

Talk given to Junior Girl Scout Troop 269, at the Methodist Church, Maynard, Mass., on March 14, 1974 during Girl Scout Week by
MISS PEARL MCAUSLIN



Fr. row: Tesa Gammon, Karen Marderosian, Miss Pearl McAuslin, Lori Mariani
Back row: Joanne Gonzales, Christine Fromm, Christine Bowman, Joanne Mucciaccio, Lori Penniman

wore bloomers and middy blouse, our scarf and pin.

To become a Tenderfoot scout, a girl had first to learn the Motto, Pledge and Laws, and be proficient in tying several prescribed knots and know their uses. Each patrol had a leader and corporal and selected a name for that particular group.

We had formation at the beginning of our meetings which was called by our Captain or Lieutenant who summoned us by whistle signals. In patrol formation, the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, our Girl Scout Pledge, motto and laws were repeated.

From this formation the patrols would retire to a corner of the room to work on their projects. At times the girls were working toward their second and first class rank. Other times they worked toward a badge that all were anxious to earn. Much time was spent in learning to tie knots correctly and swiftly, also in learning the Morse Code and in the handling of the flags or sending messages by the use of a whistle. We made our own flags which consisted of a white square with a red square centered and this was tacked to a short pole. Two flags were needed for each girl giving signals.

Then we would have a period of games or a circle when we sat on the floor and sang songs. We had many favorite songs such as the Scout chant, the Hiking song, and we had fun singing rounds.

Girl Scouts as a National Organization had been in existence 5 or 6 years at the time Miss Dodge, A Maynard High School teacher roused the interest of some of the girls to begin a troop in Maynard back around 1919.

For many years troop meetings were held in the Congregational Church Sunday school rooms. There was a period of time when we held our meetings in the Town House which formerly was located where the Maynard post office now stands.

Our uniform was a long khaki skirt with overblouse of same color, and we wore a triangle scarf knotted under the collar on which we pinned our Girl Scout emblem pin. The hat was large (somewhat of the order of porkpie style) with a brim. This hat was khaki color, also. On our camping trips and hikes, we

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At closing time we joined hands in a circle to sing our departing song.

In those days the girls made the cookies which were for sale in Girl Scout week, and some of those shapes and sizes were really something. At times this was done in the church kitchen, and again in the home kitchens of the girls. The results probably hastened the practice of selling National Girl Scout brand cookies.

We put on many little plays, concerts, and luncheons to which we invited the parents and the Girl Scout Council. The props and costumes were made by the girls, and many times this was helpful in earning a particular badge. Hostess and cooking badges were earned in this way after having had classes. One of the cooking classes was held by Mrs. Carl Stockbridge in her home on Summer Street.

The school and town nurse (Miss Blood) worked with us at times in meeting the requirements for the First Aid badge and the Home Nursing badge. The girls took turns being the patient in the bed making and in having bandages applied while the other girls practiced their skills. Our turning the patient in the bed to change a sheet was not always gentle and for some reason the "patient" would protest. Squaring the sheets at the corners and making a smooth bed took practice we found.

In our work for nature badges, we went on many hikes on Saturdays and occasionally early mornings before school. These hikes took us to Silver Hill, Summer Hill, Pine Hill, over on Red Acre Farm Road in Stow, Sout Acton, Sudbury and Concord. Flowers and trees were recognized and we made notes and sketches in our books. Bird walks took place mostly in the early morning. We studied the blazing of trails and we experimented to determine how successful we were in making a trail and in following one.

We had a ceremonial meeting for awarding badges earned and parents and friends were generally invited to attend. The badges were worn on the left sleeve of the uniform.

Sometimes we held a cake sale or had some project for earning money toward the purchase of uniforms or toward camping trips for that was in a period of time when fathers were not earning on the scale they do today and mostly mothers stayed home and did not hold outside jobs. The National ruling was that the girls were not to canvas for funds by selling house to house and that each town or city where Girl Scout troops were organized would have a Council comprised of mothers and interested people to earn the necessary money to support the troop doings. However, the Councils were not always active and lent small support at times, so that a troop had to devise ways of earning money and still conform to National Headquarter rules.

Miss Florence Gustafson and Miss Doris Miller took leadership of the troop following Miss Dodge, and we had many exciting experiences with them. Our first camping trip was a week's stay at Long Pond, Chelmsford. A Miss Levenson, who was active in Boston Scouting, was our swimming instructor for the week, and Miss Ethel Butterworth was our chaperone. We followed camping rules in that we each were assigned duties for the day, worked on nature projects, hiked, learned swimming strokes, held campfire meetings, cooked and cleaned up, and did all the fun things that girls do when they get together.

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In later years, I spent time at the State camp in Plymouth, and again at the National camp in the Adirondacks, New York. These camps were small, generally housing two girls and were located on many acres of woodlands, with a large hall for gathering for meals and meetings. The facilities available in today's camps were not a part of camping then, and we each were assigned working duties each day in addition to classes, hikes, etc., that we might be interested in doing. Sleeping out in the open in sleeping bags was fun in the evening hours, but when the mosquitoes moved in and the heavy dew fell on us were in a hurry to pick up and get back to the main camp at dawn for breakfast.

In our outdoor cooking, we learned to bake fish on a plank, make biscuits, from dough mixed in paper bags and then cooked on a stick, and many other camping shortcuts. We cut out a section from several cans and with a fire under each made of twigs we would cook pancakes when the fire was hot enough. The making of outdoor fires, the care of them and precautions were firm rules we had to learn. Each girl carried her own plate and eating utensils when a hike plan required it. The necessary fire permits also entered into the preliminary planning.

An occasional overnite stay at Cedar Hill, Waltham, was always a fun thing to do, and we had good times there, not roughing it particularly. With the number of Girl Scouts now registered in Massachusetts, it probably takes an advance notice of many weeks to hold a meeting or to stay overnight. Perhaps this is no longer considered one of the big events of the year.

We marched in the Maynard Memorial Day parades and occasionally prepared a float. Somehow it always seemed to be the very hottest of days and the melting tar would make the roads hot and sticky.

Girl Scouts gives each of us an opportunity to come together and to do things as a team and to be a part of a National and Inter-national organization working for the same goals and having fun doing it, yet, here is an opportunity to pursue by yourself that which appeals to you.

In the earning of badges you each have a glimpse of what you may later want to study in college or to use in your life work,

I hope you have plans for summer camping, and that you will increase your skills so that when you are of age you may possibly be a Counselor in one of the many camps, and I hope that some day some of you will want to be a Leader of a Girl Scout Troop."

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