

SCOUTS-L

DAN BEARD

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Subject: Dan Beard Story

I was going through a bunch of articles my Dad had clipped out of various magazines and found this, thought it might be interesting to you.

AMERICA'S FIRST SCOUT

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Dan Beard always had a yen to organize "youngsters." As a boy, he rounded up a group of friends, called them the Boy Pioneers or Sons of Daniel Boone and led them off on canoe and camping jaunts. Kit Carson, Audubon and Davy Crockett were some of his heroes; the outdoors, his first love, became his avocation. As a wildlife illustrator, Ernest Thompson Seton, Charles Dana Gibson and Frederick Remington were his friends. Loving every minute of it, Beard called his career a "61-year vacation."

In the early 1900s Dan Beard was made editor of a then-influential magazine called "Recreation," and through his writings he resurrected the notion of boys organizing into groups to learn outdoor skills. The Sons of Daniel Boone and the Boy Pioneers emerged anew. Interest in the idea was immediate. At the same time, an ocean away, Lord Baden-Powell had initiated the British Scouting movement and Beard, hearing of his success, embraced the concept and formally organized the Boy Scouts of America in 1910, with America's First Outdoorsman, Theodore Roosevelt, lending his wholehearted support. (For years, Beard led an annual pilgrimage of youngsters to President Roosevelt's grave). When told of Beard's plan for the Boy Scouts, Ernest Thomspen Seton sketched out on the spot the now traditionally familiar Boy Scout Uniform.

Through well-thumbed copies of the "Boy Scout Handbook" and from writings in

"Boy's Life" magazine and in his own books, Dan Beard became a legendary figure to millions of American youngsters, a symbol, along with his boyhood heroes of courage and honor and the uplifting nature of a clean life out-of-doors. Thanks to Beard, million of boys learned to live comfortably and safely in the wilderness, to study and love the outdoors and the myriad facts of its nature. Or as Dan Beard defined scouting: "The love of outdoors in terms of conservation."

In 1941, Beard's long, fruitful life came to an end. His own uniform, complete with decorations, can be seen in the Dan Beard Memorial Room of the Trailside Museum in New York's Bear Mountain State Park. His boyhood home in Convington, Kentucky, has been designated a National Historic Landmark.