to WWII, financial reasons, lack of members, etc.
  - What organization(s) have charted our unit?
    - It's rarely same one



YOU  
DON'T GET  
WHAT  
YOU DON'T  
ASK FOR.

# You Want History? Ask for it!

- **Meet with people and tell your story**
  - Older folks love to hear about Scouting today
  - Hearing your story will get them to open up more



# You Want History? Ask for it!

- You would not believe what some folks keep in their attic or basement!
- Most people will, in all likelihood, give you stuff
  - (or let you borrow items for scanning/copying)
    - Photos / negatives
    - Patches, mugs, other memorabilia
    - Uniforms

# Current / More Recent Events

- **Commit knowledge into written form**
  - Before things are forgotten
  - While thoughts and feelings are still fresh
- **Eliminates a lot of research down the road**



# Current / More Recent Events

- **Get Troop Historian involved**
  - Actual job, should be one in every troop
- **Write up “recap” after each event/activity**
  - Get “youth” perspective
  - Historian could “interview” other youth
  - What did they like most? Least?



# How to Organize It

- Suggest grouping chronologically by decade
  - The 1940s
  - The 1950s
  - The 1960s
  - The 1970s
  - The 1980s
  - The 1990s
  - The 2000s
  - The 2010s
  - The 2020s



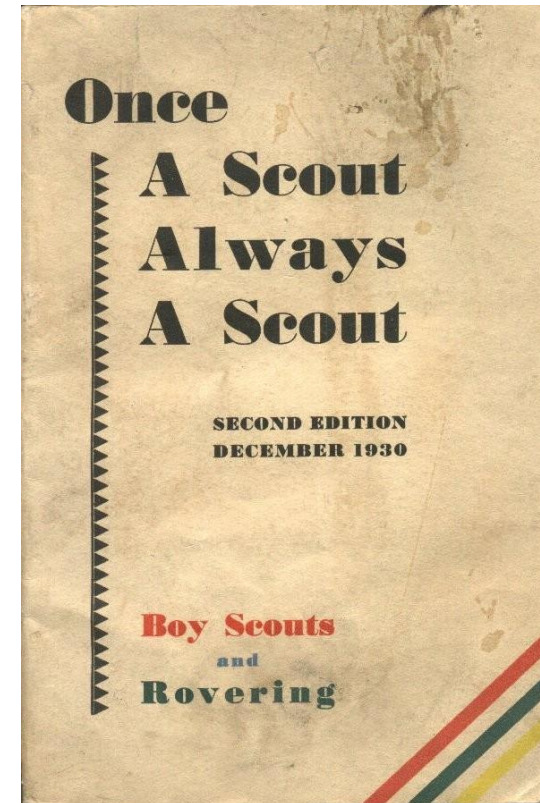
# “Scout[er] Spotlight”

- Way to highlight individual or individuals whose involvement may have spanned many years
- Can be put in anywhere
- Good to use as “filler” pages



# “Call to action” to Reconnect

- “We invite you to add your talents and interests to support Scouting”
- Potential Outcomes
  - Financial support
  - More leaders
  - More content for history





# Final Items

- Acknowledgements
  - Who helped?
- Dedication
  - Who is history for and why?
- Table of Contents



# Verification Process

- Cross-check and verify as much as possible
  - Facts, names, dates, places, spellings, etc.
  - If someone submits memory, story, etc., contact others from same era to see if they can:
    - Authenticate
    - Validate
    - Augment



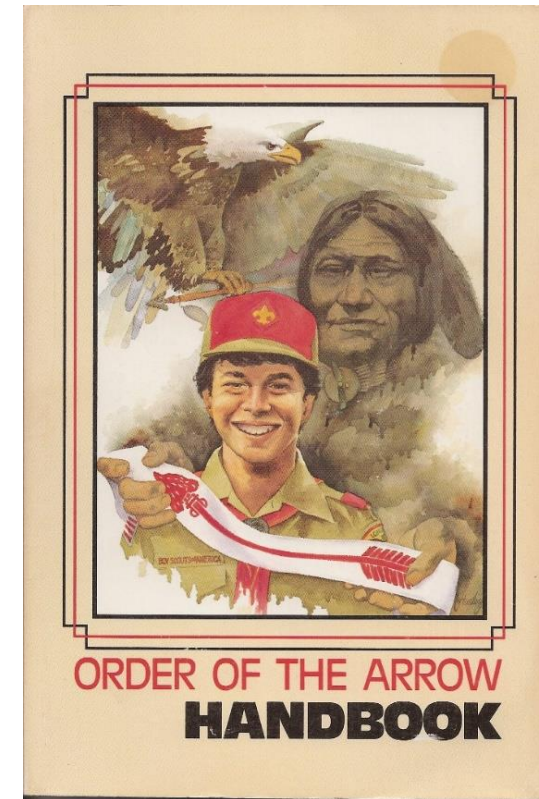
# Verification Process

- Attribute items as appropriate
  - “Bill Jones recalls...”
  - “According to the July 5, 1951 edition of the Chicago Tribune...”
  - “One version is that...”
  - “However, it is John Smith’s opinion that...”



# Scouting Vernacular

- Not everyone is familiar with things that many of us take for granted
  - Order of the Arrow terminology
  - Eagle Scout requirements
- Ways to handle
  - Adjustments to text
  - Footnotes



# Proofing

- Prepare “rough draft” and ask others to proof
  - Former leaders/members of unit
  - Person who involved in Scouting but not in unit
  - Person who has never been in Scouting
  - Your mother (don't mothers know everything?)
- Incorporate their feedback
  - Once these people have given you feedback (give them a deadline to do so), prepare “Final Draft”



# Proofing

- **Send “Final Draft” out to two people**
  - Person who can analyze for spelling, grammar, and “Language of Scouting”
  - Someone with degree in English and/or is stickler for detail
- **Incorporate their changes and you are good to go!**



**Feedback is a gift.**

# Tips and Suggestions



# Make a Plan

- **Take stock of what you already have**
  - List everything available to you
  - Photos, letters, etc.
- **Figure out what you still need:**
  - Who can you interview?
  - Who has photographs?
  - Recordings
  - Maybe video interviews?
- **Make plan for how to get these items**





# Set a Goal

- “Complete in time for our troop’s 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026”
  - Maybe your goal is 2-3 years down the road!
- Be sure to allow enough time!



# Selling the Book



# Cost

- **#1 Goal**
  - Keep cost per book inexpensive as possible without sacrificing quality
- **No-Cost Alternative**
  - Avoid printing costs completely by making available online, or as PDF



# Cost

- **How to figure unit price**

- Get cost estimates from printers and divide by number of books being printed
- Factor in any “giveaway” copies

- **Suggestion to help defray costs**

- Sell ads in back of book
  - e.g., Get businesses to give \$25 to place card in back of book
  - Send thank-you note!



# Who to Sell to?



# When to Sell?

- Anytime, but especially at...
  - Courts of Honor
  - Fundraisers
    - Pasta dinner / pancake breakfast, etc.
  - Recruiting events

# Updates and Revisions



# Updates and Revisions

- As long as entity continues to exist, its history is never “complete”
  - Simple start often sparks much more from recall of many
- Keep list of improvements and corrections
  - Misspellings, updated or incorrect information, etc.





# Updates and Revisions

- “Master document”
  - Should be kept on someone’s computer so can easily be updated
- Back it up!
  - You worked hard on this...why risk losing it all?



# Revision Timetable

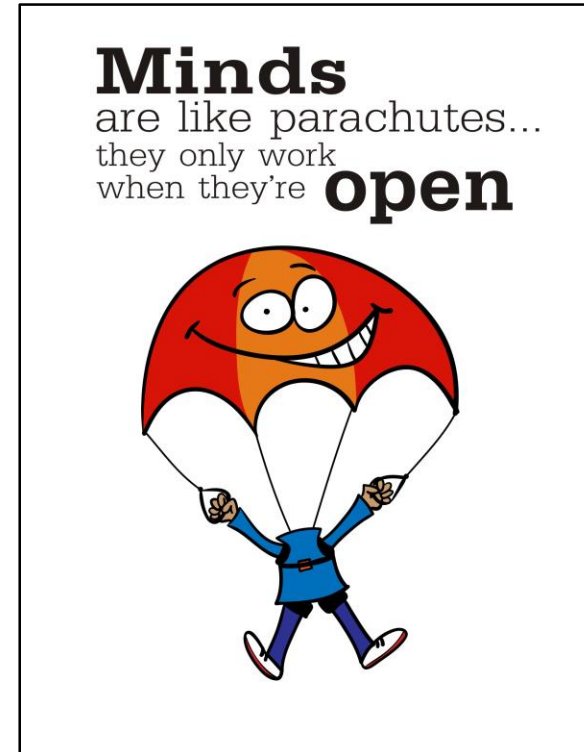


- **Have schedule for updating history**
  - e.g., every 5 or 10 years
- **How many copies should you print?**
  - Suggest enough to last through at least 5 years

# Advice

- **Be open-minded**
  - Changes
  - Constructive criticism
  - Viewpoints, opinions, and suggestions of others
- **Have positive attitude**

*“I don’t know everything, but I am trying to learn as much as possible 😊”*

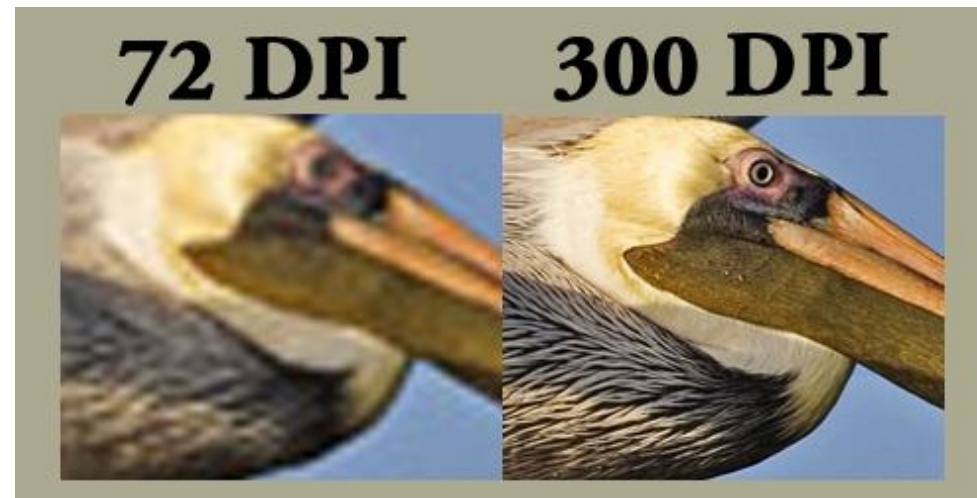


# Photos



# High-Quality Photos

- **Convert photos to 300 dots per inch or better**
  - What printed publications generally require
  - Ensures that they will not be dark, smudgy, or grainy when printed
- They will then be ready to go when you need them



# Photos

- Pictures truly do say a thousand words
- Captures moments in time



# Photos

- Get as many as possible
- They are only young, once!



# Before-and-After Photos

- Steve's Eagle Scout Project



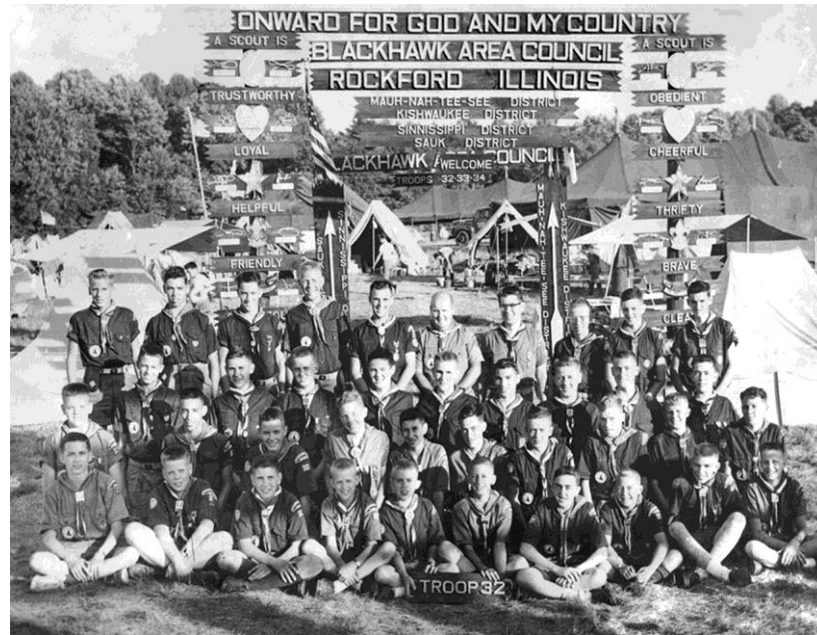
1985



2015



# Learn to Look “Through” Photos





# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



1969 – U.S. Grant  
Pilgrimage patch

# Learn to Look “Through” Photos

Old lodge flap –  
discontinued in 1971  
due to lodge merger



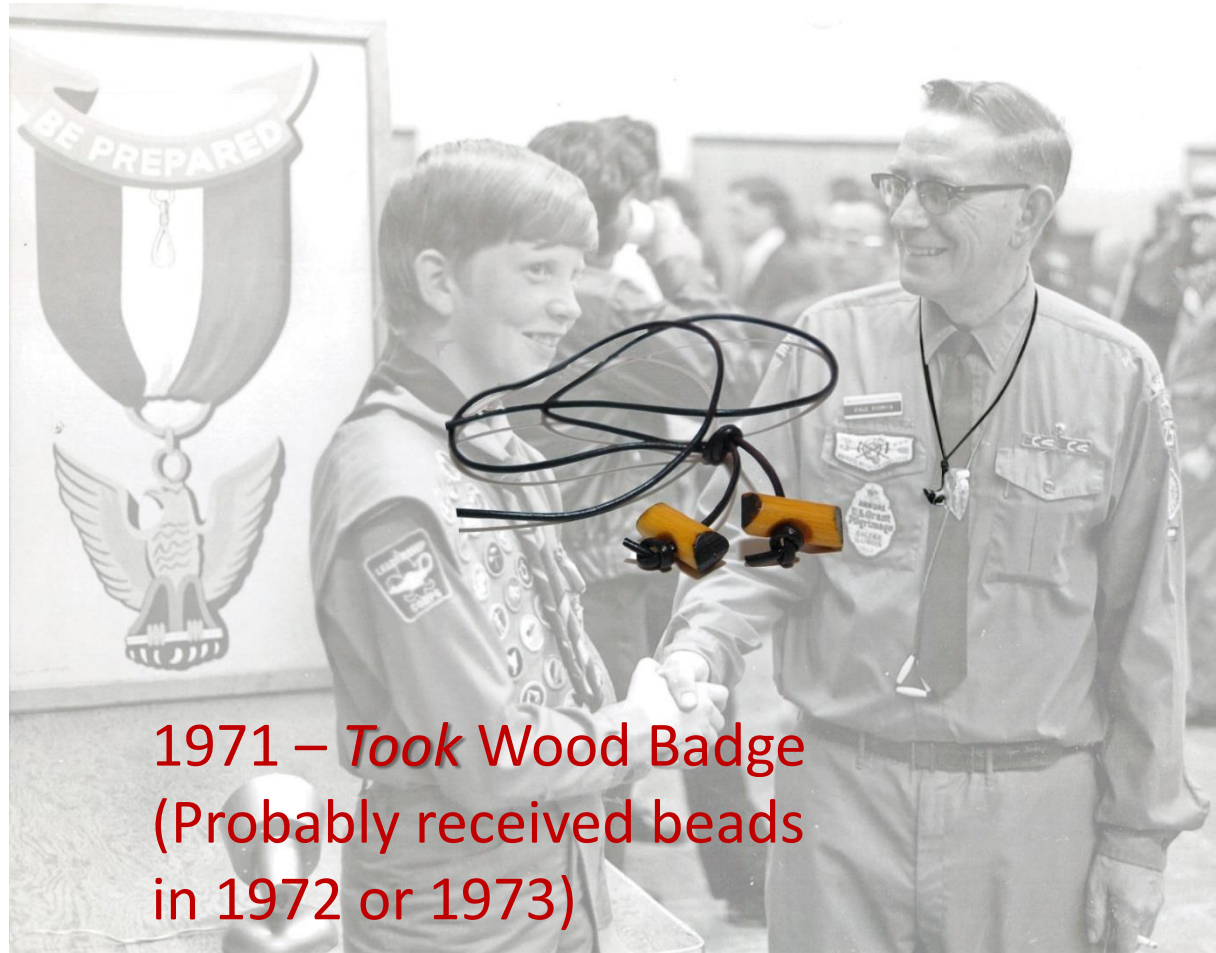
# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



1970 – Vigil Honor

1971 – Lodge Merger

# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



1971 – *Took Wood Badge*  
(Probably received beads  
in 1972 or 1973)



# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



1975 – Silver Beaver Award

Passed Away June 14, 1975

# Learn to Look “Through” Photos



# Your Experiences / Questions

**Thanks for coming!**  
**Enjoy the rest of your day!**

**Steve Sarver • 815-751-5186**  
**[sarverman.org](http://sarverman.org) • [scouts@sarverman.org](mailto:scouts@sarverman.org)**

