

## The Story of Scouting in the L.D.S. Church

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The Y.M.M.I.A. was organized June 10, 1875, by Junius F. Wells under the direction of Brigham Young. Its purpose was to provide leisure time activities, particularly along spiritual and cultural lines, for the young men of the Church. Later, athletics were made a prominent part of the program.

As news of the organization of the Boy Scouts of England in 1909 and the Boy Scouts of America in 1910 was received by our Church leaders, the Scout idea was investigated by the Athletic Committee of the Y.M.M.I.A., and in the summer of 1911, the Scout movement was officially recognized in this association. Scouting with its spiritual background and ideals, appealed to our Church leaders as an excellent activity program for its boys. Even before that time, some enterprising boy leaders in various parts of the Church had organized troops along lines recommended by the Boy Scouts of America. On November 29, 1911, on motion of President Anthony W. Ivins, then a member of the General Superintendency of the Y.M.M.I.A., the M.I.A. Scouts were officially organized by the General Board.

From that time, Scouting moved forward in the Church very rapidly. In the Improvement Era for March, 1912, Vol. 15, was printed the first statement of the purposes and plans of the M.I.A. Scout movement. It provided that Scout meetings should be held for thirty minutes immediately preceding or following the regular M.I.A. meeting on Tuesday night.

Dr. John H. Taylor, who had previously been appointed Athletic Director of the Y.M.M.I.A., was given definite responsibilities for promoting Scout work in the stakes and wards under the direction of the Athletic Committee which included Lyman B. Martineau, Chairman; Hyrum M. Smith, Oscar A. Kirkham, B.F. Grant, B.S. Hinckley and John H. Taylor.

At the June Conference of 1913, on Saturday afternoon, June 7th, a M.I.A. day celebration was held at Wandamere, and the program was devoted entirely to Scout activities. This was the first general Scout gathering in the Church.

The first lessons for the M.I.A. Scouts were published in the Improvement Era for January, 1913, volume 16. Twelve (12) lessons were including covering such subjects as the Fundamentals of Scouting, Organization, Leadership, etc., tying of knots, troop drilling -- following United States Infantry regulations for the purpose of obtaining discipline and efficiency in moving the troop as a body -- bandaging and First Aid, the Story of the

Flag, physical development, stars, compass, etc. May, 1913, the M.I.A. Scouts, upon invitation from the National Council, affiliated with and became a part of the Boy Scouts of America. The official action of the Executive Board of the National Council was taken May 2, 1913, at which time the General Board of Y.M.M.I.A. issued a charter covering the entire Church, and Dr. John H. Taylor was given a special commission as representative of the National Council in charge of all M.I.A. Scouts. At the same time, Oscar A. Kirkham was made Deputy Commissioner. The National Charter of the M.I.A. Scouts of the Boy Scouts of America was issued May 21, 1913, which becomes the official date of entry of the M.I.A. Scouts into the National Organization.

This arrangement continued until 1919, when local councils were organized in Salt Lake City and other sections, Oscar A. Kirkham becoming the first Scout Executive of the Salt Lake Council, and later, Associate Regional Executive of the Twelfth Region which includes Utah,

Arizona, Nevada, and California. He also became affiliated with the Regional Office of Region Eleven in order that he might have contact with L.D.S. Scouts, particularly in Idaho. There are approximately 24,000 Boy Scouts in the Church in 1934, which included 7,000 Vanguards who were Senior Scouts. The Vanguard movement was inaugurated in 1928 and is now developing rapidly into an aggressive Older Boy Movement among the Scouts of the Church. It has been approved by the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. L.D.S. Scouting is now organized in stakes and missions throughout the Church. Scouting continued under Y.M.M.I.A., its sole sponsor, until 1928. During this year, it was named as the activity program for the Deacons and Teachers of the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church through the Y.M.M.I.A. as an auxiliary and aid to the priesthood.

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...1935 Statement on Scouting

"The Y.M.M.I.A. is the priesthood functioning in the field of activity. Scouting, therefore, is the activity program for Deacons and Teachers in the Church and is the program for the junior departments of the Y.M.M.I.A. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters are officers in the Ward Mutual Improvement Association. They should conduct themselves as such and be subject to the rules, regulations and program of the M.I.A. On the other hand, the ward officers of M.I.A. should know that the Scout Troops and Scout Leaders of the ward are a part of the M.I.A. program and should be considered as such. The Scout Department is just as much a part of the M.I.A. organization as the "M" Men and should be so considered by ward officers. The responsibility of the Scout and Vanguard department is theirs. In the stake, the same relationships and responsibilities are maintained. The district commissioners are stake officers, and Scouting is the official department program for young men 12 to 16 years inclusive. As a result of the development of a plan of closer cooperation between Aaronic Priesthood chairmen and supervisors and Scout leaders in the M.I.A., many of the wards of the Church have succeeded in registering every available boy and young man in the ward in Scouting."

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In the early 1950's, the Exploring Program of the Boy Scouts of America was adopted as an activity extension for the Priest Quorum and now, completed the full Scouting program in synchronization with the Aaronic Priesthood -- that is, Scouting for the Deacon's Quorum, Vanguard for the Teachers and Exploring for the Priests.

In May, 1952, Cub Scouting was officially adopted by the Church. The First Presidency called on the Primary to administer Scouting for boys under 12 years of age.

In 1949, the age for entry into the Boy Scout program was lowered to age eight (8) for the Cub Scouts and 11 for Boy Scouts. Primary is responsible for the Blazer "11 year-old" Patrol.

In 1959, the new Exploring Program was organized with Explorer Specialty Program by the Boy Scouts of America. Under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric who now directed the Scouting Program for the Church, the Blazer Patrol was established for 11 year-olds. The direction of the Blazer Patrol remained with the Primary.

In the 1960's, the "Mormon" Relationships Conference at Philmont was established under the direction of the Director of "Mormon" Relationships, Folkman D. Brown. These conferences were established to train stake presidents with information on the operation of Scouting as an extension or activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood.

In the 1970's, the Scouting program was transferred from the Presiding Bishopric to the Young Men's Presidency which operated under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve, with the Young Men's President and two counselors supervising the Aaronic Priesthood and the Scouting Program.

In 1972, the Varsity Scout Program was developed to provide needed experiences for the 14 and 15 year old young men. Emphasis is placed on each youth and leader earning Varsity letters by achieving in five program areas.

Opportunity for extended priesthood leadership is also made available. The "1988" General President of the Young Men was Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, with counselors Rex D. Pinegar and Robert B. Harbertson. In the 10 years from 1977 to 1987, the number of Scout units grew by 150 percent from 14,500 in 1977 to 22,695 in December 31, 1987. The L.D.S. Church sponsors more Scout units than any other organization affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America.

It is interesting to note that in the Boy Scouts of America, less than two percent (2%) of the boys who join Scouting achieve the Eagle Badge, while in the Church, over six percent (6%) of the youth who join Scouting obtain their Eagle Badge. Another interesting note is that 94% of the Eagle Scouts in the Church go on missions. Religious awards provided by the Church in recognition of the youth members involved in Scouting include:

FAITH IN GOD AWARD for Cub Scouting.

ON MY HONOR for Boy Scouting.

ON MY HONOR ADULT RECOGNITION AWARD for adults involved in Scouting in the Aaronic Priesthood and Primary.

The Church also provides a DUTY TO GOD AWARD (not a Scouting award) for continuous service of Aaronic Priesthood youth members acquiring a four (4) year period of activity.

Many Aaronic Priesthood/Boy Scout Encampments have been held under the direction of Priesthood leadership throughout the Church. They also range in size from a few hundred to several thousand. The emphasis of these encampments have been spiritual relationship with each Aaronic Priesthood/Scout and his Heavenly Father. Highlights have been opportunities for Aaronic Priesthood Scouts to visit with General Authorities in a "Mountain Top" experience, a memorable experience that will last throughout the life of a young man.

During the 1990 October General Conference, ELDER Jack H. Goaslind was sustained as General Young Men President, with counselors LeGrand R. Curtis, and Robert K. Dellenbach. In October, 1991, Elder Curtis was released, and Elder Dellenbach became the first counselor, with Stephen D. Nadauld as second counselor.

In December of 1990, there were 24,560 Cub Packs, Scout Troops, Varsity Teams, and Explorer Posts chartered by the Boy Scouts of America to wards and branches of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with 342,156 units, the second largest youth members of any affiliate or any chartered partner of the Boy Scouts of America, the first being the public schools, in which 746,000 are high school students registered as members of Career Awareness and Exploring.

The Young Men Presidency serve, along with the Primary Presidency and the Director of L.D.S. Relationships, Boy Scouts of America, as the Church General Scouting Committee. All functions relating to Scouting and its support, organization, changes and program considerations are reviewed by the Church General Scouting Committee.