



# The Boy Scouts Association

GREATER TORONTO REGION

1162 BAY STREET – WALNUT 5-3425  
TORONTO 5, ONTARIO

## SCOUTING IN THE GREATER TORONTO REGION A MID-CENTURY DISTRICT RETROSPECTIVE (PART 1)

A recent question online about mid-century Toronto District badges has led to this two part history about Toronto Scouting and their badge histories. In the first part explored is early Toronto Scouting, the Metropolitan Toronto Region, the formation of the Greater Toronto Region and District badges associated with the early GTR.

As with any history informational items have been pulled from various sources (Toronto and Provincial Annual Reports, historical summaries and official pamphlets) and placed in a chronological order. Certain key dates and events have been footnoted for validity. Greater resolution maps can be found on the *Canadian Badgers Memorabilia Club* website.

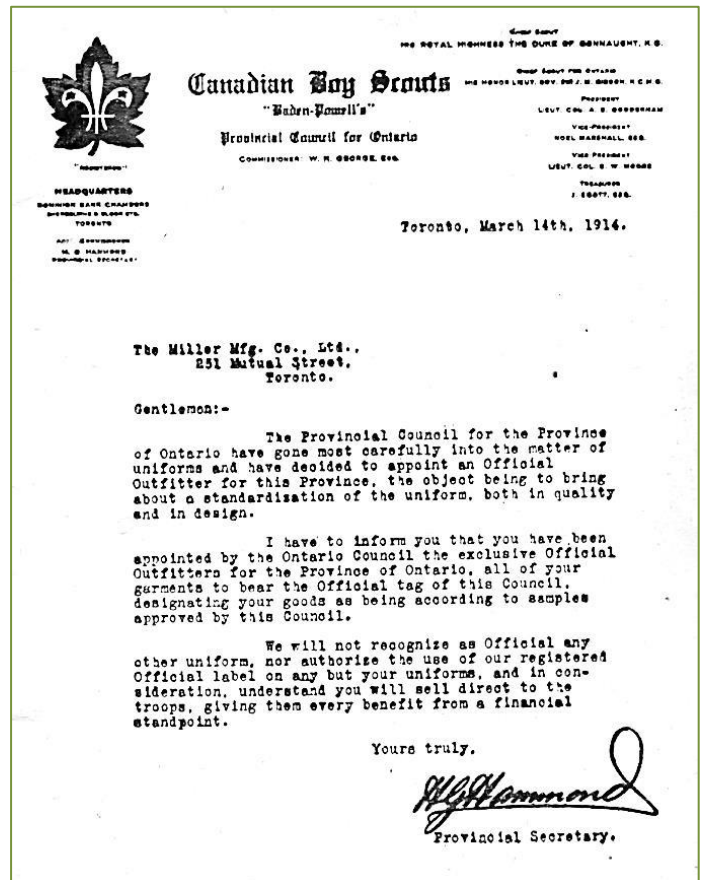


### EARLY TORONTO SCOUTING

Scouting began enthusiastically in the Toronto, Ontario area in 1908 starting with six troops, three of which were sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. The Movement quickly expanded and soon total troops numbered about five hundred and were backed by religious, business, professional, social and educational leaders. The first few years established Scouting as an integral part of the Church and Community boys' work.

In 1910 Major General Sir Baden-Powell visited Canada and during his train trip from Winnipeg, he disembarked at Parkdale Station and decided to walk to the residence of his host, Mr. E. B. Osler, in Rosedale. At least a 10 km walk. He did not know at the time that a crowd of ten thousand was waiting for him at Union Station. During his visit, 4,900 Scouts attended the first Rally at the opening of the Canadian National Exhibition. The Scouts listened to his personal message of encouragement. B.-P. visited Toronto again in 1919 and 1923, and Scouts were told of the progress Scouting was making around the world.

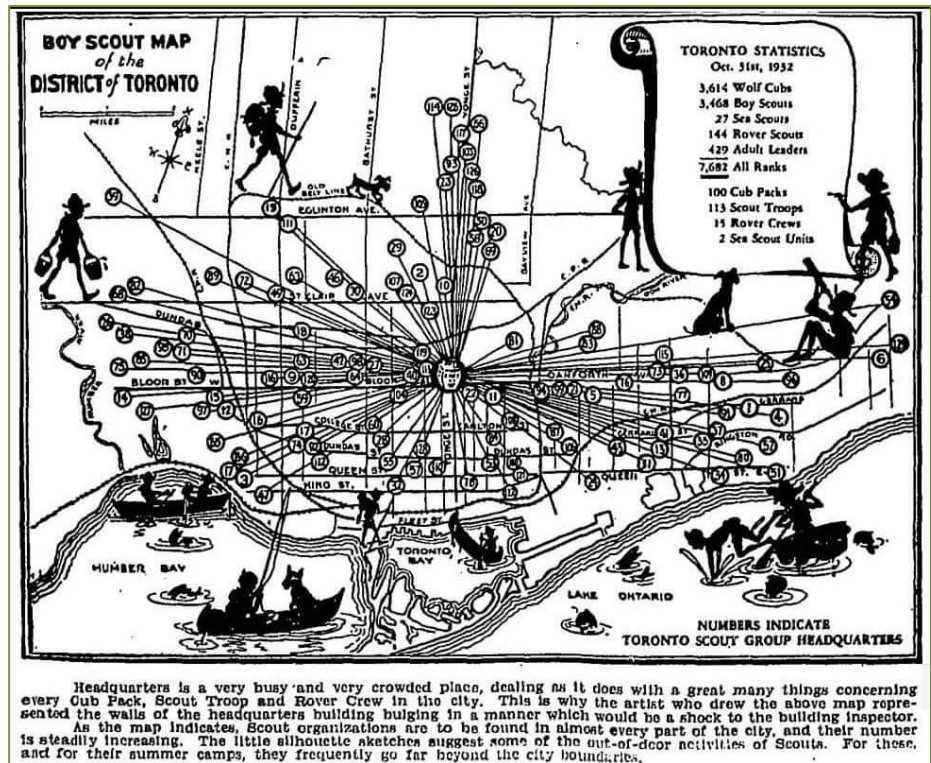
During the early years of Scouting, there were various types of uniforms but one Toronto clothing manufacturer established themselves as the official outfitter for the provinces of Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Miller Manufacturing Company had a retail outlet on York Street, presently The King Edward Hotel. It provided uniforms and equipment before the establishment of the national Stores Department in 1921.



From an early Miller Manufacturing Co. Ltd. catalogue

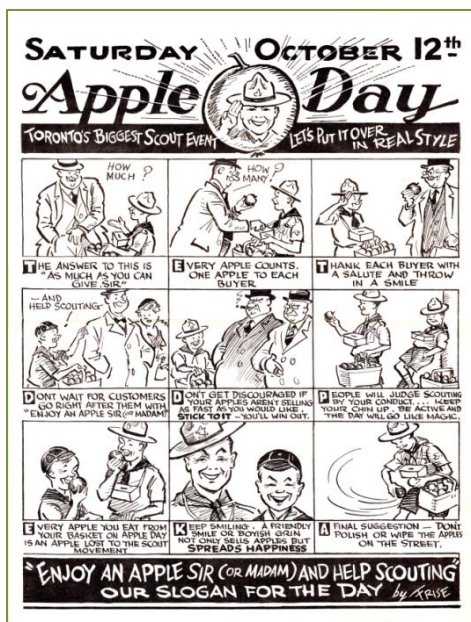
Toronto was considered a Scouting District from its onset. It was not until 1930 that it became an Association.<sup>1</sup> The Annual Report of the Canadian General Council for 1919 estimated that there were seven hundred active Scouts in Toronto but the District would grow to a certified 2,200 Scouts by the following year. The 1921 objective was 5,000 with strong growth in the Roman Catholic divisions. By 1935 membership numbers reached 9,700. Toronto was leading the way for the highest number of Scouts in the smallest area.

In 1920 the Provincial Council was re-organized for future expansion.<sup>2</sup> To help with the operational costs at the Provincial Headquarters, local districts were asked to assume some of these expenses. Programmes like Apple Days helped to pay for the local growth of Scouting. Pictured below are two examples of Toronto Apple Day promotional cartoons.



First is an October 12 advertisement by James Llewellyn Frise, dating it to either 1935 or 1940. Frise was born on Scugog Island near Port Perry, Ontario. He was a WWI veteran and injured at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917. He is known as one of Canada's best story telling cartoonists focusing on humorous and nostalgic depictions of rural life with his strip "Birdseye Center" running in the "Star Weekly".

The next cartoon is by Les Callan born in Ignace, Ontario and was a newspaper cartoonist. During WWII he drew the "Monty and Johnny" comic strip for the "The Maple Leaf" newspaper. His work was featured in the Winnipeg Free Press, the Vancouver Sun and the Toronto Daily Star where he was the staff cartoonist.



*"In 1935 a great Rally of about 13,000 boys filled the Toronto Coliseum to capacity as Cubs, Scouts and Rovers from all parts of Ontario gathered together to be greeted by their Chief, Lord Robert Baden-Powell of Gilwell; Lady Baden-Powell accompanied the Chief on this occasion."*<sup>3</sup>  
 A banquet was held in Toronto at which 900 were in attendance.



May 11, 1935 complimentary ticket

The highlight of 1939 was the Toronto "Cyclorama" which was an exhibition designated to demonstrate the whole Scout programme. This was the first time that such an event was attempted in Ontario and was done on a huge scale that very few of the thousands of people who attended were able to really see it all.

Other events predominant through the years have been the Annual Queen's Scout Recognition Ceremonies held in Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, and Scouts participating in three Coronations – King George V in 1911, King George VI in 1937 and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

Over the decades Toronto Scouts have helped in local and national community services especially toward the relief of distress. Highlights include: the 1940 "Fill up the Barrel" Campaign when 107,000 cans of food were collected, valued at \$10,600; a second such collection was organized in 1941 when 100,000 cans of food were collected valued at \$10,000 - 4,952 cases of food were shipped overseas to aid war refugees in Britain. Also in 1940, Toronto Scouts raised \$67,000 to assist British and European refugee boys. Some of these *B.P. Chins Up* funds started by the Scouts of Toronto were expanded to Canada-wide efforts. The 10th Toronto Troop (Christ Church Deer Park) raised enough money to purchase an ambulance to send overseas. Thousands of Scout books were also shipped gratis to France, Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Greece. Hundreds of food parcels and clothing were sent by the Ladies Auxiliaries of Toronto.



Through the years the growing necessity for camping facilities made imperative the purchase of the 100 acre (40 hectares) overnight camp at West Hill, Scarboro (Camp of the Crooked Creek 1936-1968) and later the Haliburton Campsite of 4,150 acres (1679 hectares).

#### The "OUT" IN SCOUTING

The 71st Toronto Troop believes in outdoor Scouting. Between May 24th and August 15th no less than nine week-end camps were held at Mimico Creek, Camp of the Crooked Creek, and at Weston. Attendance ran as high as 24, and as low as five. For their fine work at the Crooked Creek camp they received a letter of commendation from Toronto District Headquarters. The Scoutmaster, A. F. Garbett, reports that camping standards never dropped lower than 80% and frequently were adjudged at 95 to 100%.

The Junior Leader magazine October, 1946



In 1949 a new Ontario Provincial Scout Badge was adopted. The Design was suggested by Toronto Scouter Mr. C. Norman. The White Trillium was made the official floral emblem of the Province of Ontario by Act of Legislation in 1927. The design was officially adopted by the Executive Committee of the Provincial Council on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945. It was manufactured in the form used for most English Boy Scout "County" badges rather than in the form heretofore general for Provincial Scout Badges in Canada.

A new District Headquarters was established apart entirely from the Headquarters sustained by the Provincial office in 1919. The two offices had been thrown together for many years. By the late 1940's the need for a permanent Scout House was met by the purchase of a building which was situated in the heart of Toronto — 1162 Bay Street.



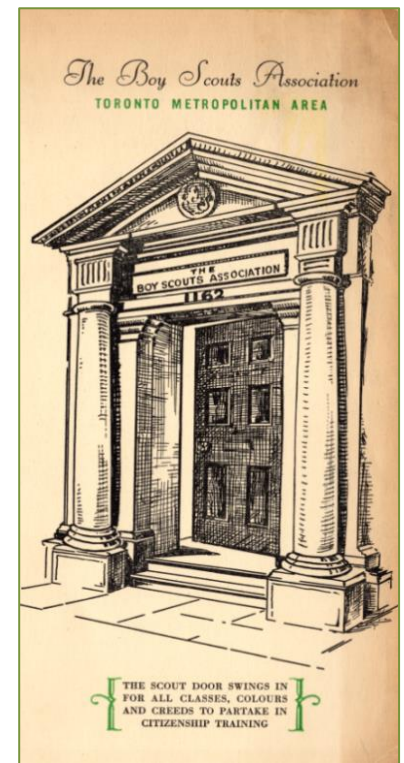
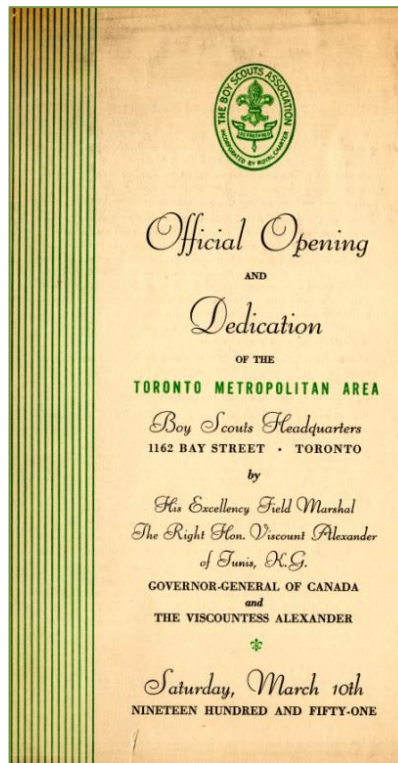
1162 Bay Street, Toronto, Scout House

Shown is the Official Opening and Dedication pamphlet of the new Toronto Metropolitan Area's headquarters on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1951. A detailed history of the building and a salute to forty-three years of service was also included in the pamphlet.

Below are two quotes from the 1954 Toronto Annual Report summarizing the effects that leadership is making for Toronto Scouting to be a success.

*"Outstanding is the faithful service rendered by scores of Leaders who have spent twenty-five and more years in active Scouting. These leaders are the backbone of our Movement."*<sup>4</sup>

*"The Boy has been, is, and always will be the sole purpose of our work, and as long, as conscientious Leaders will counsel and advise boys under their care, Scouting in Toronto will continue to contribute high-type Canadian citizens."*<sup>4</sup>



1951 Official Opening Scout House 1162 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario

### Our New Scout Headquarters TORONTO

The building was designed and built by Henry Sproatt, LL.D., F.R.L., B.A., R.C.A., in the year 1913. It was used by him in his profession of Architecture.

Dr. Sproatt was a third-generation Canadian, of which fact he was justly proud. Charles Sproatt, C.E., one time City Engineer of the City of Toronto, was Dr. Sproatt's father. His grandfather, Henry Sproatt, resided at York, afterwards Toronto, and is mentioned in Dr. Scadding's "Toronto of Old" as having joined an Association called "The Pioneers" in the year 1818.

Dr. Henry Sproatt occupied the room in the southeast corner of the building, adjoining the library, and, during the many years he worked there, his private office bore a marked contrast to the lovely library next door.

His room was sparsely furnished—a small drawing table, two or three chairs, a bare floor—but on the walls hung a lovely Cipriani, several Turners, Durer woodcuts, and a 16th century clock—for Dr. Sproatt loved beautiful things.

Dr. Sproatt was a wonderful architect. He was one of the greatest of his time. He spent a great deal of his time in the library. None but an artist could have planned such a room—the glorious fireplace, the teakwood floor, the fumed, white, quarter-cut oak, pegged panelled walls. Over the mantel in the library, the motto written there exemplifies Dr. Sproatt's feeling for all his work: "Ars Longa—Vita Brevis"; "Art (is) lasting—Life (is) brief."

The needlework over the fireplace is imitation of Elizabethan work, and was worked by the Lee Company, of Birkenhead. It represents the five seasons—Spring, Summer, Autumn, Christmas and Winter—a Tudor work to match the room. The electric fixtures at both sides of the fireplace came from the Bromsgrove Guild of Worcester.

From the leaded windows of the little bay can be seen, at the farther end of the building, a tiled wall against which rests a Roman Sarcophagus.

THE SCOUT DOOR SWINGS IN  
FOR ALL CLASSES, COLOURS  
AND CREEDS TO PARTAKE IN  
CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

1950 Reviewing The Year's Work pamphlet

### A Salute TO THE GLORIOUS PAST FORTY-TWO YEARS OF SERVICE

Scouting has successfully passed its Forty-second milestone in the City of Toronto. What it has done in the development of boys has been accomplished mainly through its inspirational and educational activities, correcting life, deepening character, and preparing them for better citizenship.

Some of the years were difficult ones for young people. Even the best-adjusted found themselves thrown into an atmosphere of upheaval, of tremendous activity, in which they seemed to have little or no part, and it was of vital importance that Scouting should find things for them to do. The Scouts with whom we are working are the men of tomorrow. Many during the past years have become Leaders, and will continue to be Leaders in the world's work in the years to come, for the community which fails to take full advantage of the strength of its Youth is wasting its most precious asset.

The record of the past definitely has been one of accomplishment in every phase of the Scout programme, and we feel we should once again thank Almighty God for our successes, as we humbly recognize the source of our inspiration and power.

We express our sincere thanks to the hundreds of willing workers who assist us throughout the Toronto Field—to the Sixers, Patrol Leaders, Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Rover Leaders, Group Committeemen, Ladies' Auxiliaries, and to all our friends who have given so generously of their time, talents and money to help the work of Toronto Scouting; and, while thinking of these people, we would like to gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the Press of Toronto, both daily and weekly newspapers, the Broadcasting Stations, merchants and general public, and all who have so willingly assisted in this grand work of preparing the Youth for the future.

Let us resolve that we will dedicate our powers and influence to continue with the great task ahead. Each in accordance with his or her ability should be interested not merely in the technique of Scouting or the Organization's success alone, but vitally interested in the Boyhood of Toronto and of Canada, thereby continuing to help in developing citizens properly equipped to meet their responsibilities.

*We Salute the Past* WITH TREASURED MEMORIES

1951 Official Opening Scout House



A SCOUT FIELD NATURALIST



PRACTICAL TRAINING



OVER THE BOUNDING WAVES

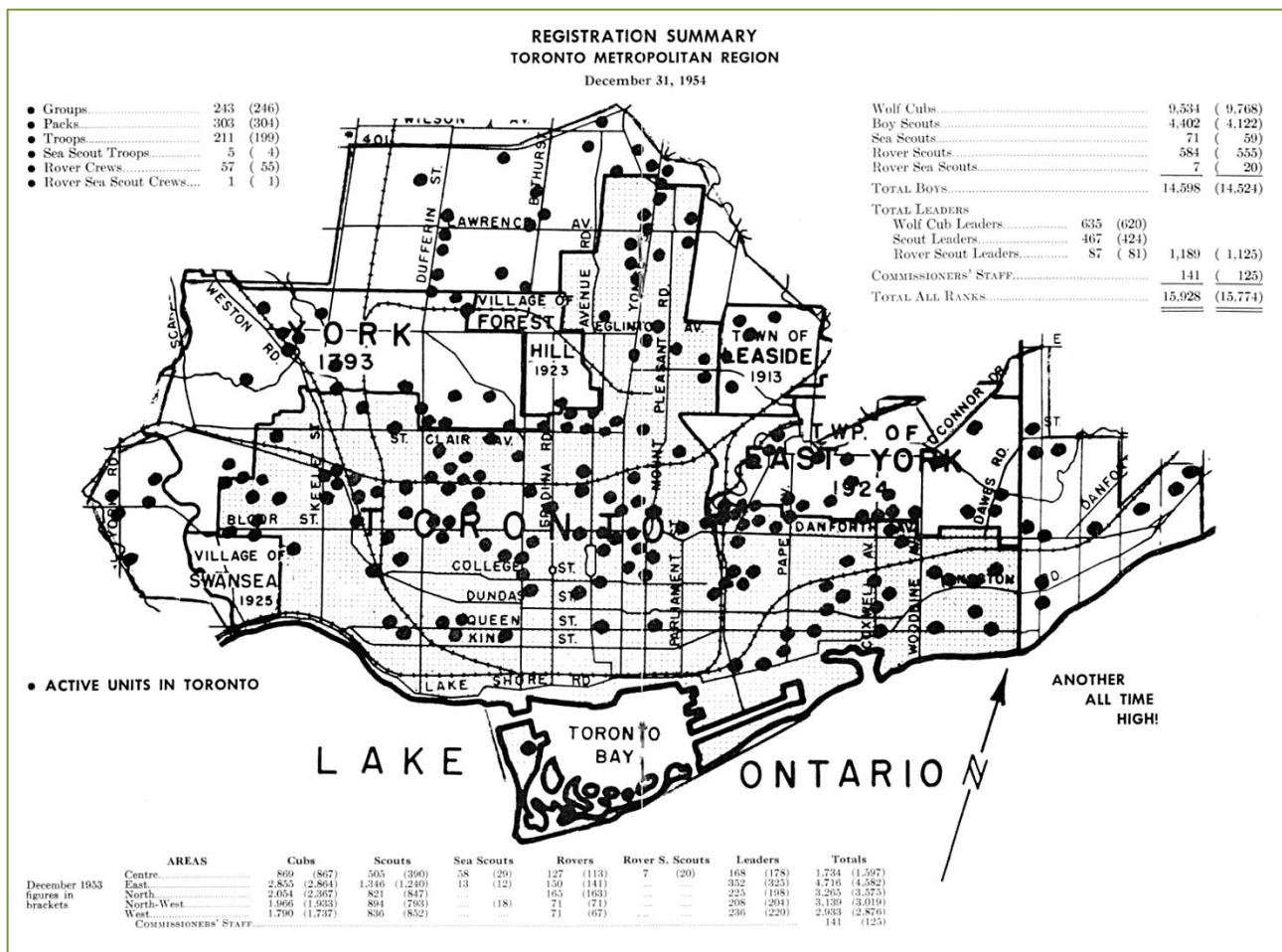
# TORONTO METROPOLITAN REGION - DISTRICTS AND AREAS

The growth of Toronto during post World War II was booming. The "Flight to Suburbia" presented a challenge that called for intelligent analysis and rigorous leadership. In 1944 the Toronto Scouting comprised 21 districts<sup>5,6</sup> and 5 areas<sup>6</sup>, with a total membership in all ranks of 11,845 with 724 adult Leaders. By the end of 1954 the membership reached 15,928 or an increase of 34½%. Adult leadership in 1954 reached 1,330 (including Commissioners' Staff) or an increase of 83¾%.<sup>5</sup>

Starting in 1945 there was a gradual change over from local associations to district councils. National Council interpreted the two terms as interchangeable. There seems to be some ambiguity as to calling Toronto a District, an Area or a Region in earlier publications during its transitional stages.

The Scouting Metropolitan Toronto Area (MTA) came into existence in 1948.<sup>7</sup> It was listed this way up until the 1956 Ontario Annual Report along with six other provincial regions. Note that this Area only consisted of the City limits at the time.

Below is the 1954 Registration Summary of the Metropolitan City of Toronto.



1954 Metropolitan Toronto Annual Report

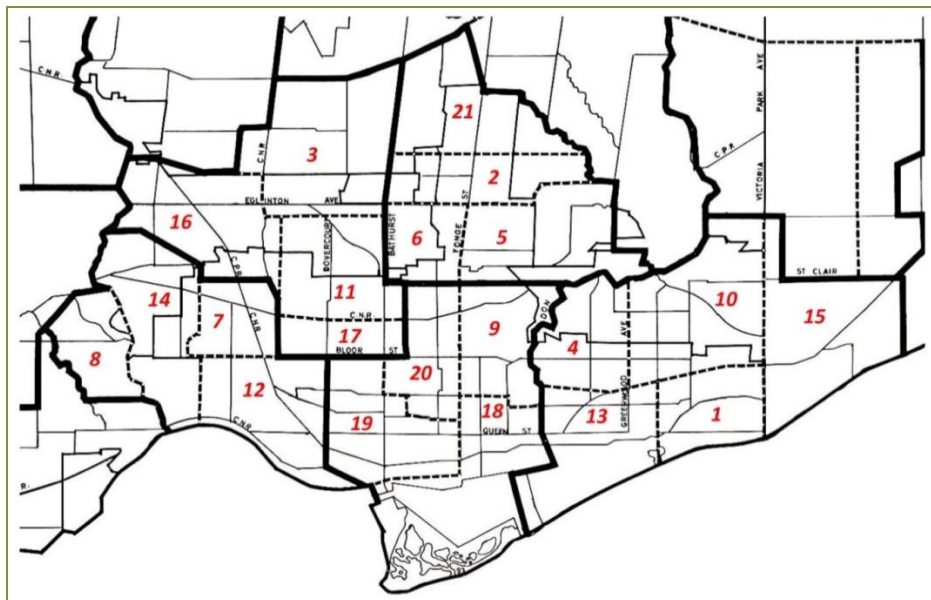
In 1954, York County (north of Toronto) was severed and the Municipality of Toronto was created. This included numerous suburbs with the city limits extending to Steeles Avenue to the north. The Scouting Metropolitan Plan was changing. Considerable work had already begun in 1948 towards the setting up of the re-organization Plan for Toronto from a "District" (Area) to a "Metropolitan Region".<sup>8</sup>

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- 5 - 1954 Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association, page 3
- 6 - 1954 Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association (Cub & Scout Badge Summary charts) page 10
- 7 - A Brief History of Scouting, back page of pamphlet, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association
- 8 - 1954 Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association, page 24

# TORONTO METROPOLITAN REGION – DISTRICT SERVICE TEAM INSIGNIA

District Service Team insignia were identified by curved strips, green in colour with gold lettering and measured 101 mm by 22 mm. Below are the 21 strips and their associated geographic placement in Toronto.



Greater Metropolitan Toronto Districts before 1957

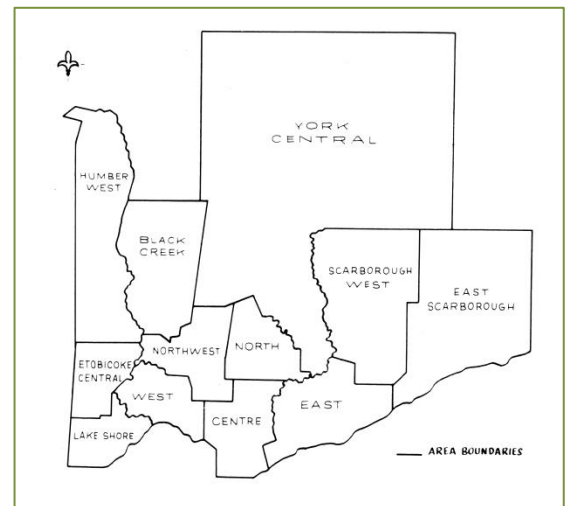
Toronto comprised five areas: Centre, West, North West, North and East. Area Service Team insignia were curved strips dark green in colour with red lettering and measured 101 mm by 22 mm. District Scouter Service Team insignia were dark green in colour with red lettering, gold Fleur-de-Lis and 63 mm in diameter.



Toronto Area strips and District Scouter badges - photo courtesy of Frank D. Smith

Starting in 1957 twelve Areas (Humber West, Etobicoke Central, Lake Shore, Black Creek, York Central, Scarborough West, Scarborough East, East, North, Northwest, West and Centre) were federated into one Region – the Greater Toronto Region.<sup>9</sup> In the formation of the Greater Toronto Region, a large section of York Central District became part of the new region, the remainder having been formed into the York Summit District Council.<sup>10</sup> The five original Toronto Areas remained the same.

The Greater Toronto Region was bound by Lake Ontario in the South, Steeles Avenue in the North, the Etobicoke Creek and Indian Line (Highway 427) in the West and the Pickering Town Line in the East.



1957 Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region

Once the Region was formed the original District Service Team curved strips were replaced with ``Greater Toronto Region`` Service Team curved strips with larger District panels placed below the strip. As with any transitional period these insignia were used throughout the 1960`s while the individual Districts designed their new unique 2`` x 2`` District badges. These new District badges are catalogued on the **Canadian Badgers Memorabilia Club** website.

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9 - 1957 Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association, unpagged

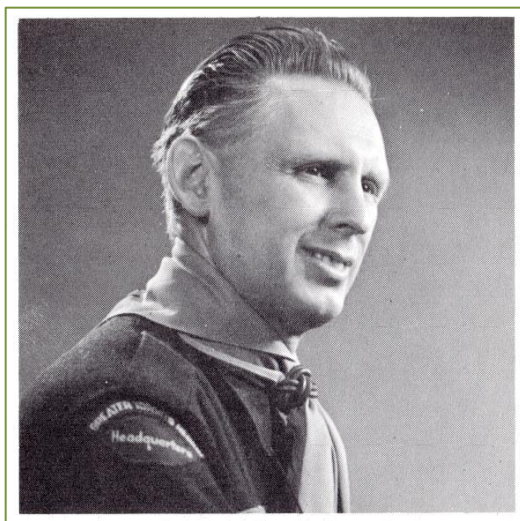
10 - Celebrating 90 Years of Scouting in Ontario, Provincial Council for Ontario, Boy Scouts of Canada, 2000, page 94



Greater Toronto Region Service Team curved strips were dark green in colour with yellow or gold lettering and measured 108 mm by 16 mm. Larger Service Team panels were dark green in colour with yellow or gold lettering and measured 81-84 mm by 40-41 mm.



Pictured on the left is GTR Regional Commissioner Ronald J. Williams displaying a Service Team badge on his right shoulder. Picture is taken from *Scouting in Action* souvenir programme dated 1965. Pictured to the right is a selection of transitional GTR District Service Team insignia. Note that the Districts of Centennial and York Garrison did not form until 1967.



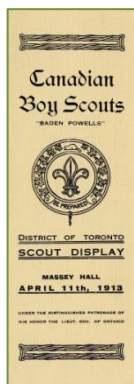
GTR Regional Commissioner Ronald J. Williams 1965 displaying a Service Team badge



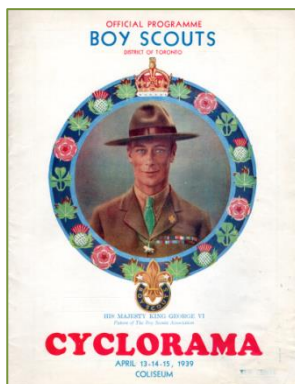
Greater Toronto Region panels – photo courtesy of Frank D. Smith

By January 1<sup>st</sup> 1957 The Greater Toronto Region was servicing over 27,000 boys and leaders. By 1959 The Greater Toronto Region comprised 28 Districts. In Part 2, the early history of the GTR and badge histories of the new Districts is documented. ❀

## TORONTO SCOUTING EVENTS



1913 April 11<sup>th</sup> District of Toronto Scout Display pamphlet



1939 April 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> District of Toronto Cyclorama programme with His Majesty King George VI on the cover



1951 March 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Toronto Metropolitan Area Cyclorama programme



1965 April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Greater Toronto Region Scouting in Action programme



A portion of the 13,000 Cubs and Scouts that filled the Big Coliseum at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds in Toronto for Lord Baden-Powell's visit in 1935



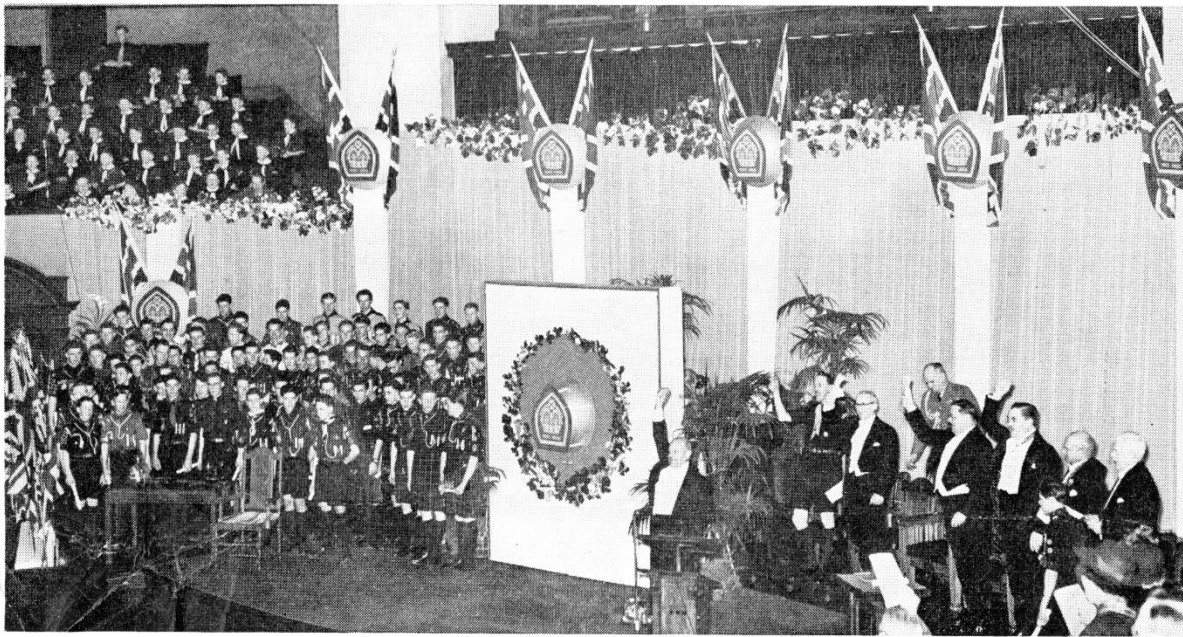
6,000 Wolf Cubs welcome The Chief Lord Rowallan at Varsity Arena, Toronto, 1946  
His response – "My ogodness – look at them come. Is there an end to them?"



Toronto Scouts stopping over in Gander, NFLD, 1957

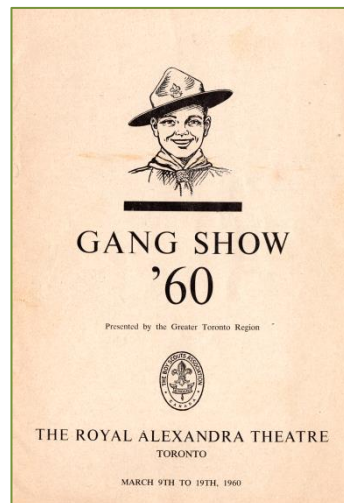
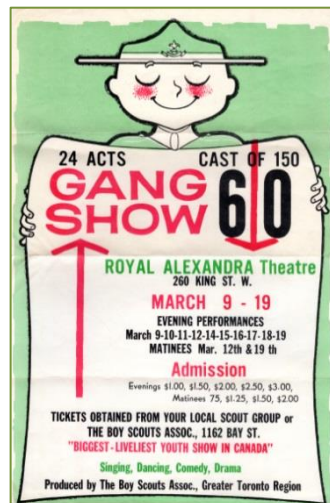


North Toronto Cubs & Scouts at a Hobby Craft Show, February, 1960



His Honour Ray Lawson, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, calls for three cheers for 94 Toronto King's Scouts at their recognition ceremony in Toronto's Convocation Hall in March. Guest speaker at the function was Donald Gordon, President of the Canadian National Railways, who was making his first public address since his appointment to that important post. Mr. Gordon was made an Honorary King's Scout.

Recognition ceremony – photo from *The Junior Leader* magazine June 1949



Greater Toronto Region  
March 9<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 1960  
Gang Show at Royal  
Alexandria Theatre  
featuring 24 Acts and a  
Cast of 150  
"Biggest – Liveliest Youth  
Show in Canada"  
Poster and programme  
booklet shown.

Read the full show article  
in the May 1960 issues of  
*The Scout Leader* or *The  
Junior Leader* magazines.

## REFERENCES:

- 1936 *Price List of Official Uniforms, Equipment, Books, etc.*, The Boy Scouts Association of Canada
- 1939 *Cyclorama Official Programme Boy Scouts District of Toronto*, District of Toronto, The Boy Scouts Association
- 1950 *Reviewing the Year's Work* pamphlet, Toronto Metropolitan Area, The Boy Scouts Association
- 1951 *Official Opening and Dedication of the Metropolitan Area Boy Scouts Headquarters* pamphlet, Toronto Metropolitan Area, The Boy Scouts Association
- 1954 & 1957 *Annual Report, Greater Toronto Region*, The Boy Scouts Association
- 1954, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1962 & 1966 *Annual Report, Provincial Council for Ontario*, the Boy Scouts Association
- 1961 *Scouting Trails 1910-1960*, Provincial Council for Ontario, Boy Scouts of Canada
- 1965 *Scouting in Action* booklet, Greater Toronto Region, Boy Scouts of Canada
- 2000 *Celebrating 90 Years of Scouting in Ontario*, Provincial Council for Ontario, Boy Scouts of Canada
- 2009 *Specialized Catalogue of Ontario Scout Badges Part 1*, Harold Daw, October 24, 2009
- A Brief History of Scouting* back page of pamphlet, Greater Toronto Region, The Boy Scouts Association
- Canadian Badgers Memorabilia Club* magazine and website
- What Every Boy Should Know – Instructions from Headquarters - Official Outfits, Catalogue No. 25*, The Miller Mfg. Co. Reg'd.
- Wikipedia* website
- I would like to thank Kevin Thur, Patrick Sterlock, Frank D. Smith, Mitch Darren, Dan Wolfenden and Sharon Symington for helping with their input.

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