

Scouting in St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, MN – A Brief History

Beginnings ...

Troop 17, St. Paul, Minnesota, was organized in February of 1916 when a group of boys decided they wanted a Boy Scout troop in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. They approached Professor James Drew, who lived across the street from the Congregational Church (St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ), and asked if he would serve as Scoutmaster. He consented, a troop committee was formed, and the Church agreed to become institutional sponsor as well as provide meeting space.

It was originally known as troop # 69, but in the following year (1917) the troop was renumbered #17 by the Scout Council.

Highlights of Scouting in St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, MN

1916	Troop 69 is founded with 30 scouts and Prof. James “Dad” Drew as Scoutmaster.
1917	Troop 69 is renumbers as Troop 17. Eighteen more scouts added to the roster.
1918	Troop 22 is formed at the St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church. Some of the scouts leave troop 17 to form Troop 22.
1919	Schism. Many of the original (now older) Scouts want a troop just for themselves. They form Troop 25 and call themselves the “Wyandot Troop” from the Wyandot (Huron) Indians. St. Matthews Episcopal Church agrees to sponsor. Much emphasis is placed on military-type drill by the Wyandots.
1921	Knot-tying becomes Troop 17’s specialty as a result of the expert teaching by “Dad” Drew.
1926	Wyandot Troop merges back with Troop 17.
1927	The troop wins first place in the prestigious City Wide Scout Contest.
1930	“Wall-scaling” becomes a popular activity with area scouts. Troop 17 constructs a wall for its exclusive use behind the church.
1931	The troop’s 15th anniversary is celebrated with a Troop “Review.” Scouts become involved in Indian pageantry as a result of the interest by its Assistant Scoutmaster, R. Dale Sandres.
1932	Every member of the troop makes an Indian costume for himself and comes thus dressed to the big Scout Show, held at the old Hippodrome on the State

	Fair grounds.
1936	Troop 17 becomes known for its hockey team. Wins are frequent in bloody battles within the St. Paul Scout Hockey League.
1938	Troop 80 is formed at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.
1942	Troop 48 is formed at Corpus Christi Catholic Church.
1943-45	Servicemen who were former Troop 17 Scouts are able during World War II to keep in touch with one another by means of a Troop Newsletter which circulates around the world. A real morale booster.
1949	Elmer L. Andersen takes the first big step toward eventually becoming Governor. He becomes Scoutmaster of Troop 17.
1950	Eight scouts from Troop 17 attend the National Jamboree held at Valley Forge, PA. It's the first Boy Scout Jamboree held since 1937. Bob Wall recalls that Dave Rutford won the log chopping contest in a romp by using a real sharp cutting axe and taking short, quick chops while all of the other competitors were taking huge swings with their axes. Troop serves as honor guard at Ken Bacheller's wedding.
1951	The troop attends the wedding of Scoutmaster, Herb Putnam, in full uniform.
1953	For the fourth year in a row, Troop 17 takes first place at the Scout Roundup competition sponsored by the St. Anthony Park Association. Three other St. Anthony Park troops also compete.
1956	Four Eagle Scouts in one year!
1957	Three more Eagle Scouts in one year!
1961	Troop reaches its largest size ever – or since: 50 members.
1965	The troop's membership dwindles to a handful – but hangs in there.
1967	Troop 22 doesn't survive this period.
1968	Full recovery for Troop 17!
1970	The troop's Rube Goldberg-type "Can Crusher" (an ingenious pioneering feat) is a smashing hit at the Scout Fun Fair at the State Fair Grounds.
1974	Troop 80 "folds up its tent" for good.

1975	A sizeable financial gift is received from the estate of one of its early scouts.
1979	Troop mushes and muscles its way to an impressive first place at the Klondike Derby. In spite of the blizzard, no frostbit is reported. Troop 48 goes out of existence.
1980	Troop 17 is triumphant in the water carnival at Camp Tomahawk, watermelon splits before the taste of victory.
1981	A gala 65th Anniversary is celebrated.
1983	High adventure trips become annual events that have continued to the present. The trips have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpacking trips in the Bighorn Mountains, Bear Tooth Range, Glacier National Park, Isle Royale National Park, Wind River Range, and Philmont • Canoe trips to the BWCA, Queteco, and many rivers in Minnesota • Bike trips to Wisconsin Dells • Sailing trips in the Apostle Islands and Florida Keys
1983	A large group of boys and adult leaders join from the Lauderdale troop.
1984	Troop 17 becomes matchmaker for John and Joanne Wahlstrom. Canoe trip inaugurated in memory of Chris Stout.
1986	Six Eagle Scouts in one year!
1989	Bill Healy earns silver Eagle Palm.
1991	75th Anniversary celebrating 75 years of scouting in the Park features a historical video.
1998	Troop 17 wins grand prize at the State Fair Scout Exposition for its pioneering display that features several signal towers and a rope bridge. A signal tower and bridge constructed by the troop become an annual part of the St. Anthony Park 4th of July parade and picnic that continues each year.
2000	Troop 17 Eagle Scout Neal Kwong, age 15, dies in a tragic accident while working at Tomahawk Scout Reservation. Scouts and leaders from the troop serve as color guards and speak at the memorial service which hundreds of scouts attend. Indianhead Council establishes a campership fund as a memorial to Neal's life.
2002	Pioneer tower and rope bridge building becomes a tradition for St. Anthony

	Park 4th of July celebration.
2003	Church member Thomas Kwong achieves Eagle rank.
2004	Bough-cutting campout and wreath-making become a tradition for the troop's fundraising. Scouts can earn their way to summer camp! Troop provides greens and trees for SAPUCC's Advent/Christmas season.
2006	Troop 17 celebrates its 90th year with a St. Croix canoe trip and celebration dinner at Fred C. Andersen Scout Reservation, with many alumni and friends present. Church member Thomas Smith achieves Eagle rank.
2007	Scouter Mark Hansen of Troop 17, church member David Misemer of Gateway District, and Gary Kwong, son of member Mary Kwong, awarded the Silver Beaver, the highest award that can be awarded to a scouter by a council.
2009	Troop 17 and St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ together join the Centennial Commission, which provided leadership and funding for the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America in the Council area. Jerry Wallace awarded North Star District Scoutmaster of the Year.
2010	John Wolf becomes Troop 17's 90th Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America's Centennial year. Scout Joshua Rothe Moon passes away after a yearlong battle with cancer, which was discovered while at Tomahawk Scout Reservation with the troop in June of 2009. Scouter Mike Smith of Troop 17 awarded Silver Beaver, the highest award that can be awarded to a scouter by a council.
2011	Troop 17 celebrates its 95th year, in St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ's 125th anniversary.

Prepared by John Michael Smith, January 201219