

BOY SCOUT TROOP 72

District Four--Watchung Area Council

Sponsored by the Men's Triangle Bible Class of

The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, N.J.

A FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY HISTORY OF THE TROOP

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1963

Westfield, N.J.

A HISTORY OF BOY SCOUTING IN WESTFIELD AND OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 72

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PROLOGUE: A Summary of Troop 72's History Prepared for the  
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Boy Scout Troop 72, which celebrated its official 40th anniversary in 1963, is one of the largest and most active troops in the nation. The Troop, which in recent years has numbered between 75 and 150 boys, meets every Monday evening from 7 to 9 P.M. in Westminster Hall under the guidance of an expert Scoutmaster and his assistants plus the many fathers active on the Troop Committee. At least one or two overnight camping trips, canoeing trips, day hikes or other outdoor scouting events are held each month throughout the year. During the summer months the boys camp together as a troop for 2-4 weeks at the Watchung Area Council camp in New Jersey and in the Adirondack Mountains or other areas suitable for canoeing.

Most of the boys are members of the Presbyterian Church, but like all other Boy Scout troops, membership is open to any interested boy over eleven years of age, regardless of religious affiliation. Consequently, the membership includes boys from all the Protestant denominations in town plus some from the Roman Catholic and the Jewish religions. The Troop, through its leaders and the Institutional representative, maintains close liaison with the overall program of the Church. The Minister of Youth works especially close with those boys studying for the comprehensive God and Country Award.

A Boy Scout Troop was first formed at the Church in 1917 during the seventh year of scouting in America. It was actually formed as a double troop known as Troop 2-3 and at the same time, one other troop had been in existence for one year in Westfield.

The first Scoutmaster of the Troop was M. A. Harris, who later became Deputy Commissioner of Scouting for the Westfield District. There were four assistant Scoutmasters among, whom was Myrton E. Glover ,who was active for many years in the Triangle Bible Class and who succeeded Harris as Scoutmaster. The three members of the Troop Committee at that time were W. J. Anderson; M. C. Dutcher, superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School; and John C. Morrow, secretary of the Men's Club.

In 1919 all men interested in scouting met at the old Parish House and formed what was known as the Central Union Council of Boy Scouts. This Council included all of the communities from Westfield eastward through the Roselles. Dr. Wllilliam Steans, Minister of the Church, was interested in the scouting movement, for he spoke at this organization meeting, and lent his support to the Scoutmaster's monthly meetings in the old Parish House. With the help of the Church and the leaders originally interested in scouting, a total of seven Boy Scout troops were formed in Westfield by the end of 1919. Troop 2, the original Church troop, continued to meet, in the Presbyterian Parish House.

By 1922, The Central Union Boy Scout Council had to disband due to apathy of the public in the period following World War I and to the lack of financial support by the communities. Without leadership, scouting, including Troop 2, completely disappeared from Westfield. A year later the young men of the American Legion recognized the value of the Scouting, movement and reorganized four troops for the community. From this reorganization in May, 1923, the present Troop's birthday is officially recognized. Again known as Troop 2, the boys met at the old American Legion headquarters on Prospect Street and then for a while at Lincoln School.



In 1925 the Troop returned to the Presbyterian Church under the sponsorship of the Men's Triangle Bible Class, where it has remained. In 1926 all of the Westfield Boy Scout troops became a part of the new Watchung Area Council and in 1932 the "7" digit was prefixed to their numbers.

In the early days of the Troop and up until the late thirties, outdoor camping was limited to about one or two overnights a year plus a week or two of summer camp for a few boys. The boys spent overnights in the Troop's cabin which was located in a wooded section of town known as the Fairacres Tract at the present intersection of Wells Street and St. Marks Avenue. Under the leadership of John Van der Veer in the forties, the Troop began an active schedule of monthly camping trips. This -proved especially difficult during the gasoline rationing days of World War II for the boys to reach far flung camping spots available in the metropolitan area. However, Vandy loaded his boys with packs onto public buses and trains and cajoled the conductors into making unscheduled stops within a few miles hiking distance of their camp.

After Vandy relinquished the leadership of the Troop, the camping, schedules were not rigdly followed and the membership dropped drastically. Dr. Robert Skinner, Senior Minister, who was vitally interested in the Troop asked Stscy Bender to take over leadership late in 1950. Stacy again brought strong, leadership to the Troop, and this has continued to the present time. Throughout the past decade of the Troop's history an ever accelerating program of monthly overnight camping trips, hiking, and canoeing events was added to the schedule. The boy membership also made up the nucleus of two National Jamboree Boy Scout Troops. One troop attended the Jamboree event at Valley

Forge under William Holt, Scoutmaster in 1957; and the other traveled to Colorado Springs under Rogers Dearing, Scoutmasters in 1960.

Since its formation the Troop has followed the aim of National Scouting which is to train boys for citizenship by inculcation from within the boy the qualities of character, health, strength, handicraft, skill and service to others. Approximately 2000 boys have passed through the Troop. Between fifty and sixty of these boys attained scouting's highest achievement of Eagle rank. Since its inception late in the forties, the very rigorous God and Country recognition has been awarded to about 35 boys by the Church's ministerial staff. This award which is earned after a year's study by the boy with his minister in Christian outreach and service has received its greatest interest under the tenure of the Rev. James Cole, Minister to Youth. -Under the leadership of the God and Country recipients, outdoor Christian services of devotion and worship are held on each camping trip.

The Troop is financially self-supporting. Under a Christmas paper sales program instituted in 1951 by Arthur W. McClure of the Triangle Bible Class, the boys, earn the funds with which to purchase their tents and other items of heavy camping gear. Also, summer camping scholarships are provided for the most active and noteworthy scouts of the year.

The following lists the men who have served as Scoutmasters for the Troop throughout the years, but no attempt has been made to list the hundreds of men who have contributed to the stewardship of the Church by serving the Troop as assistant



scoutmasters, Troop committeemen, scouting instructors and other adult assistants which are so necessary for successful operation of this large boy's organization.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Scoutmaster</u>	<u>No. of boys originally chartered for year</u>
1918	M. A. Harris	--
1919	"	--
1920	Myrton E. Glover	--
1921	"	--
1922	-----	--
1923	Harold L. Brooks	--
1924	"	--
1925	James K. Rocky	--
1926	William J. Savoye	18
1927	John A, Dennis, Jr.	21
1928	"	24
1929	Thomas H. Young	25
1930	"	29
1931	"	21
1932	Ray Hyers	27
1933	"	22
1934	F. E. Hanson	25
1935	Walter Taylor	35
1936	"	27
1937	Ray Hyers	29
1938	"	31
1939	"	32
1940	John Van der Veer	31
1941	"	30
1942	"	31
1943	"	33
1944	"	39



<u>Year</u>	<u>Scoutmaster</u>	<u>No. of boys originally chartered for year</u>
1945	John H. Van der Veer	33
1946	John L. Williams	27
1947	"	26
1948	Albert F. Chadwick	19
1949	"	17
1950	Stacy Bender	19
1951	"	21
1952	"	30
1953	William P. Holt	35
1954	"	40
1955	"	45
1956	"	50
1957	"	60
1958	Rogers K. Dearing	75
1959	"	88
1960	"	90
1961	"	114
1962	"	127
1963	William A. Foote	135

## CHAPTER I: Scouting in Westfield, 1917-1923

There are no existing records of the Troop's actual formation, but- from other records it was ascertained that the Troop was originally organized in July, 1917. The earliest record in the Troop's possession is a National Charter dated 1919 and believed to be the first actually issued to the Troop.

One of the first notices in the newspapers (The Standard and The Westfield Leader) of Scouting activity in Westfield was a brief article that a "Boys Day" was held in March, 1917. Charles H. Robinson, who was Scoutmaster of the Boy Scouts and president of the Westfield District Sunday School Association presided at the event. The troop headed by Mr. Robinson was Troop 1 and the only one in Westfield at that time. In July, 1917, Troop 2 (later to become known as TROOP 72) was formed under Scoutmaster M. A. Harris at the Westfield Presbyterian Church. In February, 1918, Troop 1 with R. W. Hunt, Scoutmaster then, and Troop 2 (M. A. Harris, scoutmaster) met together at the Presbyterian Church to celebrate the eighth anniversary of Boy Scouting in America. Later that same month both again met to hear a talk by the Senior Minister of the Church, Dr. William Steans. From all accounts of that era, Dr. Steans was keenly interested in the Scouting movement, for he lent his encouragement and the Church facilities to the formation of new troops over the next two years. In July, 1918, there was held at the Presbyterian Church the "annual swearing in of the Boy Scouts". It is recorded that there were then three troops in Westfield, but this was because the original Troop 2 was split and became known as Troop 2-3, still under Scoutmaster M. A. Harris. By the end of 1918 there were sixty boys in these three Westfield troops all of which participated in a



Liberty Bond parade with World War I soldiers in New York City. Scout Arthur Bunnell, who in later life became an Elder of the Presbyterian Church, carried the Troop 2-3 colors.

Throughout 1918 the Scouters of Westfield made plans to form a council. This became an accomplished fact on February 15, 1919, when the Central Union Council was formed in a meeting at the High School on Elm Street. This Council included the communities of Roselle, Roselle Park, Cranford, Garwood, Westfield and Scotch Plains. Julian E. McKnight of Roselle was elected to be the first president of the new council. During February of that year, organizational meetings were held and plans made to start a fund drive throughout all of the communities involved. By March, the fund drive had reached the same obstacle that many Boy Scout fund drives have met since: it did not reach its goal.

The following month the new Central Union Council hired a Professional scout executive. On April 29th a Boy Scout Rally dinner was held in the old Presbyterian Parish House to welcome the new executive, John D. McEwen. (The owner of McEwen's Floral Shop, Grove Street, is the brother of John.) J. R. Boardman of the National Boy Scout headquarters along with Senator William Runyon, Scout Commissioner, attended. At this dinner the many scout committees were formed and the Council was in operation.

By June of 1919 there were six troops in town. One new troop had been formed of boys who lived "on Madison Avenue out near the big woods". It was proudly noted that one troop consisted entirely of colored boys" and efforts were being made to form a troop of all Italian boys. With this growing organization, the City Council turned over the old



Prospect School to the Scouts for use as a headquarters (this was an old frame building and was situated about where the present town parking lots are located.

In July, 1919, Troops 2, 3, 4 were "sworn in to membership" in ceremonies at the Presbyterian Church. M. B. Dutcher, who was one of the first committeemen of Troop 2, administered the oath as Scout Commissioner of the new Council. That summer, the Scouts from Westfield attended their first summer camp at Scout Camp Wawanassa at Bear Mountain., New York. This camp was for use by the New York and New Jersey scouts. They were quartered in old eight-man army tents. When the boys arrived in camp, it was pouring rain. After two days of constant rain, the -parents back home became worried and sent a special delegation to Bear Mountain to check on the boys. A glowing report on the health of the boys came back even though by now it was noted that everyone was up to their knees in mud. After a week of continued rain the camp was closed and the boys all came home.

In the fall of that year all of the Scouts met at the Presbyterian Church under the leadership of M. A. Harris, who was now deputy commissioner of Scouting. Mr. Harris installed Mr. Myrton E. Glover as Scoutmaster of Troop 2. Mountainside was now represented in the Council with Troop 7 under the leadership of Olaf Olseni. In December the Council scouts held what would now be called a Camporee. All troops hiked to a vacant lot in Scotch Plains and set up camp. All visitors to the weekend campsite "were amazed at how well the boys could roast potatoes and live outdoors."

In January, 1920, there were now 191 boys in the seven troops of the Westfield District. It was decided to make the double Troop 2-3 into two separate troops in order



"that Troop 2 might be designated as the preparatory troop for promotion into the Officers training troop". The seven troops of the Westfield District along with their Scoutmasters were:

Capt. H. B. Wright	Troop 1
Myrton E. Glover	Troop 2
R. R. Chatfield	Troop 3
C. H. P. Smith	Troop 4
Alex Taylor	Troop 5
H. J. Sensbush	Troop 6
Olaf Olsen	Troop 7

The newspapers do not give any further news of the Scouts throughout 1920., but by February of 1921 it was noted that the Central Union Council was in financial difficulty. A fund drive was held, but it was not successful. All of the seven troops were still operating, however. The only newspaper notice given to the scouts in 1922 was the fact that they marched in the Memorial Day Parade. At the end of this Particular parade all participants gathered at the cemetary [sic] at the end of Broad Street to hear a speech by the minister of a Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth. This minister gave a pro-German speech which almost started a riot as most of his listeners were members of the new American Legion. At the end of his speech which had been punctuated by catcalls and yells, "the American Legion men arose as a body and demanded that he be lynched". Fortunately, for his own good it was noted that "the minister had quietly slipped away in the crowd and disappeared".

Unfortunately, in 1922 Scouting completely disappeared in Westfield due to the lack of leadership. The Council was disbanded because enough financial support could not be maintained to pay executive, John McEwen, who then became a professional on the National Headquarters staff.

In 1923 the young men of the American Legion who recognized the value of the Scouting Movement worked to reestablish scouting for Westfield. That year they re-formed four troops which all met at the American Legion headquarters (the old Prospect Street School building). Troop 2's charter was renewed May 30, 1923, which is the official birthday of the present Troop 72. Actually, the four troops that the American Legion re-formed are today known as Troop 71, 72, 73, and 74. and are Westfield's oldest troops.

Troop 2 met for awhile at the American Legion building and then at Lincoln School. In 1925 they returned to the Presbyterian Church and met in the old Parish House (now Westminster Hall) under the sponsorship of the Men's Triangle Bible Class where they have remained ever since. Doug Sampson, who in adult life has maintained active leadership in Westfield's scouting, affairs, was a boy member of Troop 2 at that time. Doug recalls very vividly his days in the Troop and his recollections are recounted in the next chapter.

In 1926 the Watchung Area Council, encompassing the communities from Bernardsville, through Plainfield and Westfield, up through Summit was formed, and Troop 2 became a part of this organization which today is one of the top ten councils in the Nation. From 1926 to the present time all of the charter applications of the Troop are on file in the Council office. Many of the present prominent business men of the town were boy members of the Troop and their names may be found on the annual Charters.



## CHAPTER II: TROOP 72, The First 25 Years, 1923-1948

After its reorganization in 1923 by the American Legion and after it became a part of the Watchung Area Council in 1926, the Troop was still designated as Troop 2, of the Westfield District. Then in 1931 the Council added the numeral "7" to all of the Westfield troops.

The best history of the Troop during its first 25 years was recounted by former Scoutmaster John H. Van der Veer in a talk given at the silver anniversary celebration in 1948 at the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Van der Veer's story is as follows:

I cannot start this history of Troop 72 better than by reading a report I have just received from one of its charter members:

First of all, congratulations, not only on the number of years,, but also because the group has hung together for such a long period. Little did any of us kids back in 1923 think that we would still be-thinking of Scouting 25 years later. It is a tribute- to the type of leadership that Troop 72 has had that makes a 25th reunion possible.

I believe that Eyre Hutson and Harold Brooks were most instrumental in starting the troop at the old Legion headquarters on Prospect Street. We used to meet on the second floor in the back, and as I recall, drilled most of the time, or so it seemed. This was not surprising because at that time the troop was sponsored by the American Legion, and drilling was what they knew best. But they did try to teach us Scouting when Commissioner John McEwen cracked the whip.

We learned most of our real Scouting down at Mr. Hutson's summer place in the Pine Barrens. We had lots of swimming in the cedar colored water holes and hiking, along the miles of wooded roads. The present gang will know what they were like if you have had any recent hikes to the Pine Barrens.

Troop 72' used to be pretty good, as I recall it., although I am not sure we won all the rallies. I can still recall the 10 or 12 foot high wall that we had to scale as part of the rallies. Rope tying [sic], fire lighting, water boiling, first aid, three legged races, all were fun and a lot of us worked hard to do our best for old 72 - number 2 in those days.

I can also recall the first overnight hike we had in town, up to Surprise Lake (which was then called Silver Lake), with hot dogs, coffee, cocoa, and baked potatoes. A few of the dads stayed with us - but very few. We had old eight-man



Army tents and straw for bedding. The rocks were so hard that none of us could sleep. About two in the morning Mr. Hutson made all of us get up in our pajamas and hiked us for several miles to tire us out so we'd keep quiet the rest of the night.

After Eyre Hutson became commissioner, Harold Brooks took charges and after him came J. K. Rockey, who was an Eagle Scout and wanted everyone else to be one. He really tried hard, but he had a hard gang to work with. About this time we used to meet in the Lincoln School.

We had a lot more fun in Lincoln School because of the better floor and the swell basketball baskets. We played a lot and I think we beat all the other troops in town. We took a lot of day hikes with Mr. Rockey and had our cabin in back of Red Chattins farm. Mr. Rockey tried to teach us all about trees and birds, but we all liked to cook and eat more than we did to study birds. I guess that is how I learned to cook so well - ask Vandy or George Koechlein about my prowess. I'm glad I'm far away, because I'm sure they'd not be too sympathetic.

After Lincoln School we moved to the Presbyterian Chapel and were not so well accommodated. The basement was too low for basketball and the windows wore too brittle for growing boys.

This has been rather a rambling letter but I wish I could remember more of the good times we had. I do wish to emphasize, however, that Senior Scouting is the real important part of Scouting that was missing in the beginning.

Congratulations again to Troop 72. I hope a lot of the old gang turn out and make the celebration a real one. My regards to Ray Hyers and all the rest of the gang.

Signed,

Doug Sampson, Haverhill, Mass.

From Sampson's letter you will note that the troop was in existence prior to 1923, the year from which we reckon this anniversary.

The most important man in a Scout Troop is the Scoutmaster. The troop committee is also important, but their main job is to back up the Scoutmaster. Our Scoutmasters have been a pretty hardy lot - they had to, to be Scoutmasters - for as far as I know, all former Scoutmasters of this troop are still alive.

The troop committee chairmen have not been so fortunate, for in recent years we have lost three; Allen Richardson, E. Lufkin Smith, and Robert DuBois.



In the late war we lost two of our Scouts, Major Lindberg and Lieutenant Blifford.

Doug Sampson has told you of meeting in this building. One of our most strenuous activities in this building was the game, "Can in the Dark". Later we were assigned to our present quarters in the Parish House, where the chances of accidental damage are much less. The forbearance of the church authorities over the years speaks eloquently of their Christian spirits, for I know that at times we have sorely tried them.

When we organized our Cub Pack another meeting place was needed once a month to make room for the Cubs. For this purpose we were able to secure the High School gymnasium, and the Board of Education has granted us this use ever since. But as we have wished to maintain our intimate contact with this church, we have alternated our meetings between the Parish House and the High School gym.

Sampson spoke of the troop having been sponsored at first by the American Legion. I think this was changed to the Triangle Bible Class of this church about the time we moved here. This would be about 1926. We are very fortunate in having been sponsored by the Triangle Bible Class ever since.

Doug also mentioned our cabin. It was located about where Wells Street and St. Marks Avenue now intersect. We kept this cabin until about 1937 when the opening of Wells Street compelled us to give it up. The cabin was a great care because it was often-broken into by people from surrounding towns, usually with considerable damage.

While we had the cabin a lot of the troop activity centered there. Some of the older fellows went there after troop meetings Friday evenings and stayed until Sunday afternoon. It was there that the older fellows taught Scouting to the younger ones and passed their tests.

Back in those days we had a mother's association which raised money for the troop. For a number of years this was a successful organization.



Overnight troop hiking did not go on a monthly schedule until 1939 when the troop was about 15 years old. Prior to that time there was about one overnight hike a year, and as Doug Sampson described one, they were quite sketchy affairs.

After-that a typical hiking schedule was an October hike to Camp Watchung, a November hike to the Schiff National Reservation at Mendham., a December hike to Camp Lion, a Christmas hike to Camp Watchung, a Washington's Birthday hike to the Montclair Scout camp at Glen Gray, a March hike to Schiff, an April hike to the pine barrens back of-Forked River, and a May hike to Camp Watchung. The Washington's Birthday hike was a one-day affair, the Christmas week hike a three-day outing, and the rest overnight hikes. Lately the troop has also hiked overnight to the Stokes State Forest.

On one pine barrens hike I unexpectedly-had to work Saturday evening, The troop had gone ahead Saturday morning under other adult leaders. So I started out alone early Sunday morning and arrived in Camp just as the fellows were finishing breakfast. Bob Lowe was cooking pancakes and he offered me some. Well those pancakes were so good that I kept Bob cooking them for at least forty-five minutes. I can still taste how good they were,

On these pine barrens hikes, which were generally late in April, we usually managed to get a dip in the cedar colored swimming hole.

Gas rationing during the war restricted the distances we could go on hikes but we never missed our monthly schedule. We could walk to Camp Lion, while we could go by train to Schiff and to Camp Watchung, or at least within five miles of them. One time we tried taking a bus to Sterling. That was alright Saturday, but when the troop arrived at Sterling Sunday on the way back we found that the bus did not run Sundays. Reed Warburton, Mrs. Van der Veer and Jim Boyer combined to help-us out of that hole.



During the last five years the troop has done an excellent job of paper collecting. This became a joint effort of the troop committee and the Scouts, and enough money has been made for the troop to acquire a good equipment of tents and cooking equipment for hikes.

Before the paper collections became so well organized Van Doren's Laundry used to loan us a laundry wagon Saturday mornings for our paper collections. Jack Moore used to get a great kick out of driving the laundry wagon with the World's Fair horn. (Jack is now Professor of Economics at the University of Knoxville, Tennessee.) (12/9/62).

Mention of the late war brings to mind the Emergency Service Corps, that town-wide organization of about fifty senior Scouts which cooperated with the Defense Council. Troop 72 was the first troop to put a qualified patrol in the Corps. Our troop always had more than its proportion of Scouts in that organization. One of their projects was to put a message from the Mayor of Westfield to the Mayor of Plainfield by signalling [sic]. The day scheduled rained cats and dogs. But the message went through.

Also, during the war we had about six air-minded Scouts who formed an active Air Scout unit under the leadership of Don Patch and the guidance of Hermann Fischer.

As you all know, the last war demonstrated the wonderful work fellows of Senior Scout age can do when the need arises. One summer Russ Raush of our troop got the job of assistant waterfront director at Camp Watchung. To qualify for this work Russ had to take a training course of a week of 15-hour days at the Schiff National Training School. When Russ had been in camp but a week the adult waterfront director was taken by the army. For the rest of the summer Russ, who was but 17, ran the waterfront at camp. Jim (Scout Executive) Boyer was careful to always have adults on hand, but Russ ran the job. (Russ is now a successful building contractor.)



I have mentioned our Cub Pack. We ran a Cub Pack in connection with the troop for about five years. Finally we transferred the Pack to McKinley School, which was the school from which most of our Cubs came.

We have sent a number of Scouts to Camp Watchung each summer. This camping has been most successful when the Scouts from the troop all went at the same time, accompanied by an adult leader. Once we had seventeen Scouts and an adult leader in camp for a week. Needless to say, we cleaned up all camp contests that week, including the water front, touch football, baseball and volley ball.

At Camp Watchung our fellows have actively supported the Order of the Arrow. Both Dan Clark and Walter Van der Veer served as chiefs of the O. A. A number of our fellows hold Brotherhood rank in this honorary camping organization.

The highlights of a troop occur in competitive events. Troop spirit and activity are always highest when the troop makes a good showing in competition.

The early history of the troop was full of successful competition. We won the Westfield district rallies in 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1932. We again pushed our heads above the crowd in North Plainfield in 1938. At that time Bill Blount was the active junior leader under Scoutmaster Hyers. That year our Fox Patrol won the area camping contest against Plainfield, Summit and the other towns in our area, while the troop led all Westfield troops in the Area rally.

This Fox Patrol was one of the original patrols of the troop. Back in the early 30's it had also won an area camping contest. From 1938 to 1943 the Fox Patrol of our troop won every camping contest. Other famous patrols of those days were the Beaver Patrol, led by Bob Wright, the Antelope Patrol, led by Ken Swallow, and the Eagle Patrol, led by Bob Hanson.

About this time we went in strong for tower building. Our tower was constructed entirely of ropes and poles, not a nail being used. Standing about 15 feet high, it easily



supported six Scouts on its platform. After much practice two Senior Scouts could erect it in twenty minutes.

The year following the North Plainfield rally won the district rally but lost the area rally at Summit by a narrow margin when one of our fellows blew up in the string burning, contest.

The next year a similar loss occurred when we allowed -in untrained Scout in the first aid contest. But the fellow who had lost the string burning contest at Summit came back and made good, so that we won the string burning relay in the record time of 52 seconds. This was really something. Three pairs of Scouts in a relay produced three fires by flint and steel, upon the completion of which the fourth pair made a string burning fire by friction. This record was only obtained by months of practice.

There was not much troop advancement for the first seven years in our troop. About 1930 Jack Brady came to us as a transfer with first class rank He gave our advancement a real start. Bob Nanz and Karl Litzelman were Life Scouts of that period while Jack Brady, Al Bengston, Alan Hazeltine, John Hoffman, Jack Van der Veer, Bill Rowland, Bill Blount, and Clayton Kaynes were Eagle Scouts at the time.

Right here it should be recorded that Al Bengston, who joined us as a tenderfoot, served as Assistant Scoutmaster the four years 1933 to 1937 and only left us to become Scoutmaster of Troop 74. Other fellows who started in Troop 72 and became Scoutmasters were Doug Sampson and Clayton Kynes.

The next group consisted of Bill and Bob Lowe, Life Scouts, and the following Eagles: Bob Wright, Walter Van der Veer, Bill Cesarz, Bob Hanson, Dan Clark, Clark Ambrose, and Coleman Clark.

Then came Don Patch, Marvin Brager, Les Johnson, Dave Downs, and Dave Green as Life Scouts and Russ Raush, Jack Moore, and Reed Warburton as Eagle Scouts.



Mr. William's group includes Ed Bodkin, Pete Waldrop, and Bob Harris as Life Scouts.

In our twenty-five years we have had 18 Eagle Scouts.

When area rallies were discontinued in 1941, advancement was used as a basis of troop rating. We led all Westfield troops in advancement in 1941, 1942, 1943, and 1944. Also, in 1942 we won the area advancement contest over all troops in the Watchung Area Council. This placed our name on the annual Council Trophy. Troop 72 is the only Westfield troop whose name is engraved on this trophy.

But advancement is not the work of the Scoutmaster. Alone he wouldn't get to first base. Just as Scoutmaster Rockey didn't get far in the early days. The fellows who piled up the advancement record for Troop 72 were Dan Clark, Russ Raush., Don Patch, Jack Moore, and Reed Warburton. They did it by bringing up the advancement of the other Scouts in the troop.

Jim Boyer used to tell a story of our Scoutmaster of those days. It seems that this Scoutmaster used to check the fellows attendance at the boards of review. One time when a Scout didn't show up the Scoutmaster phoned him and asked the reason. The fellow replied that he had to mind the baby. "You come down to court", said the Scoutmaster. "I'll mind the baby."

Coming down to more recent history, the troop won the Westfield district camping, contest in 1946, placed third in the spring of 1947 and won it hands down in the fall of last year. This last win was the result of the training of Scoutmaster Williams and the excellent leadership of Ed Bodkin, Pete Waldrop and Bob Harris. It was the best exhibition of troop camping I have ever seen.

This is the end of Mr. Van der Veer's story.



### CHAPTER III: Troop 72, 1948-1963

After John Van der Veer relinquished leadership of the Troop, the monthly camping schedules were not rigidly followed and by 1950 many of the boys had lost interest and membership was at its lowest ebb. Actually, from the Spring until the Fall of 1950 the boys were evidently without a Scoutmaster. At that time there were only seventeen boys listed in the Troop and nine of these were listed as belonging to the Explorer group. The remaining eight scouts were all Tenderfoot. This was the sorriest state to which the Troop had fallen since its reorganization in 1923. Dr. Robert Skinner, Senior Minister of the Church, was vitally interested in the welfare of the Troop and in the Fall of 1950 recruited Stacy Bender to take over the leadership, Stacy again brought to the Troop strong leadership which has continued. From this point on, the growth in membership, advancement and other Troop accomplishments has been almost phenomenal and stands as a classic example of how a Troop can be rapidly revitalized with a good program and strong leadership.

The points of interest concerning the Troop from 1950 -- 1958 are given in the following notes by Stacy Bender and William P. Holt, who succeeded Bender as Scoutmaster. The notes by Stacy Bender are as follows:

Reverend Robert Skinner, then Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, approached me in the summer of 1950 with a view toward relieving the then scoutmaster who had resigned and left the boys in the lurch. Consequently, I never met the man I succeeded and memory fails me as to his name. In mid-September of 1950, the ten dispirited boys were considerably heartened by the appointment of Tom McGill and Bill Kelly as Assistant Scoutmasters, and myself. The nucleus of these boys was Bob Skinner, Jr., Marstan Jones, Ricky Shreve and Dick Crane, all of whom later made Eagle Scout.

We built the troop up and after about the first year had to enlarge our charter from a four patrol unit into a six patrol unit. We had a very active Troop Committee headed by Elwood Jones, Marstan's father and, as you may know, sold holiday gift wrapping



paper with a tremendous success, enabling the troop to buy a lot of equipment and pay for two weeks at scout camp for all troop members each year. Additionally, it was easy to get the Council to approve our taking over the cabin on the Lion's Tract inasmuch as I was one of the members of old Troop 1 when it was built in 1926-1927.

During this entire period Douglas DuBois was Junior Assistant Scoutmaster.

I would say that it was in the Fall of 1952 that we founded the Explorer Unit that later became famous as the preferred honor unit for the Governor of New Jersey. Minimum advancement required for membership in this unit was the rank of Star Scout.

This is the end of Stacy Bender's notes and William P. Holt's notes are as follows:

In September, 1952 the troop was very small and had about twenty members. There were two scouts at this time who were made joint Senior Patrol Leaders. These boys had participated in all phases of the movement and are what we call "hot Scouts". They lead training at Schiff Scout Reservation and served at Camp Watchung on the Staff. They were born leaders of boys and as time has shown of men also. They were Ricky Shreve and Marstan Jones. Ricky is now Lieutenant (Jg) Richard L. Shreve serving with Admiral Rickover on the atomic submarine project at Groton, Connecticut. Rickey graduated from the United States Naval Academy with top honors. Not as much information is available on Marstan Jones as his family has moved from Westfield. We do know that he graduated from Hamilton University and believe he is, or will soon be a dentist.

In the fall of 1952 William Holt joined the staff as an Assistant Scoutmaster. At the same time the fortunes of the troop turned from the standpoint of the number of boys. When Stacy Bender took over the troop two years before, it was almost on the point of becoming extinct. The leadership was questionable and furthermore there was less interest from parents. Stacy Bender organized well and induced parents to take an active interest in both advancement and in the meetings as well. A group committee



was re-formed and worked closely with the scoutmaster during the year 1951 to build up the troop. In the fall of 1952 about fifteen boys joined the troop which was the largest number recruited up until that time. This group of boys along with the twenty scouts already in the troop made up a full troop of four patrols.

Camping at that time had not reached the widely traveled status that we now have come to expect. The troop had a cabin at Camp Lion and most of our weekend camping was confined to visits there or to Camp Watchung. At that time the cabin was comfortable and the fireplace in good working order so year round camping was very practical and diligently practiced. A great deal of emphasis was placed in 1952 on advancement, and the troop had one of the highest advancement records in District Four. At the conclusion of the scout year in June, 1953, Stacy Bender was transferred to Baltimore and William Holt became scoutmaster.

During the summer of 1953 about eighteen boys attended Camp Watchung, and in the fall of 1953 another influx of new scouts came. The troop was brought up to about 45 in strength. Bill Kelly became an Assistant Scoutmaster. Tom Macgil became advancement chairman and many fathers gave their help in starting Troop 72 up the trail to becoming one of Westfield's finest troops.

During these years, and in fact, starting in 1-951 Art McClure had made arrangement to secure Christmas wrapping paper. The boys in the troop wrapped and sold this to defray expenses for tentage and other equipment. The money received also provided camping scholarships for worthy scouts who earned points toward this honor, just as they do today.

In 1954 we moved out a bit in our camping activities. During this year we had a father and son encampment at Bass River State Forest. We also inaugurated canoe trips which were then and still are the most popular activity of the outdoor scouting year. Some of our first canoe trips were made to Lawrence Brook and Lake Farrington, near New Brunswick, and to the Rancocas River which is still popular among the scouts.



In late 1954 some of the Senior Scouts wanted to form an Explorer Post. This was done and the post included not only boys from Troop 72 but scouts from other troops in town. The post was sponsored by the Church and the boys met on Friday nights at the Church. The scouts leading this Post activity were Ricky Shreve and Marstan Jones.

1955 and 1956 saw further growth in the number of scouts in the troop. As a result camping and other activities increased and at - this time we put a plan into effect of having direct father participation on each meeting night. The troop committee appointed or made available fathers as instructors for each meeting night. Fathers also took over transportation problems, which by now had become a large factor for a troop traveling far and wide on weekend camping trips. A very fine advancement group made its imprint on the scouts. Troop 72 always stood at the top of the troop lists in advancement at the yearly District Court of Honor. Each year saw a number of Eagle Scouts awarded their badges at the Court of Honor.

1957 was a big year in the history of Troop 72. This was a year of graduating a new class of Senior Scouts who, with the beginning of the scout year in September, 1957, reactivated the Post with about twenty scouts in number. This was continued only about a year. Strangely, one of its problems was obtaining a leader to work with them. Prior to this time Mr. John Cheshire had led a Senior Scout group which had been very active with its own program. John, however, was transferred at the end of 1957 to another post in his company. It is interesting to note that John Cheshire during the time he was with the troop as Assistant Scoutmaster was married. Only a few weeks after their marriage and while John and Julie were still honeymooning, the troop journeyed to Bass River and the newlyweds went along. The Senior Scouts took great pleasure in pitching a special tent right on the beach of Lake Absegami for the honeymooning couple. During these years Bob Gallagher, Earle Benton, Jack Collins, Neal Crouse and Don Keel were Assistant Scoutmasters with the troop.

During July, 1957, a National Scout Jamboree was held at Valley Forge. Troop 72 made some history in District Four by sending 21 scouts from the troop to make up the



best part of one of the troops attending. Five of these scouts were elected to leadership status in the Jamboree Troop. Its Scoutmaster was William Holt who was still scoutmaster of Troop 72. In May, 1958, William Holt resigned as scoutmaster of the troop and was succeeded by Rogers Dearing who had been an Assistant Scoutmaster of the, Troop.

Interesting side notes:

The System of Point Charting which was started in 1954 is similar to the one in use now.

Each year emphasis was placed on the God and Country Award which became very active when Jim Cole arrived as Minister of Youth.

Each successive year more boys became interested in long term camping and Camp Watchung attendance increased each year.

This is the end of William P. Holt's notes.

Under Scoutmaster Dearing the monthly camping schedule carried out by Bender and Holt was continued. The canoeing program which proved so popular under Holt was implemented and to the summer camping schedule was added a week's canoeing trip to the Adirondacks. For both the adult leaders and the boys these summer camping events were a most enjoyable experience. At the same time the number of boys attending the Council's Camp Watchung increased each year. In the summer of 1962, 120 boy weeks were spent by the Troop at Watchung. For the past three to four years the Troop has far exceeded all other Council troops in the amount of camping experience.

Under Holt in 1954 an individual point scoring system was instituted. All of the boy members were listed on a large chart and points were recorded each week by the Troop scribe for attendance, advancement, overnight camping attendance, and performance of community services. From this point system the top 20-30 boys were awarded summer camp scholarships with the money earned from the Christmas paper



sales. This individual point scoring system has been continued and is followed with keen interest by all the boys. Added to this in 1959 was a patrol scoring system. Patrol scores were awarded on a competitive basis for camping proficiency, contests, etc. At the end of the year nominal prizes such as special neckerchiefs and neckerchief slides denoting "Honor Patrol" membership are awarded.

In 1958 Messrs. John Wilson and in 1959 Richard Gruman joined the Troop as Assistant Scoutmasters. Under Wilson's guidance the program was strengthened and all of the boy leaders were trained at Council Junior Leader Training Courses or in the National Training Courses at Schiff Reservation. These trained leaders then actually ran the Troop. No step was taken in the program unless it had the approval of the Green Bar Council (the boy leaders). Gruman had a special interest in boy advancement and under his guidance the boys received the maximum in scouting. The advancement in the Troop continued to rate among the best in the Council and well above the national average with 65-80 per cent of the Troop each year at or above First Class rank. With the Troop actually under well trained boys, no real discipline problems ever developed. We had a well rounded program and opportunity for fun and advancement, the number of new boys applying for membership continues to increase. This has posed no particular problem as many fathers of the Troop committee are always in attendance each meeting night and on each camping trip. By the summer of 1962 the Troop reached its highest registered membership of 150 boys. In the spring of 1962 the Troop was awarded a plaque as the "Honor Troop" of District Four, Watchung Area Council. This award was based on the percentage of registered boys participating, advancing and being trained.

In the summer of 1960 the boys of Troop 72 formed the nucleus of one of the seven Watchung Council troops to attend the Golden Jubilee Jamboree at Colorado Springs. R. K. Dearing and John Wilson led the Jamboree Troop as Scout-master and Assistant Scoutmaster, Also, William Holt, former Scoutmaster, acted as tour master



for the Watchung Area troops on this Jamboree adventure which consisted of a moving tour through most of the Western part of the Nation.

Under Dearing's tenure as Scoutmaster no attempt was made to continue an Exploring Post for in 1959, the National Council separated exploring from all troop operations. Any boys over fourteen years of age who wished to remain in a Boy Scout troop then had to do so as Senior Scouts, rather than as Explorers. In the Fall of 1960 a Senior Scout Patrol with William Holt as advisor was then set up. Membership in this patrol is entirely voluntary for all boys over fourteen years of age. That is, the senior boys of the Troop may chose either the regular Troop program or the Senior program. The Senior program was set up to provide greater opportunity for service to the Church, to the community, and to the younger boys in the regular Troop. Some of the Senior outdoor trips are integrated with the regular Troop camping schedule but trips of historical or avocational interest are also undertaken. Under Holt's leadership this program proved much more successful than the old Exploring program and many boys are maintaining an active participation in Scouting right through high school.

In the fall of 1962 Dearing resigned as Scoutmaster and the Troop committee appointed William A. Foote, who was an assistant scoutmaster, as the new Scoutmaster. Mr. Foote who is an expert archer, camping and general outdoor enthusiast, brings to the boys new plans and judgments for even greater achievements in Scouting.

TROOP 72: Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, Committee Chairmen

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of boys on annual chartered application</u>	<u>Scoutmaster</u>	<u>Ass't. SM's</u>	<u>Troop Com. Chrmn.</u>
1917	--	M. A. Harris	M.E. Glover A.H. Hoppock E.D. Skinner G.E. Howarth	M.C. Dutcher
1918	--	M. A. Harris	G.E. Howarth	M.C. Dutcher
1919	--	"	"	"
1920	--	Myrton E. Glover	--	--
1921	--	"	--	--
1922	--	-----	--	--
1923	--	Harold L. Brooks	--	--
1924	--	"	--	--
1925	--	James K. Rocky	--	--
1926	18	William J. Savoye	--	W.T. Conner
1927	21	John A. Dennis, Jr.	--	"
1928	24	John A. Dennis, Jr.	F.P. Turner T.H. Young Wm. Quick	R.G. Casstleman
1929	25	Thomas H. Young	J.A. Dennis Wm. Quick	W.T. Conner
1930	29	Thomas H. Young	Wm. Quick	R.G. Castleman
1931	21	"	"	W.T. Conner
1932	27	Ray Hyers	"	Joseph A. Reid
1933	22	"	John Brady F.E. Hanson	Robert C. DuBois
1934	25	F. E. Hanson	T.H. Kenny G.A. Bengston John Brady	Robert C. DuBois
1935	35	Walter Taylor	G.A. Bengston C.A. Scott, Jr. Edward P. Dilks	Robert C. DuBois
1936	27	Walter Taylor	Edward P. Dilks	F.E. Hanson
1937	29	Ray Hyers	A. Bengston	J.H. Van der Veer
1938	31	"	Wm. Rowland J.H. Van der Veer Clayton Kynes	A.H. Richardson
1939	32	Ray Hyers	Clayton Kynes W.G. Blount	Robert C. DuBois



<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of boys on annual chartered application</u>	<u>Scoutmaster</u>	<u>Ass't. SM's</u>	<u>Troop Com. Chrmn.</u>
1940	31	J.H. Van der Veer	Clayton Kynes Wm. Rowland W.G. Blount K.B. Litzelman	F.E. Hanson
1941	30	"	W.G. Blount Wm. Rowland	Walter Taylor
1942	31	"	E.A. Jeuther, Jr. W.B. Van der Veer	Herman A. Fischer
1943	33	J.H. Van der Veer	W.B. Van der Veer W.A. Rowland Wm. J. Cesarz Wm. Blount	G.L. Cheasley
1944	39	J.H. Van der Veer	Wm. Blount	G.L. Cheasley
1945	33	"	"	Harold W. Conley
1946	27	John L. Williams	H.A. Halsey J. H. Van der Veer	Wm. E. Wyman
1947	26	John L. Williams	H.A. Halsey J. H. Van der Veer	L.C. Smith
1948	19	Albert F. Chadwick	Benj. T. Marshall	L.C. Smith
1949	17	"	"	"
1950	19	Stacy Bender	L.T. McGill	Elwood W. Jones, Jr.
1951	21	"	--	--
1952	30	"	--	--
1953	35	W. P. Holt	Wm. Kelly D. DuBois	J. Corbett Jones
1954	40	W. P. Holt	Wm. Kelly D. DuBois	J. Corbett Jones
1955	45	W. P. Holt	Earl Benton Bob Galagher John Cheshire	J. Corbett Jones
1956	50	W. P. Holt	Earl Benton Bob Galagher John Cheshire	J. Corbett Jones
1957	60	W. P. Holt	Donald Keel Earl Benton N. Crouse	Alva Sapp
1958	75	Rogers K. Dearing	Donald Keel Gilbert Foster John P. Wilson	C.H. Mayne

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of boys on annual chartered application</u>	<u>Scoutmaster</u>	<u>Ass't. SM's</u>	<u>Troop Com. Chrmn.</u>
1959	88	Rogers K. Dearing	John P. Wilson R.D. Gruman	Robert Bangs
1960	90	Rogers K. Dearing	J.P. Wilson R.D. Gruman G.E. Foster R.P. Staack W.P. Holt	R.H. Stalbaum
1961	114	Rogers K. Dearing	W.P. Holt J.F. Curran Ben Cutrer	F.J. Madea
1962	127	Rogers K. Dearing	Ben Cutrer C.L. Brown W.A. Foote	John W. Brumbaugh
1963	135	Wm. A. Foote	C.L. Brown Ben Cutrer John P. Wilson R.D. Gruman Ted Jacobs Stan Baumann Fred Wenker Wm. P. Holt Jack Woodford	John W. Brumbaugh



### EPILOGUE: Troop 72 History

The history of Troop 72 is undoubtedly written in over-glowing terms which reflect the biased opinions of its authors. In truth,, however, the successes and failures of the Troop probably rate it about comparable in the long run to many other well managed troops.

This written history lists only facts compiled or deduced from written records. The early history (1917-1925) was prepared from the newspaper records of the "Standard" and "The Westfield Leader". The earliest record still retained by the Troop is its 1919 Charter. From 1926 to the present, the complete annual charter data of the Troop are on file in the Watchung Area Council office.

Although the modern record of the Troop over the last decade shows the organization to be highly successful,, the Troop in its complete history passed through two or three crises which bordered on almost complete failure. The record shows that the accomplishments of any troop are directly proportional to the interest of the adult leadership. The causes of the ups and downs of Troop 72 over the years agree with the author's observations compiled when he was scoutmaster. Any average group of boys can be welded into an outstanding troop of Boy Scouts if the Scoutmaster, his assistants and the troop committee are willing to spend the time to train the boys and offer them all opportunities for achievement and advancement. By the same token, this same group of boys can become a difficult scout troop due to half interest or lackadaisical adult support. Surprisingly, in the observation of many Scout troops there is no middle ground. Either the leadership job is done right and the troop is "outstanding", or it just isn't done at all and the troop is then in constant difficulty and need of help of one kind or another.

In the history of Troop 72 it appears that its greatest successes were achieved under the leadership of those scoutmasters who served at least four to six years. This is probably true of any other troop, also.

The result of having had so many "short term" scoutmasters is that the overall advancement record of the Troop is not outstanding. Only about 2-3 per cent of the scouts ever became Eagles and the early records show each year that most of the chartered members were Tenderfoot and very few were First Class or above. The records further show that the exact opposite is true as the tenure of the Scoutmaster grows longer. In this case more of the older boys stay longer with the troop and steadily advance to the highest ranks. These boys in turn become the top boy leaders and the whole troop operation becomes much smoother and easier for the adult leaders.

It was the author's observation that the first year or two is the most difficult period for a Scoutmaster, no matter how high his initial qualifications. There is probably no way that this initial "difficult" period can be entirely eliminated, but the Scoutmaster who rides it out will find great rewards thereafter. This difficulty comes, in part, because the Scoutmaster is new to the boys. His methods might be slightly or totally different from those of his predecessor and the boy leader's methods are new to him. Just by the laws of human nature this causes some "bumps" as each gets to know the other. By the third year of a Scoutmaster's tenure, a deep sense of loyalty toward him by the boys begins to permeate the troop. The troop's operations then move smoothly by the impetus of the boy leadership and the new boys are -more quickly trained and absorbed into the overall troop activities.



This "difficult" period is undoubtedly the reason so many troops have constant leadership problems and far too many individual troops never achieve any constant measure of success. Any man who agrees to become a Scoutmaster for "only a year or two", or is recruited only on a "temporary" basis by the Committee is to be Commended for what he is giving to Scouting, but the long range interests of the troop are not being best served.

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Surprisingly, it does not take an especially gifted man to act as Scoutmaster. He does not have to be an expert in any particular phase of scouting, but he does have to be genuinely interested in outdoor camping. The major thing that it requires is an ability and willingness to learn and to teach-only the contents of the "Handbook for Boys". The only major personality trait required is an ability and willingness to treat the boys as courteously as the scoutmaster's peers.

It is the author's opinion that there are only three basic requirements to be met in order to build and maintain a highly successful Boy Scout Troop organization. Each of these requirements will demand a large amount of adult time to implement them properly. It must be remembered however, that no troop can be run properly with part-time scoutmasters and part-time interest by the troop committee. An outline of these major operational requirements follows: