



FACT SHEET #3

New Jersey Scout Museum

History of Monmouth Council BSA

Beginnings As early as 1911, Boy Scout troops were already springing up around Monmouth county. It was soon decided that local officials were needed to assist the troops, and so in 1917 the Monmouth County Council was chartered in Red Bank. The first Scout Executive was Merritt L. Oxenham, who had extensive Scouting experience in New York and Puerto Rico.

Ocean County Extension In 1927 the council was enlarged to include Ocean county, and the word "County" was dropped from the council's name, making it simply Monmouth Council. The name was changed to Monmouth-Ocean Council in 1937 to reflect Ocean county's growing significance. The council's name changed back to Monmouth Council in 1939 when Ocean County Council was formed.

Eisner Family Sigmund Eisner's uniform manufacturing company in Red Bank made *every* Boy Scout uniform sold in the United States between 1910 and 1933. At his invitation, Chief Scout Executive (and BSA founder) James E. West came to Red Bank to help form Monmouth Council, and made available his offices on Broad St. for the council's first headquarters. His son Monroe Eisner was a founding member of the council and served as council Treasurer for many years.

Camps Scouts attended summer camp at the Kanohwahke Lakes Scout Camps in Harriman (NY) State Park in the late teens and early 1920s. Camp Monmouth (a.k.a. Camp Minnewaska) in the Shark River Hills was the first summer camp owned and operated by the council. In 1924 the council acquired Camp Burton on the Metedeconk River in what is now known as the Breton Woods area of Ocean county through the generosity of the Housman family. This was replaced by Camp Burton-at-Allaire in the historic Allaire Village which operated from 1929 to 1940. In addition to serving as a year-round training camp and summer camp, the council's headquarters was also at Allaire in that era.

With help from Geraldine Thompson, the council acquired the land for Camp Housman (a.k.a. Camp Brisbane) near the Allaire site from the Brisbane family. Housman was a weekend training camp only; the council's troops utilized other council's camps for summer camp. Forestburg was acquired in 1956 as a mountain camp, and the Quail Hill property in the early 1960s as a local weekend training camp. When Quail Hill opened in 1967, Camp Housman closed and was sold to the state.

Other lesser-known camps also existed. Camp Derrick at the Jamesburg State Home was used by the inmates' troops and other local troops. The New Jersey Sea Scout Base operated for several years on Sandy Hook in the 1930s. The Camp Mennen Harbor (Fair Haven) and Spermaceti Cove (Sandy Hook) Sea Explorer bases existed briefly in the 1940s and 1950s, respectively. Weekend camping was also offered at Camp Joy in

Ocean county in the 1930s, and at Poricy Pond (Middletown) and Hidden Hollow (Holmdel) in the early 1960s.

Training Programs Patrol Leader training was offered by the council beginning in the mid-1920s. The council offered extensive youth and adult training at Camp Burton-at-Allaire in the 1930s, and also at Camp Housman in the 1950s-60s. Junior Leader Training was a staple at Forestburg through the 1960s, then moved to Quail Hill in the mid-1970s. Patrol Method Training was first offered by Great Northern district in the early 1970s and then as a council-sponsored training course which has evolved into the Patrol Leader Skills weekend. The first Wood Badge course sponsored by the council was held at Forestburg in 1967. The council has sponsored a total of ten Wood Badge courses at Forestburg, Schiff, and Quail Hill.

Order of the Arrow The original OA lodge in the council was *Ohowa* Lodge 71 chartered in 1933. *Ohowa* Lodge was active at Camp Burton-at-Allaire and supported the council's training programs, but membership was never very big and it became inactive around 1940. The lodge was reactivated in 1950 as *Na Tsi Hi* Lodge 71 and it remains a cornerstone of the council to the present day. The name means "in the pines." Lodge members have gone on to hold higher offices including Section Chief, Northeast Region Chief, and OA National Chairman. The lodge was honored with the prestigious E. Urner Goodman Camping Award in 2000 and National Service Award in 2004.

High Adventure A council crew hiked Philmont Scout Ranch in 1947, christening a long tradition of Philmont treks. The first female Venture crew hiked the Ranch in 2002. Individual troops and posts/crews frequently attend the other BSA high adventure bases or plan their own trips. Council contingents have attended every National Jamboree since the first one in 1937. Service Troops from the council staffed both the 1939-40 and 1964-65 New York World's Fairs.

[This information was provided by Dave Wolverton.]

The book *Images of America: Monmouth Council Boy Scouts* (Arcadia Publishing, 2003) contains much more information about Monmouth Council's history, including 200 vintage photographs. It may be purchased at the New Jersey Scout Museum.