



PRICELESS MEMORIES OF

# TROOP



The adventures, history, and traditions of an iconic  
100-year-old Parkersburg, West Virginia Boy Scout Troop



R O N T A Y L O R





**The Boy Scouts of America (BSA)** is the nation's foremost values-based youth training organization, currently reaching more than 2.3 million youth throughout the United States. Many prominent business and civic leaders attribute their success in life to Scouting. In this book, author Ron Taylor recalls his own rewarding experiences as he documents the fascinating history of a typical but exceptional 100-year-old Scout troop. Dedicated volunteers and generous alumni made Troop 3 of Parkersburg, West Virginia, a national model for Scouting in mid-twentieth century America. This is a joy-filled story of service, fun, and outdoor adventure, which will engage and inspire a wide reading audience.

*The skills of leadership and importance of teamwork that I learned in Troop 3 played a major role in experiencing success during my professional life, as Chairman of the Department of Radiology at Northwestern University School of Medicine. Looking back, my life was greatly enriched by my scouting experience. It is indeed a privilege and a source of pride to have been a member Troop 3.*

LEE F. ROGERS, MD

*This book should appeal to those Boy Scouts and leaders who lived the experience, and to generations of Scouts who hopefully will follow. It presents the history of Troop 3, its iconic founder, and how the troop moved forward after his death.*

PAUL LAPANN,  
Managing Editor,  
Parkersburg News and Sentinel

## Ron Taylor / About the Author



A native of Parkersburg, West Virginia, Ron Taylor began his Boy Scout career as a Cub Scout in 1946, and joined Troop 3 in 1949. He is an Eagle Scout, a BSEE graduate of Ohio University, and a retiree of The Procter & Gamble Company. Ron, a Silver Beaver recipient, has hiked several sections of the Appalachian Trail, completed a high adventure trek at Philmont Scout Ranch, earned his Fifty Miler patch, and has attended over five hundred campfires while actively serving as Assistant Scoutmaster at Troop 3's summer camps for more than fifty years. Ron and his wife, Anne, live in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has two children and five grandchildren.



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## Preface

**O**ver the years, many people commented about the need to document Troop 3's adventures, important milestones, traditions, significant contributions to the community, and its impact on the lives of over eleven hundred Scouts and two hundred Sea Scouts.

In 2012, two hundred Troop 3 alums and their guests from twenty states held a joyous reunion in Parkersburg, West Virginia, where they celebrated the troop's ninety-five years of continuous operation. After the laughter and singing ended, it became evident that there was a significant story here. And that someone ought to document the organization's unique history before it was too late.

I conducted a brief inquiry, seeking a chronicler to accept such a challenge. Finding no volunteers, I began to think seriously that if anyone was going to create a record of the troop's history it had to be me. I had been an active member of the troop and a leader since 1949, so documenting the troop's history seemed like the natural thing for me to do.

My search for records dating back to the troop's founding produced sparse results. I decided it would be impossible to cover all of the important events, leaders, or people associated with the past one hundred years of the troop's operation. Therefore, some are mentioned briefly, or not at all.

My purpose in writing this book was three-fold: First, I wanted to recount the 100-year history of one of the oldest continually operating Boy Scout troops in the United States and the second oldest in the State of West Virginia, from its founding in 1917, to present day. In doing so, I also wanted to recall some of the memorable times that none of us probably ever thought much about until we were men with children.

Second, it was my desire to paint a picture of the principal leaders, volunteers, and members that created and nurtured this outstanding organization and the timelines associated with its adventures, history, and storied traditions.

And third, I wanted to share my perspective on how the principles and values of Troop 3 and the Boy Scouts of America helped to shape my life and the lives of five generations of young men.

For me, the Scout Oath, the Law, and the Motto provided the positive direction I needed to achieve success as a boy, and as an adult. These principles and

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values, coupled with the confidence and learning gained through my amazing experiences in Scouting, made a major impact in my personal and business life.

Another important factor that played a key role was the practical learning that Scouting provided through its outdoor adventures, advancement programs, and leadership opportunities to get me to believe in myself. For example, I developed a sense of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency and discovered that the importance of a can-do attitude, coupled with hard work, always favored me achieving a positive outcome in anything I decided to pursue. In other words, since, "Winners do what losers don't want to do" I quickly found out if I wanted something bad enough, I'd better be prepared to work hard enough to get it.

Thanks to these wonderful learning opportunities I developed the self-confidence, self-esteem, and leadership qualities that have since opened many doors for me. Today, I firmly believe that, "Troop 3 taught me all I needed to know to be successful in life!"

In the following pages, thanks to the study of old pictures, numerous letters from the Smith Turner collection, brief excerpts from the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel*, the recollections of others scattered throughout the United States, and my personal remembrances, I "have done my best" to summarize the history of this exceptional Boy Scout troop.

Each chapter recounts a span of time, while describing significant milestones and happenings. If there are inaccuracies in this book, the responsibility is mine.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share my story of Troop 3.

Ron Taylor

Cincinnati, Ohio

December 2016

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## Introduction

**F**or over 100 years, programs of the Boy Scouts have instilled in youth the principles and values found in the Scout Oath and Law. Today, these principles and values are just as relevant in helping boys grow to their full potential as they were in 1910 when the Boy Scouts of America was founded in the United States.

Scouting provides youth with the opportunity to try new things, provide service to others, build self-confidence, develop leadership, and reinforce ethical standards. It has been proved that these opportunities not only help boys when they are young, but carry forward into their adult lives, improving their relationships, their work lives, their family lives, and shaping the values by which they live.

W. D. Boyce incorporated the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. Early in the summer of 1910, the representatives of thirty-four different organizations held a conference interested in boys and out of that came a permanent organization. One of the key players in forming this new organization was Daniel Carter Beard, a resident of Covington, Kentucky, who in 1905 had founded the Sons of Daniel Boone. Since his group was based on American frontier traditions, it became perfectly natural to merge it with another proponent of out-door life—the Boy Scouts of America.

The purpose of this book is to share the history of a remarkable Parkersburg, West Virginia Boy Scout troop, Troop 3. For those who are not familiar with Parkersburg, it is the third largest city in the state of West Virginia with a population of approximately 31,000 people, situated on the state's western border with Ohio, at the confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio rivers.

Parkersburg was settled in the late eighteenth century by Virginia veterans of the American War for Independence. The town first came into prominence as a transportation hub after completion of the Northwestern Turnpike in 1838, the Staunton to Parkersburg Turnpike in 1847, and the Northwestern Virginia railroad in 1857. These early highways were important land links to the Ohio River. New development quickly followed after 1861 when major oilfields were discovered nearby, and the town found itself at the center of a booming oil industry. After the oil boom faded, Parkersburg became an important manufacturing center for boilers, corrugated boxes, glass, mattresses, oil refining, silk threads, steel,



tile, and vitrolite—a pigmented structural glass material used in Art Moderne building designs. At one time the city had the distinction of being home to the largest plants in the world for the production of derricks and oil field equipment, porcelain insulators, rayon, shovels, and garden tools.

Behind every Boy Scout troop, there is a story. Scout troops don't just appear. Instead, they are created and nurtured by volunteers with enthusiasm, heart, principles, and vision.

Fortunately, Troop 3 was blessed to have such a founding scoutmaster in Don B. Lowe. Mr. Lowe was an intuitive and insightful man who passionately believed "the Scouting movement offered the very best method for doing constructive work among boys!"

A veteran of the First World War, he was a charter member of American Legion Post No. 15, and a member of the Masonic and Elks Lodges. He received his Scoutmaster's Key in 1925 and was recognized in 1939 by the Kootaga Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America with the Silver Beaver Award for outstanding service to youth. In 1948, he received the region-level Silver Antelope Award, which recognizes Scouters of exceptional character for distinguished service to youth. During his 84-year life, he was considered the dean of West Virginia Scoutmasters.

Since 1917, the values-based program of Troop 3 has empowered a large number of its members to become business and community leaders

**HOW DO YOU TELL THE STORY OF A  
100-YEAR-OLD BOY SCOUT TROOP THAT IS  
LARGER THAN LIFE? A TROOP THAT:**

- Produced the first Eagle Scout in West Virginia.
- Has inspired 12% of its members (three times the national average) to earn Scouting's highest award, Eagle Scout.
- Boasts having had two members who earned the highest honor in Boy Scouts, and the highest honor in Sea Scouts: Eagle Scout and Quartermaster Sea Scout.
- Camps at its private 152-acre wilderness campsite with a staff that has come from as many as five states to provide adult leadership for its summer camps.
- Maintains a stone lodge and seawall docking and recreation area on the Ohio River in Belpre, Ohio.
- Has an active list of every single member since it's founding in 1917.
- Prides itself in having one family that produced four Eagle Scouts and several that produced two, or more Eagle Scouts.
- Enjoys roughing it in the wilderness.
- Has a distinguished alumni that are important "movers and shakers" throughout the USA.
- Is renowned for its rich history and traditions.