

## **History as a part of the Anthony Wayne Area Council**

### **TIMETABLE - Thunderbird District**

1910 Edwin T. Jackson, "Daddy of Scouting" in Fort Wayne, organizes Troop 1; Bird Scoutmaster.

1917 June 3: first annual meeting of Council, Troop 8 headquarters, Kessler Fairfield Avenue, Fort Wayne; 24 members - 100%.

Fort Wayne YMCA allows Council to use its land at Robinson Park along St. Joseph River for troop meeting cabins; cabins abandoned due to lack of supervision.

1922 Robinson Park property leased from YMCA for summer camp, \$807.39; used through 1923.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In April 1917, 24 men chartered the Fort Wayne Local Council, Boy Scouts of America, later titled the Anthony Wayne Area Council. The Anthony Wayne Area Council, like all councils, was and is organized by its board members. As early as 1910, the year in which the Boy Scouts of America incorporated nationally, men and boys had formed Scout troops in Fort Wayne. D.J. Hutchinson held a meeting on March 11, 1917, at the First Baptist Church in Fort Wayne. Six men attended, and the following month - April - the Council was chartered. L.O. Wetzel, then Scout Commissioner for Fort Wayne, was appointed the first Scout Executive for the Council beginning January 1918. S.W. Greenland was selected the first President of the Council Board.

The board meeting the following month, held June 3, 1917, was declared the first annual meeting of the Council. It was held at the headquarters of Troop 8 in the rear of the old Kessler home in Fort Wayne.

### **TERRITORY, DISTRICTS AND NAMES**

Through the years the Council Board has made several decisions regarding what territory is included in the Anthony Wayne Council. These decisions have affected the district structure and the name of the Council. Originally, the Council included only Scout troops in Fort Wayne. In 1923 the Board invited the smaller towns in Allen County to affiliate with the Council. The Council name was then changed from the "Fort Wayne Local Council" to the "Anthony Wayne Council."

In May 1925 the Council; i.e., Allen County, was divided into five districts. The city of Fort Wayne was divided into quadrants, each one a district: Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest. The fifth district consisted of the outlying communities in Allen County. In February 1926 the regional Scout office in Chicago recommended that the Council expand further to include the "six counties of the Indiana Twelfth Congressional District": Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Whitley. Later that year, November 1926, the Council Board invited Adams, Wells, and Whitley counties to

join the Council; Whitley being the only one recommended previously by the region. In May 1928 the following four counties joined the council: DeKalb, Huntington, Noble, Steuben. In fall 1929 Jay County joined the Council, making it nine counties.

In 1933 the city of Fort Wayne itself was divided into five districts: one for each quadrant as before, and a central district was formed in the midst of these quadrants to serve the growing inner city population and the special problems of poverty it represented. In 1948 the Council Board decided to organize all of Allen County into one central district with four subdivisions. This was the beginning of a trend, noted later in September 1952, "toward larger and more effective and efficient Districts." Effective January 1, 1953, all districts were reorganized into only four districts in the Council:

West - Huntington, Whitley  
South - Adams, Jay, Wells  
North - DeKalb, Noble, Steuben  
East - Allen

In 1960 the districts were again restructured. Allen County was divided into two districts, separated by the east-west running Norfolk and Western Railroad. The rural counties retained their affiliations and Indian names were assigned each district according to the following structure:

Tomahawk: Huntington,  
Limberlost: Adams, Jay,  
Pokagon: DeKalb, Noble  
Miami: South Allen  
Thunderbird: North Allen

In February 1972, the neighboring council to the west, Pioneer Trails Council, disbanded. It had consisted of three counties: Elkhart, Kosciusko, and LaGrange. Kosciusko and LaGrange counties were incorporated into the Anthony Wayne Area Council.

Tomahawk: Huntington and Whitley  
Limberlost: Adams, Jay and Wells  
Pokagon: DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble and Steuben  
Miami: South Allen  
Scout Reach: Fort Wayne Intercity  
Thunderbird: North Allen  
Kosciusko: Kosciusko  
Three Rivers: Exploring and Venturing in Allen  
Learning for Life: Allen

Today, then, the Anthony Wayne Area Council consists of 11 counties divided into six districts. The current district structure is as follows:

Lincolnway: Kosciusko and Whitley  
Wabash Valley: Adams, Huntington, Jay and Wells  
Pokagon: DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble and Steuben  
Miami: South Allen  
Scout Reach: Fort Wayne Intercity  
Thunderbird: North Allen

### **CAMP PROPERTY**

Camping is the cornerstone of Boy Scouting. Whatever other activities Scouts may do, they always return to the outdoors. It is natural, then, that councils since the beginning have sought permanent campgrounds for their Scouts. The Anthony Wayne Area Council is no exception.

In 1911, the first Scouts in northeast Indiana camped in the woods behind cottages on Sylvan Lake at Rome City.

In 1917, when the Council was chartered, the Board Members immediately obtained campground adjacent to Robinson Park on the St. Joseph River in Fort Wayne. There the troops built Scout cabins which were soon abandoned due to lack of supervision. The Council rented the Robinson Park land from the YMCA for summer camp from 1922 to 1924. The Robinson Park land was only a few acres and far too small for the growing number of Scouts. Furthermore, the Council decided the power lines there were too dangerous for Scouts.

So in 1924, the Council rented camp property at Goose Lake. This 10 acre camp was named Kekionga, or "Blackberry Patch." Camp Kekionga served for five years, but was also soon outgrown.

In 1929 the Council established Camp Limberlost, named in October of that year. During the winter of 1934-35, all the camp equipment which had accumulated at Limberlost was hauled across the frozen lake to Big Island. For the next 32 years the island was developed for camp use.

In February 1966 that by an almost unbelievable sequence of improbable events 4 contiguous farms in the Indiana lake country just south of Angola became available to us if we could act by April 15th which we did! The assembled piece consists of about 1000 acres of rolling, partially wooded wilderness land containing three private lakes, a mile of other lake frontage, and the source of the Pigeon River, navigable for canoe trips from camp to points as far distant as Lake Michigan.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

February 12, 1934 was the first annual Lincoln Pilgrimage for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. This activity has continued ever since on February 12: Abraham Lincoln's birthday. The Lincoln National Corporation in Fort Wayne hosts this patriotic ceremony honoring the nation's 16th president.

In 1980 the Council hosted the first annual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby for the entire Council. This event was held to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Cub Scouting and has continued each year since. The Pinewood Derby, conducted in the spring at Glenbrook Square in Fort Wayne, features a 12-foot high, 80-foot long race track for Cub Scouts to race their carved pinewood cars. Attendance at the 1985 Pinewood was approximately 700.

### **BOY SCOUTING**

The first Boy Scout troop in Fort Wayne was organized in 1910 by Edwin T. Jackson, the "Daddy of Scouting" in Fort Wayne. Jackson wrote for information about Scouting and received some manuals. He read them and, confident in his training, invited boys to his home to form a troop. Over 300 showed up, so Jackson moved the meeting to Reservoir Park. There a gang of roughly 30 teenagers showed up. As Jackson recalled to a reporter for the News-Sentinel newspaper in January 1927: looked for a time as though a good battle would mark the first Scout meeting in Wayne." Even though no hostilities occurred, that first meeting of Scouts is referred to as "The Battle of Reservoir Park."

Troop 1 was then formed and affiliated with the "American Boy Scouts": one of a few short-lived movements that sprang up immediately after Baden-Powell's first Scout campout in 1907 at Brownsea Island, England. These first Scout movements in the USA merged very soon with the Boy Scouts of America, incorporated February 8, 1910. Troop 1 also affiliated with the new BSA. Edwin Jackson recruited J.R. Bird as the first Scoutmaster; Jackson himself became the first troop commissioner.

After a few years Troop I disbanded, along with four additional troops which had formed. In 1917 the Anthony Wayne Area Council was chartered under the original title "Fort Wayne Local Council." The first troop to charter with the new Council was Troop 6, sponsored by Trinity Methodist Church, Fort Wayne. C.H. Kessler was this troop's first Scoutmaster. Fifteen other troops chartered within a month. The earlier troops, numbers 2 through 5, have subsequently reorganized and disbanded at different times.

### **COMMISSIONERS**

The first commissioner in the Anthony Wayne Area Council was Edwin T. Jackson, the "Daddy of Scouting" in Fort Wayne. He organized the first troop in Fort Wayne, Troop 1, then recruited another man, J.R. Bird, to be the Scoutmaster- Jackson became the troop's first commissioner.

In 1982 the Anthony Wayne Area Council was able to report 45 new commissioners, 28 of them in the Thunderbird District.

The Thunderbird District in fall 1984 instituted a plan to register all units in the district in January and February. The idea of this coordinated registration period is to concentrate the registration service of the commissioners into one time frame each year. In this way it is hoped the commissioners can concentrate on program service to the units during the remainder of year. More time is needed to assess the success or failure of this plan.

As has been repeated throughout this book, nearly every contemporary idea in the Council has a precedent. So too does Thunderbird's unified registration plan. In the minutes of the Council Board's December 1954 meeting is recorded a "motion to study a plan for unified registration dates for units."