

The Old Scout

History of Scouting in the U.S.A.

105th Anniversary: 2015

This brief history of the Scouting Movement is intended to give young scouts information about the early founders of Scouting and the rich traditions that make up the scouting program as they forge their own paths toward the rank of Eagle Scout.

History of Scouting, Part III: Early American Founders – Ernest Thompson Seton

Ernest Thompson Seton was born in England in 1860. He later moved to Canada then finally Connecticut. He was a writer, naturalist and artist. In 1902, he founded the Woodcraft Indians, a youth organization dedicated to the principles of American Indian life. He wrote a book called “The Birchbark Rolls of the Woodcraft Indians” which was a guide for his program.

Seton actually sent his book to Robert Baden-Powell, and met with him in 1906 when Seton was in England for a series of lectures. Baden-Powell used many of Seton’s ideas in his first scouting handbook, “Scouting For Boys”. Because of this, Seton always considered that it was his ideas that became the foundation for the Boy Scout movement.

After the Boy Scouts of America was formed in 1910, Seton folded his Woodcraft Indian organization in the Scouting Movement. Seton was very involved in the early years of the Boy Scouts of America, and wrote much of the first scout handbook used in the United States.

Seton was an influential founder of the Boy Scouts of America. He resigned from Scouting by 1915 after disagreements with some of the early leaders. He returned in the 1920s to help develop the program for younger boys that eventually became the Cub Scouts. Seton died in 1946.

Troop 201 has camped at Camp Seton in Lyme, Connecticut, named after Ernest Thompson Seton.