

His Early and Personal Life

Robert Baden-Powell, one of the founders of the Scout Movement, was born February 22, 1857. His childhood was filled with classes at the Charterhouse School and time spent with family. As a child, he loved the outdoors and explored the wilderness with his brothers. He excelled at many pursuits such as art, acting, writing, and playing the piano and violin.

He joined the British Army in 1876, then served in India and Africa, and even served three years in the British Secret Intelligence Service. As a part his military service, he served as a Scout and became interested in increasing the number of soldiers who had scouting skills.

His Role in the Scout Movement Baden-Powell wrote many books about military scouting, his love of the outdoors, and his interest in developing the physical fitness and enhancing the character of youth. He was interested in developing not only the skills, but the imagination of youth. He was truly an educational innovator and developed an educational method by getting youth to work together, develop self-sufficiency, embrace adventure, and develop outdoor skills through FUN with a purpose.

He wrote “Aids to Scouting” in 1899 as a guide for military scouts, but Baden-Powell, or BP as he was called, found youth were just as interested in his ideas about safe and effective Scout activities. Boys and girls were playing “Scout” in their backyards and were devouring the information available to them.

When he returned from his last tour of military service, he was appointed Vice President of The Boys' Brigade, a youth organization. He talked

about this with Sir William Smith, founder of the Boys' Brigade and gave suggestions including training in observation and deduction. His goal was to give some new ideas to the Brigade officers, which they followed. His was not his intention to start a new movement.

On a camping trip on Brownsea Island in 1907, he tested his ideas about scouting. He brought along boys from varying socio-economic and family backgrounds. Following the camping trip,

Pearson, a successful publisher, contacted him and arranged for Baden Powell to write a series of articles and promote them.

Each article was called a “Campfire Yarn”. These Yarns were fun and entertaining stories he would have told around a campfire, but they were fun with a purpose.

In 1908, he rewrote the book as “Scouting for Boys”, intended for youth readership.

They taught youth important information about outdoor survival skills and development of good citizenship. The articles were so popular among youth, boys and girls started forming their own “Scout Troops”, and the game of Scout was being played in backyards similar to cowboys and Indians.

As a prolific writer, Baden-Powell was able to get a wide variety of information out to organizations and youth very quickly. The first Scout Rally was held in London in 1908, where girls and boys both attended. His wife Olave and sister Agnes were responsible in part for bringing for the Scout Movement to girls. His writing captured the minds and heart of youth. Baden-Powell intended his material to be used by organizations such as the British Boy’s Brigade. He wanted his material to be able to evolve with the changing needs of youth, and did

not intend for the founding of his own organization. However, even Baden-Powell could never have guessed how popular the Scout Movement would become among youth and it became obvious some form of organization was required. Organizations started to use the material as well to form their own “Scout Troops.” The movement grew larger as organizations such as the YMCA began to have many “Scout Troops” under one banner organization.

The Scout Movement grew

quickly to more than a million youth all over the world by 1922. The educational method behind the Scout Movement, including the development of character and always doing your best, continue today.

The Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA continue this rich tradition. We are inclusive Scout Programs focused on allowing our Scouts to choose the activities they

want to participate in, ensuring the experience will be FUN and personalized for them. As part of the Scout Movement, we help our Scouts develop meaningful friendships, promote strong families and strengthen family values, instill kindness, courtesy and respect, and enhance character as instilled by parents.