Decades Fact Sheet

1950

The 1950s were Scouting's first golden age. After years of depression and war, Scouting, like the country as a whole, could finally enjoy a period of peace and prosperity.

Early in the decade, Scouting membership reached 3 million for the first time—a milestone President Eisenhower noted in a 1953 message to Scouts and Scout leaders. A few years later, as the first of the baby boomers reached Cub Scout age, membership began growing by 200,000 or more a year.

1950.1. The Scoutmaster

There was plenty for those Scouts to do. The second National Scout Jamboree—long delayed by war—was held in 1950, followed by additional jamborees in 1953 and 1957; more than 45,000 Scouts attended each event. The younger set enjoyed a new activity called the pinewood derby, created by Don Murphy, a California Cubmaster whose son was too young to compete in the soapbox derby. Older Scouts could participate in an expanded Exploring program, which let them explore careers and hobbies beyond such traditional Scout activities as camping and hiking.

Sprinkled throughout the decade were national Good Turns that addressed the issues of the day. In 1952, Scouts collected 2 million pounds of clothing for domestic and foreign relief. The following year, they distributed 1 million posters and 30 million doorknob hangers as part of a massive get-out-the-vote campaign. And near the end of the decade, they delivered 40 million emergency handbooks and 50,000 posters prepared by the Office of Civil Defense Mobilization.

PHOTOS

1950.2. Aviation

1950.3. Scout band

1950.4. On the beach

1950.5. Pinewood derby

1950.6. Cooking

1950.7. 1953 Jamboree

1950.8. President Eisenhower

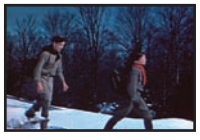
1950.9. 1957 Jamboree

1950.10. Bob Hope

VIDEO

1950.V1. Cubmobile races were a big hit in the '50s.

1950.V2. A generous donation of land becomes one of Scouting's most popular destinations.



1950.V3. Scouts are prepared—for a hike across snow or for preparing a meal outdoors.