Chapter 19

BEAVERS AND SCOUTING

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BEGINNINGS WITH B.-P.

Before looking at Beavers and how they came into being, we should go back to the origin of Scouting. Scouting began in England in 1907. Its founder was Robert Baden-Powell – B.-P. as we’ve come to know him over the years.

An enthusiastic outdoorsman always on the look-out for adventure, B.-P. joined the British Army in 1876. He had an exciting career and rose to the rank of Lieutenant General. His interest in the welfare of his troops led him to introduce many innovations into service life. All were designed to improve the quality of his soldiers and help them develop skills in such areas as taking care of themselves in the out-of-doors, observing, tracking, cooking and map reading. In fact, his aim was to make his soldiers more self-reliant in every way.

While in the army, B.-P. wrote *Aids to Scouting* about these areas of army life. The book became quite popular and was used to train boys in a number of schools and clubs. B.-P. rewrote *Aids to Scouting* and called the new book *Scouting For Boys*. It, too, became an instant success and soon boys were getting together, in small groups called patrols, to practice Scouting.

That was the beginning. Baden-Powell resigned from the army to guide the affairs of this new but fast-growing movement called Boy Scouts.

Soldier, hunter and man of action until 50 – promoter of peace and brotherhood, conservationist and youth leader until his death – the founder of the World Brotherhood lived two separate lives.

A MOVEMENT GROWS

When the Scout Movement was formed, there was only one section called, naturally enough, Boy Scouts. These boys ranged in age from 11 to 18 years of age, and learned and practised a number of skills in woodsmanship and survival.

A few years after the organization had formed, B.-P. realised that boys too young to be Boy Scouts wanted to get involved. B.-P. searched for several years for a base for a program acceptable to these younger boys. He chose Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Book*, and developed a program around the mystery, adventure and group relationships found in Kipling’s story. Huge numbers of boys joined the new section called Wolf Cubs when it formed in 1913-14; it remains extremely active today.

By 1917-18, many of the boys who had joined the Scout movement in its early years had reached their 18th birthday and were too old to continue as Boy Scouts. They wanted to remain members of the organization, so a third section of Scouting was formed. They came to be known as Rover Scouts. Their motto was “Service,” and they moved into adult leadership roles with Scouts or Cubs.
As a result of a study into the needs of older Scouts, it was decided to form a new program called Venturers for 14 to 17-year-olds. The idea in this section was to let youth members have greater control over the program they chose to follow.

**BEAVERS IN SCOUTING**

Throughout 1970 and 1971, Scouting officials in Winnipeg discussed the need for a pre-Cub program. Beginning in 1971, in response to many requests from parents, they devised and tested an experimental program.

In May, 1972, National Council approved Beavers Canada as a three-year experimental program in a number of designated councils. On November 15, 1974, Beavers Canada was adopted as an official program section of Scouts Canada for five, six and seven-year-olds.

Since then, the Beaver section has flourished in Canada. Some other countries have also introduced similar programs for their younger children.

We’ve provided an outline to show how Beavers fit into the total Scouting family.

**Beavers**
Five to seven-years-old

**Cubs**

- **Unit name:** Pack
- **Typical ages:** 8-10 years
- **Meetings:** 1 1/2 hours weekly, early evening
- **Activity centre:** Sponsor’s/partner’s facility, community, outdoors
- **Activity groups:** As a pack divided into small groups (sixes) for games and activities
- **Major focus:** Working with others and developing responsibility for individual behaviour
- **Activities:** Badge and star work, games, music, storytelling, playacting, crafts, outdoors, spiritual fellowship
- **Leadership team:** Cub leader and assistants, activity leaders and Scouters-in-Training. Cubs encouraged to offer ideas and help plan.

**Scouts**

- **Unit Name:** Troop
- **Typical ages:** 11-14 years with an option to age 16
- **Meetings:** Two hours weekly, evening
- **Activity centre:** Same as Cubs
- **Activity groups:** A collection of small groups (patrols)
- **Major focus:** Working in small groups, helping make program decisions
- **Activities:** Indoor and outdoor activities, achievement badges and awards, challenge badges and awards, hiking, camping, hobbies
- **Leadership team:** Troop Scouter, Scout Counsellors, Scouters-in-Training and Patrol Leaders. Scouts active in planning.
Venturers:
   Unit name: Company
   Typical ages: 14 - 17 years
   Meetings: Weekly, evening
   Activity centre: Same as Cubs
   Activity groups: Small interest groups, individuals who come together for activities
   Major focus: Committee-type organization, sharing adult responsibility with advisors
   Activities: Work with resource people in fields of special interest
   Leadership team: Advisor works with selected officers of company.

Rovers:
   Unit name: Crew
   Typical ages: 18 - 26
   Meetings: Evenings
   Activity centre: Community, outdoors
   Activity groups: Decided by the crew
   Major focus: Adult support for committee-type organization, planning, decision making experiences
   Activities: Community service and crew interests
   Leadership team: Decided by the crew.

SCOUTSabout:
   Typical Ages: 5-7, 8-10
   Meetings: After school, 1 1/2 hours weekly, over three month period
   Activity Centre: Same as Cubs
   Activity Groups: A SCOUTSabout group is arranged in smaller sub groups, much like lodges or sixes.
   Major Focus: After school developmental structured play program.
   Activities: Games, music, storytelling, playacting, crafts, outdoors, spiritual fellowship.
   Leadership Team: SCOUTSabout leaders with help from high school youth.

Extreme Adventure:
   Typical Ages: 14-18
   Meetings: Weekly, evening
   Activity Centre: Same as Cubs
   Activity Groups: Small interest group, individuals who come together to plan and develop their own adventure.
   Major Focus: Planning and preparing for an activity.
   Activities: The group will focus on planning and preparing for the adventure, including any activities or experiences to prepare them for the experience.
   Leadership Team: Advisors work with all youth.

These youth, with their leaders, are part of the worldwide movement of Scouting. Enjoy your time with them, and Busy Building Tomorrow!