



# Arizona Scouting Museum Newsletter

Vol: 2 No: 2

Second Quarter 2006

## Juliette Gordon Low Biography Founder of Girl Scouts of the USA

Juliette Gordon Low, founder of Girl Scouts of the USA, was born Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon on October 31, 1860, in Savannah, Georgia.

She was the second of six children of William Washington Gordon and Eleanor Kinzie. Family members on her father's side were early settlers in Georgia, and her mother's family played an important role in the founding of Chicago, Illinois.

Young Juliette Gordon developed what was to become a lifetime interest in the arts. She wrote poems; sketched, wrote and acted in plays; and later became a skilled painter and sculptor. She had many pets throughout her life and was particularly fond of exotic birds, Georgia mockingbirds, and dogs. Juliette was also known for her great sense of humor.



### Early Adulthood

In her teens, Juliette attended boarding school at Virginia Female Institute and later attended Mesdemoiselles Charbonniers, a French finishing school in New York City.

On December 21, 1886, her parents' 29th wedding anniversary, Juliette married William Mackay Low, a wealthy Englishman, in Savannah, Georgia. Although the couple moved to England, Juliette traveled extensively between the United States and England.

Before her marriage, Juliette had suffered from chronic ear infections. She had lost most of her hearing in one ear because of improper treatment. At her wedding, when she was 26, she lost hearing in her other ear after a grain of rice thrown at the event lodged in her ear, puncturing the eardrum and resulting in an infection and total loss of hearing in that ear.

During the Spanish-American War, Juliette came back to America to aid in the war effort with her mother. She helped her mother organize a convalescent hospital in Florida for wounded soldiers returning from Cuba. Her father, who had been a captain during the Civil War in the Confederate army, was commissioned by President McKinley as a brigadier general in the U.S. Army and served on the Puerto Rican Peace Commission. At the end of the war, Juliette returned to England and to a disintegrating marriage. The Lows were separated at the time of her husband's death in June 1905.

## Girl Scout Life

Juliette Gordon Low spent several years searching for something useful to do with her life. Her search ended in June 1911, when she met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts. Girls were rushing to be part of the British Boy Scout movement started by Baden-Powell. B-P was not interested in hosting the girls and asked his sister Miss Agnes Baden-Powell to form a society of Girls Guides. By August 1911, Juliette was working with seven girls as part of the Girls Guides in England.

Later when Baden-Powell was traveling to the United States aboard a ship, Juliette Low was also aboard. It was on this trip the B-P met Miss Olave Soames traveling with her family. Juliette got off in Jamaica in the West Indies and Miss Olave Soames later became Mrs. Olave Baden-Powell.

Less than a year later, she returned to the Savannah, Georgia and made her historic telephone call to Miss Nina Anderson Pape (a distant cousin and principle of a local girl's school), saying, "I've got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we're going to start it tonight!"

On March 12, 1912, Juliette Low gathered 18 girls to register the first troop of American Girl Guides. Margaret "Daisy Doots" Gordon, her niece and namesake, was the first registered member.

Miss Agnes Baden-Powell gave Juliette permission to make use of the English Girls Guide handbook. Juliette retained W. J. Hoxie to assist and *How Girls Can Help Their Country* was issued by Knickerbocker Press in 1913, although Juliette's name does not appear as author, there are distinct touches by Juliette throughout the book.

During this time, Juliette interviewed Campfire Girls executives with plans to join together the two organizations suggesting the name Girl Scouts. Negotiations with the Campfire Girls ran into a brick wall. Juliette's one stipulation was the Girl Scout law be part of the new organization. The Campfire Girls refused and the merge fell apart.

Although officially started the night of March 12, 1912, the Girl Scouts was incorporated June 10, 1915 in Washington DC and received a Federal charter by the U.S. Congress on March 16, 1950.

In developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States, Juliette brought girls of all backgrounds into the out-of-doors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. She encouraged girls to prepare not only for traditional homemaking, but also for possible future roles as professional women—in the arts, sciences and business—and for active citizenship outside the home. Girl Scouting welcomed disabled girls at a time when they were excluded from many other activities. This idea seemed quite natural to Juliette, who never let deafness, back problems or cancer keep her from full participation in life.

From the original 18 girls, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.6 million members. Girl Scouts is the largest educational organization for girls in the world and has influenced more than 50 million girls, women and men who have been members.

Juliette Gordon Low died at her Savannah, Georgia, home on Lafayette Square January 17, 1927. She is buried at Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah.

Source:

Lady from Savannah—The Life of Juliette Low

By: Gladys Denny Shultz and Daisy Gordon Lawrence



Sir Baden-Powell; Lady Olave Baden-Powell; Juliette Low

## Boy Scout Trivia

1. What year did Cub Scouts cease to be an experimental program?
  - 1930
  - 1931
  - 1932
  - 1933
  
2. What important program was started in 1982?
  - Varsity scouting
  - Scouting for the Handicapped
  - Tiger Cubs
  - Cub Scout Wood Badge
  
3. Den Mothers became Den Leaders in what year?
  - 1964
  - 1967
  - 1972
  - 1976
  
4. The first religious body to formally adopt Scouting was?
  - The Church of Jesus Chris of the Latter-day Saints
  - Catholic Church
  - Baptist Church
  - Methodist Church
  
5. The twelfth point of the Scout Law, a Scout is Reverent, was added by whom?
  - Ernest Thompson Seton
  - Daniel Carter Beard
  - James E West
  - Robert Baden-Powell
  
6. In 1976, women were officially allowed to serve as?
  - Scoutmasters
  - Cubmasters
  - Merit Badge Counselors
  - Committee Chairpersons
  
7. Teddy Roosevelt's positions in Scouting included all but this?
  - Troop Committeeman
  - Scout Commissioner
  - Chief Scout Citizen
  - Honorary President
  
8. Which President signed the bill for the BSA's Federal Charter?
  - Theodore Roosevelt
  - Woodrow Wilson
  - William Howard Taft
  - Gerald Ford

## Items We Are In Need Of

Camp Geronimo—3 Inch Patches

I Did It All = Years 4 & 5

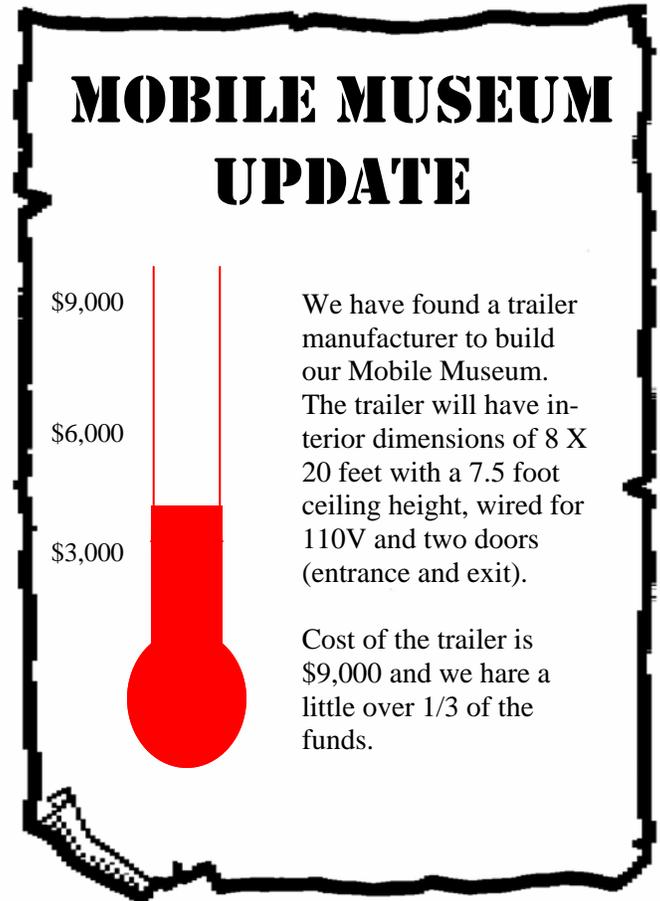
First Edition Scoutmaster Handbook

First Edition Boy Scout Handbook (1910)

First Edition Boy Scout Handbook (1911)

## Boy Scout Trivia—Answers

1. 1933
2. Tiger Cubs
3. 1967
4. The Church of Jesus Chris of the Latter-day Saints
5. James E West
6. Cubmasters
7. Honorary President
8. Woodrow Wilson



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Our mission is to promote Scouting through the preservation and display of Scouting Memorabilia and teaching of the history of Scouting in the United States.

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