

TRAINING CENTER EDITION

In this Issue:

- [Dining Halls](#)
- [Schiff Scout Reservation](#)
- [Schiff and Wood Badge](#)
- [Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp](#)
- [A Scouting Village](#)



DINING HALLS

Have you spent some time at a BSA council camp? No doubt many great activities occurred in the camp's dining hall, and not just at mealtime. Some dining halls are rustic landmarks harkening back to Scouting's early days. Many newer dining facilities incorporate the best of energy efficient construction and design.



Robert Birky photo

Dining Hall at New York City Council's Camp Alpine

Scouts can build lifelong memories over dining hall meals. They represent a break from busy camp activities and a chance to enjoy Scouting traditions and strengthen friendships.



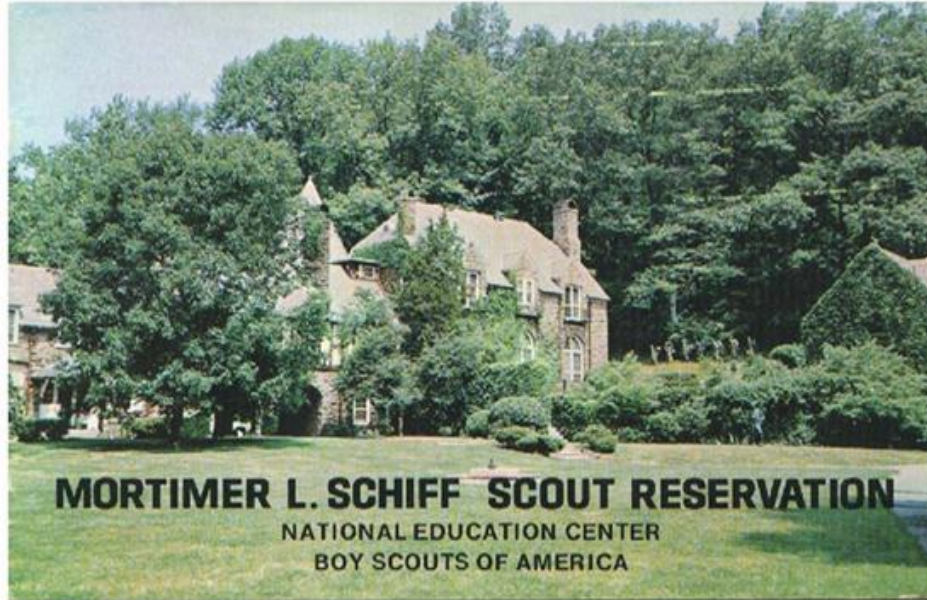
Robert Birkby photo

1960s Scouts having lunch at Southwest Iowa Council's Camp Wakonda

The central buildings of many camps are also the settings for aspects of BSA training courses that are best done indoors. One of the most famous was at the Schiff Scout Reservation.

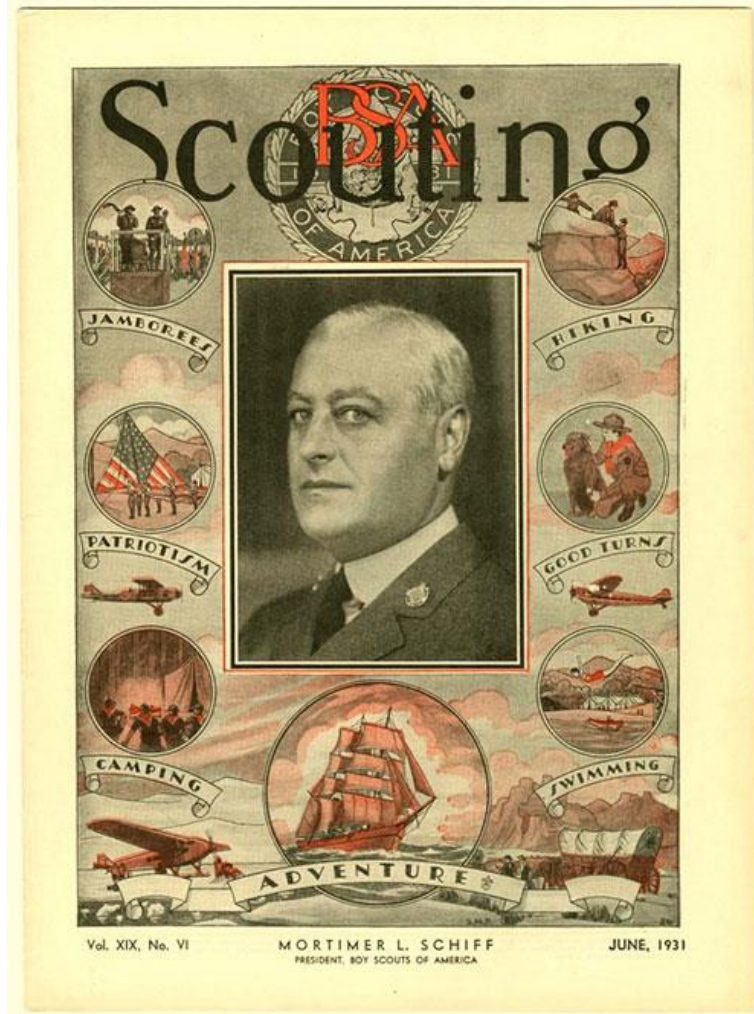
SCHIFF SCOUT RESERVATION

From 1933 until 1979, generations of aspiring BSA professionals came to the woodlands of western New Jersey to learn leadership that would launch their careers. Volunteer Scouters and youth found plenty of camping skills, too. The setting was the Mortimer L. Schiff Scout Reservation, long the home of BSA's national training.



A BSA brochure featured the main buildings at Schiff Scout Reservation

Mr. Schiff was a New York banker who had served the BSA as a key volunteer since its beginnings. Elected in 1931 to be the organization's national president, he died after just two months in office. His mother Mrs. Jacob Schiff provided funds to purchase a 500-acre estate to be Scouting's training center, named in honor of her son.



Scout Magazine's Mortimer Schiff Cover

Among the most important activities at Schiff was the National Training School dedicated to preparing candidates entering the Scouting profession. They came from across America to learn the inner workings of the BSA and hone their abilities as leaders and administrators.



A class of new Scouting professionals training at Schiff

Among those attending a 1944 Schiff training was Robert Carter Birkby who had accepted a district executive position with the Southwest Iowa Council.

In letters written to his parents on official Schiff stationery, he told of long hours of interesting classes, experimental campsites, new friendships, and his first ever trip to New York City.



Robert Carter Birkby



Like many who completed training there, Mr. Birkby looked back on his days at Schiff as among his best Scouting experiences. The spirit of the place came through in lyrics sung with hearty gusto during meals in the Schiff dining hall:

MEN OF SCHIFF SONG

**Men of Schiff together
Taking to the world,
Scouting ways forever
With flags and Banners
Mightily unfurled.
To our Oath and Scout Law
True we'll always be,**

**With every council
Every region
Bound together in our legion
Men of Schiff are we.**

In 1979 the BSA national office moved from its long-time home in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to its present Irving, Texas, location. Professional Scout training went with it. Other national training moved west to the Philmont Training Center and to other BSA high adventure bases.



The Schiff Reservation was sold along with the New Brunswick holdings. Today, the original property forms the core of the Schiff Natural Land Trust, a community-based conservation organization that has shielded the land from development and promoted it as open space.

SCHIFF AND WOOD BADGE

A legacy of the Schiff Scout Reservation is its historic role in the origins of Wood Badge in America. Devised as the ultimate training opportunity for Scoutmasters, Wood Badge was launched in 1919 at Gilwell Park near London, England. Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouting movement, helped bring Wood Badge to America with a 1936 course held at the Schiff.

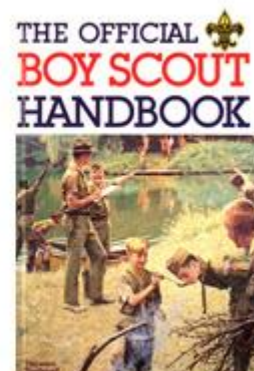
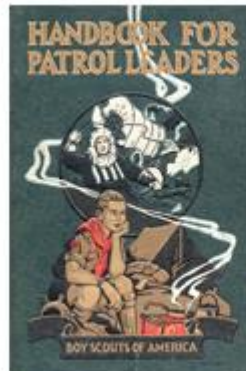
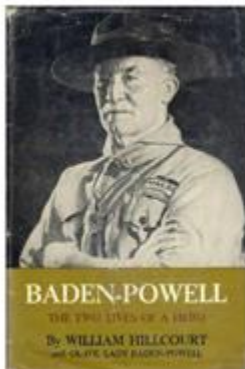


A dozen years later, Wood Badge was adopted by the BSA as a national program with its home at Schiff. William Hillcourt, who had attended the 1936 course, was instrumental in developing the program and became deeply associated with Wood Badge activities at Schiff.



William Hillcourt instructing during an early Wood Badge course at Schiff Scout Reservation

Born Vilhelm Bjerregaard Jenson in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1900, Mr. Hillcourt became well-known for his monthly column in Boys' Life magazine. He was also involved in writing a biography of Robert Baden-Powell and several editions of the Boy Scout Handbook, Fieldbook, and Handbook for Patrol Leaders.



Hillcourt's pen name was "Green Bar Bill," taken from the two bars of a patrol leader's patch. Through his lifetime of service to Scouting, he signed thousands of manuals with his distinctive green bar signature:



With the closure of Schiff, Wood Badge joined other leadership courses in moving its primary centers of operations to the BSA national office and the Philmont Training Center. In 2001, Scouting unveiled a new version of the course called Wood Badge for the 21st Century, opening enrollment to leaders from all areas of the BSA.



Modern Wood Badge emblem

Many traditions of Wood Badge carried over from the program's origins. Among them are patrol names. Hiking staff shields available from scoutstuff.org celebrate these historic patrols:



Antelope



Bear



Beaver



Bobwhite



Buffalo



Owl



Eagle



Fox

RAYADO RIDGE

The Philmont Training Center is well-known as the home of terrific week-long courses. Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp, a new facility overlooking the Sangre de Cristo mountains, opens greater opportunities for the training of youth and adults.



The site is already hosting NAYLE (National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience), the Philmont Leadership Challenge, Wood Badge courses and other training opportunities.



Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp

NAYLE Facebook Group

And yes, the new camp does have a dining hall. For years to come it is sure to be the center of training activities and mealtime fellowship guiding Scouts and Scouting toward continued success.



NAYLE Facebook Group

Aerial View of Rayado Ridge Leadership Camp

A SCOUTING VILLAGE

Want a dining hall of your own? Check out this one from scoutstuff.org. It's a terrific porcelain rendering of a camp dining hall, perfect for decorating a table at Scouting's ceremonial events.



Scouting Village Lighted Dining Hall

(This edition of the *Be Prepared Newsletter* was developed and written by Robert Birkby, author of the current editions of the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Scout Stuff*, *The Conservation Handbook*, and *Eagle Scouts: A Centennial History*.)