

The History of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts in Sun Prairie

Scouting in Sun Prairie has a long history which began earlier than the official records of scouting in Sun Prairie. Records show that Charles Wetmore and the Sun Prairie School District established both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts in 1926. A Boy Scout Troop likely started prior to April 1926 and it's estimated that a Girl Scout Troop was started in November of that year. The April 29, 1926 issue of *The Cardinal's Message* contained an article about the Boy Scouts planning several hikes under the leadership of Mr. Kingeter.

Scouting in Sun Prairie Faced Early Challenges

An article in *The Cardinal's Message* from November 10, 1926 stated that the Boy Scout's Troop Number 1 was in financial difficulty. To solve the problem, the scouts arranged for a benefit at the Pastime Theater.

Scouting depended upon the cooperation and enthusiasm of the teachers at the public school. It wasn't until 1931 or 1933 that Boy Scouting was placed on a firm foundation in Sun Prairie under the sponsorship of the Lions Club. The Four Lakes Council of Boy Scouts of America listed the Lions Club as Troop 43 sponsor in 1931. The Sun Prairie Lions Club didn't receive its charter until October 19, 1933.

The Girl Scouts had similar challenges. The Girl Scouts were periodically revived under the leadership of the school. Ellen Virchow became interested in scouting because of her daughter's involvement. In February of 1945 Ellen Virchow requested that the 20th Century Clubs sponsor the girl scouts in Sun Prairie in order to provide for a continuous leadership when leaders quit and the Club agreed to the sponsorship.

Sources: Four-Lakes Council letter in April 1988, Lions Club 50th Anniversary Program, The Cardinal's Message, The Star Countryman, Girl Scout records donated by Ellen Virchow, Boy Scout records and photographs donated by Rudy Gehrmann, Boy Scout records donated by John Callies, and the Museum Guide Notes for 1988.

Sun Prairie Girl Scouts

The Sun Prairie Public School organized Girl Scout troops in 1926 and membership was open to girls in the seventh grade through high school. The Girl Scout Notes in the school newspaper dated February 22, 1929 listed a Junior and Senior Patrol, a Sophomore Patrol, and Seventh and Eighth Grades Patrol. The captain of Sun Prairie's "Lone Troop" was Miss Mae Maloney, a teacher at the school. Scout activities included candy and peanut sales at football games, hikes, outdoor suppers, and work on merit badges.



Miss Lucille Curry, physical culture and hygiene instructor led the girl scouts in 1930. One of the activities involved the Girl Scouts gathering at the City Hall at 6:30 a.m. and walking to Angell Park where “a fire was kindled and a hearty breakfast of buns, bacon, cheese, doughnuts and apples was enjoyed.”

Miss Lucille Curry, Miss Eleanor Melster, and Mrs. Margaret Tuschen reorganized the girl scouts in 1936. Two troops were active in 1938, the junior troop under the direction of Miss Lucille Curry, and the senior troop under the sponsorship of Rosalie Beers.

An ongoing challenge with scouting in Sun Prairie was in providing for a continuity of leadership for the Girl Scouts. In February 1945, Ellen Virchow requested the 20th Century Club to sponsor a troop in Sun Prairie providing continuity of leadership when scout leaders resigned. Fortunately, the club members supported the project.

One hundred and fifty girls were registered as scouts between 1944 and 1950. Twenty-one women served as leaders and assistants. Thirty-five women volunteered to work on the troop committees. In late 1949 or early 1950 the local “Lone Troop” joined with the Dane County Area Council of Girl Scouts.

Early Girl Scout leaders included, Mrs. C. L. Stoneking, Mrs. Florence Frydenlund, Mrs. Ellen Virchow, Mrs. Norma Western, Mrs. Francis Sheehan, Mrs. Roberta LaVere, Mrs. Marcella Chase, Mrs. Rosella Farmer, Mrs. Harry Peele, Mrs. Antoinette Klein, Mrs. Helen Renk, Mrs. Zelma M. Wetmore, Ruth Ann Gilroy, and Mrs. Margaret Tuschen, Mrs. Rosella Farmer, and Mrs. Laura Thomas.

Girl Scout Troop # 163



The girls in this troop stayed together through their entire scouting career from Brownies to Senior Scouts in the 1940s and early 1950s. The Troop took a train from Sun Prairie to Chicago in June of 1953. The girls raised the money for the trip by doing work in the community.

***Members of Troop 163 at
the old lake.***

Girl Scout Troop # 164



This Troop met at Mrs. Ruth Ann (John) Gilroy's home at 224 West Main Street on April 27, 1949. Scout identification, left to right; Shirley Schoenherr, Judy Mickelson, Jean Gilroy, Mary Jean Nichols, Meredith Jones, Ruth Ann Gilroy (scout troop leader), Charlotte Gibson, Loretta Cruger, Caryle Western, and Carol Jean Thompson. Caroline Heitsch at the extreme left was cut off from the photograph.

Girl Scout Troops & Patrols in Sun Prairie

Troop Number	Date Organized	Sponsored by	Leader
Scout Troop Grades 7-12	1926	S. P. Public School	Miss Mae Maloney
Junior & Senior Patrol	1929	S. P. Public School	Miss Mae Maloney
Sophomore Patrol	1929	S. P. Public School	Miss Mae Maloney
Seventh & Eight Grade Patrol	1929	S. P. Public School	Miss Mae Maloney
Four School Patrols	1930	S. P. Public School	Miss Lucille Curry
Senior Troop	1936	S. P. Public School	Misses Lucille Curry, Eleanor Melster & Mrs. Theodore Tuschen
Troop Number Unknown	1937	S. P. Public School	Misses Lucille Curry & Eleanor Melster
Junior Troop	1938	S. P. Public School	Miss Lucille Curry
Senior Troop	1938	S. P. Public School	Rosalie Beers
Lone Troop	1944	S. P. Public School	Mrs. Florence Frydenlund & Mrs. Stoneking
Girl Scout Lone Troop	1945-1949	20 th Century Club	See Notes on Scouts
Scout Troop	c. 1949-1950	20 th Century Club	See Notes on Scouts

Boy Scouts Early History

The Sun Prairie Public School organized Boy Scout Troop #1 in 1926. Scouting developed from youth activities provided by the school district. Mr. Harold Kingeter, teacher of manual arts, was in charge of two patrols, the Fox Patrol and the Eagle Patrol. Boy Scout meetings were held every Tuesday evening. The first fundraiser for Boy Scout Troop #1 was a benefit at the Pastime Movie Theater. The troop's profit was \$23.00. Scouts were first mentioned in the new student Publication, *The Cardinal's Message* dated November 10, 1926

The scouts had challenges with meeting times and generating interest in regular troop activities in 1929. The Troop tried to establish Monday evenings from 7:30-9:00 for their meetings: "Now that we have the use of the new gym most of the boys desire to play basket-ball, due to the fact that this is the only opportunity they have to practice. Later we expect to take up volley ball and indoor baseball. The regular troop activities will start directly." (February 22, 1929, *Cardinal's Message*) When the scouts first met in 1930, there were only seven returning scouts from 1929.

The February 1930 article in *The Cardinal's Message* noted that the Boy Scouts were divided into three patrols. The scouts were meeting every Saturday afternoon in the school gym where "the afternoon is spent in passing tests and playing basketball." The March 1930 edition of *The Cardinal's Message* reported that the Boy Scouts now had twenty-four members in the troop. Mr. Meinert, a high school teacher was the leader of the scouts. A Scout news article in *The Countryman* on Sept. 24, 1931 stated that the scouts had a good attendance on their meeting on Sept. 22, 1931. Activities included a scout library under Howard Gritzmacher, a wiener roast, with classes in fire making, cooking, tracking, and scout pace. An event for October was a model-making contest. After the meeting the scouts played basketball for a half hour.

Sun Prairie Boy Scouting was placed on a firm foundation in the early 1930's when Lions Club agreed to sponsor them.

Troop 43 and the Lions Club Support of Scouting

Troop 43 was probably organized in 1931. The Sun Prairie Lions Club sponsored Troop 43 for the first time in 1936 (other scout records mention 1933 as the date when the Lions Club sponsored Troop 43). Mr. Olson, a high school instructor was in charge of the Boy Scouts in 1936 & 1937. Meetings were on Friday evenings. The scouts planned camping trips during the summer. Scout Master Charles Wetmore had to reorganize the troop in 1938 since there were only seven members at the beginning of the year. Other men serving as scout leaders were Mr. Ted Tuschen, Mr. Phil Harvey and Mr. Ray Estervig.

Joe Bedner, the chair of the Boy Scout Committee in 1953 listed 24 boys with seven in the Explorer Scouts. Ray Estervig continued as Scoutmaster with Phil Harvey as the assistant Scoutmaster. Troop members included Louis Blaser Jr., John Belda, John Cobb, Richard

Lothe, Stanley Wagner, William Waller, Donald Herring, Steve Anderson, Art Benisch, Dale Duchert, Lee Gibson, Thomas Harvey, Ronald Helmke, Charles Koltos, William LaVeer, Earl Machkovich, Dennis Reinen, Terry Schultz, Fred Stohl, Kenneth Tjugum, Terry Tuschen, William Wagner, Lyman Western, and Leo Jesberger. The Lions Club constructed a clubhouse in 1955 that was used by the scouts and other youth organizations

Methodist Boy Scouts in the 1940s

In the 1940s, the Sun Prairie Methodist Church organized a Boy Scout Troop. The Boy Scouts and their fathers were honored at a dinner that drew more than one hundred people for the banquet and ceremony. Boy scouts mentioned in an undated Madison newspaper article were George Hughey, Philip Dougherty, David Catlin, John Walker, Russell Vale, and Edward Langer (Cub Scout). The Women's Society of Christian Service prepared the dinner. Mrs. T.W. Tuschen was the chairperson of the arrangements committee.

Boy Scout Troop 64



Sacred Hearts Troop, 1973

Sacred Hearts Parish first chartered its Boy Scout Troop 64 in 1964. Later it was sponsored through the Knights of Columbus, Holy Family Council 4879. A letter from the Four Lakes Council to Rudolf F. Gehrman on June 3, 1975, congratulated Rudy for serving as the unit leader. The letter listed enclosures of the unit charter and membership cards for the youth in the unit. Rudy was the Scoutmaster of Troop 64 when the troop went on a sixty-eight mile canoe trip on the Chippewa River Canoe Trail. Eight canoes were used on the trip. Bernie Lessner followed the troop in a pick-up truck that carried the troop's food in coolers.

Other adults assisting the troop were Terry Showers, Tony Renz, Roger Reichert, Bob Steffes, Carl Hirschinger, and Gale Cripps. The roster for 1976 also lists David Hanneman as one of the adults helping with the troop. Eighteen scouts took part in the trip. Rudolf Gehrman is standing to the right of the troop. The two leaders in the photographs are Roger Reichert and Rudy Gehrman.

The Knights of Columbus, Holy Family Council 4879, sponsored this troop beginning in 1976. The last records on this troop are from 1976. Troop 64 disbanded shortly after the Knights of Columbus sponsored it. Scout leaders included Anthony Renz, Gale Cripps, David Hanneman, Rudolf Gehrman, and Roger Reichert. Rudy Gerhrmann donated the tent and photographs to the Museum.

Cub Scouts

A Cub Scout pack was formed in the fall of 1952 when a group of parents met at the Wisconsin Porcelain Company meeting hall. Mr. Fred Roller was appointed as Cub Master and Mr. Edward Callies was appointed as Assistant Cub Master. Five or six dens were formed with each den headed by a Den Mother. Each month the Den Mother received a magazine that outlined the activities for each meeting. Weekly meetings were held at the home of the Den Mother. Once a month the pack met at the High School Gymnasium where cub scouts displayed their craft projects for the month. Pins and rank cards were awarded during the monthly meeting of the pack. The boys had to perform approximately ten deeds for each rank. Cub Scouts progressed from Wolf to Bear, to Lion, and to Webelos.

Boy Scout Troops, Patrols & Packs (1926-1988)

Troop Name	No. of Years	Chartered with	Dates Chartered
Lone Troop, Fox & Eagle Patrols	5	Public School	1926-1931
Pack 43	27	Sun Prairie Lions Sun Prairie Jaycees	10/1961-10/1962 4/1962-4/1988
Troop 43	35	Sun Prairie Lions Club	8/1931-4/1988
(Unknown)		Sun Prairie Methodist Church	c. 1949
Troop 47	24	Sun Prairie Lions Club Our Savior Church	4/1963-1988, 7/1969-4/1988
Troop 90	11	LDS Church	4/1971-1974 & 11/1976-5/1988
Troop 64	13	Sacred Hearts Church Knights of Columbus	1964-1976 1976 or 1977 (Disbanded)
Troop 17	?	Colonial Club	?
Post 90	11	American Legion LDS Church	4/1968 dropped, 4/1972 dropped, 11/1980 dropped, 11/1982 dropped, 5/1986-5/1987
Pack 143	16	Optimist Club of Sun Prairie	10/1970-5/1986
Pack 243	1	Kiwanis Club of Sun Prairie PTO Bird School	10/1973-5/1984 5/1987-5/1988
Pack 343	36	Sun Prairie Lions Club	2/1948-2/1951 8/1952-5/1988
Pack 443	9	School and Community Organization	10/1976-10/1977 5/1979-5/1988
Boy Scout Troop	?	Methodist Church	1930s? 1940s?