

# History of The Arrowhead Lodge



During the summer of 1930 a group of Arrowmen placed a petition on the desk of the then Alamo Area Council Scout executive. It was a request for permission to use the attraction and program of the Wimachtendienk Wingolauchsik Witahemui to help improve Scout camping. After consulting his staff and the Executive Board of the Council, the Executive sat down with John Ackerman--who later became the Lodge's first chief--to discuss the Lodge's program and the value of that program as an aid to Scouting.

After several months of preparing an organization and planning a program, the Alamo Area Council petitioned the National Order of the Arrow Lodge for admittance into the circle of lodges. In September 1931 the petition was granted and the sixtieth lodge of the W.W.W. was born under the name of Aina Topa Hutsi, translated from the original Sioux to mean "Arrowhead Lodge". The Lodge adopted the Perpetual Burning Fire as its totem and decided it would pattern its ceremonies and costumes after those of the Sioux.

By the summer of 1932, the Lodge had prepared for its first calling-out ceremony, held at a camp north of San Antonio. Seven troops had been in camp for almost a week. After being told about the Order, each of the troops elected one candidate for membership, basing their choice upon each Scout's camping ability. Following an all-troop campfire, the names of the seven candidates were read out. The candidate were then led off upon the trail to the

place set aside for their pre-Ordeal. This Ordeal was started the following morning and they were accepted into the Order that night.

In spite of the trying years of the Great Depression, the Lodge held its own and managed to grow slightly. Basic and fundamental ideas for program and operation were discovered. But with the Depression at its hardest in 1933, the Lodge began to falter; and the Lodge officers recommended that the Lodge not be rechartered for 1934. Not wishing the Lodge to fall apart as it obviously would have done within a matter of months, the Scout Executive did not have the recharter for the Lodge processed.

In 1938 the Lodge was ready to take off where it had left off in 1934. But when World War II developed in 1941, the Lodge's membership was torn asunder as its dynamic leaders accepted their responsibility to defend the country. New Arrowmen quickly rose to the challenge and took upon themselves the reins of leadership, and they guided the Lodge through the rocky years of turmoil. Perhaps the most outstanding leader of the Lodge during this time was 1944-1945 Lodge Chief Manuel DeLarrea. For his valuable service the Lodge conferred upon him the Vigil Honor in 1946, thus becoming the first Arrowman in the history of the Lodge to be accorded the Vigil Honor.

In 1946 lodges from all over Texas assembled for an Area meeting - a forerunner of today's section conclaves-to share ideas about costuming, program, and administration. Since then, meetings have been held annually with different lodges acting as host, and in many of the Scout camps and colleges around the state. A number of the Arrowmen from Aina Topa Hutsi have been elected by all the lodges to serve a one-year term as Area Chief or Section Chief. Other ATH Arrowmen have served as Area or Section vice chiefs, secretaries, or as deputy chiefs in charge of an aspect of the conclave program.

The 1950's saw many changes in ATH programs, and the Lodge reaches a new high in activity. At the start of the decade it did not enjoy a good relationship with the Council, and the Lodge suffered as a result.

Between 1951 and 1957, the program was rebuilt by a series of capable youth leaders; and several innovations were introduced during this period. Chapters were first organized in 1953 in each district of the Council, and their functions became an important aspect of the OA program. Also during this time, a system of Lodge committees was organized to carry out Lodge programs. The tradition of an annual Winter Banquet was started in 1953. The Lodge calendar came to resemble its modern format as the Fall and Spring

Fellowships were first held; an Ordeal weekend was held at the end of the summer to help the Council close summer camp operations.

The 1960's were a turbulent period for the Lodge. Even as the Lodge membership grew to record numbers, its program was severely reduced. Once again, the Lodge's relationship with the Council began to deteriorate, and reached crisis proportions during the mid '60's.

The Lodge kept up its activities despite these problems. The calendar normally consisted of a Fall Fellowship / Ordeal Camp in August, a Winter Banquet in December, and a Spring Fellowship in May. In 1965, Bear Creek Scout Reservation opened as a permanent summer camp, and call outs and Fall Fellowships/Ordeal Camps were held there and at the old Indian Creek Scout Camp for several years. Even as the program struggled, enrollment increased as most years saw over 300 new members inducted.

One notable success during the decade was the creation of the Missions Historic Trail in 1968. A Lodge committee led by Earle Harben and Jerry Harben mapped the trail, designed a patch, printed informational pamphlets, and won approval from Council and National authorities.

A new spirit of optimism led to the reorganization of the Lodge, and an improved relationship between the Lodge and the Council began to develop.

Rebounding from the depths of the 1960's, ATH soared to great heights in the 1970's. The Lodge's recovery began in 1973, when a new energetic Council Camping Committee - realizing the value of an effective OA lodge - set out to make Aina Topa Hutsi the Council's strong right arm.

The Lodge was reorganized and new rules were written. During the middle of the decade it seemed that the Lodge consistently had new and exciting projects in planning, being developed, or near completion. Not everything was successful, but the record was outstanding.

The new rules greatly expanded the Lodge's committee structure, and several of those committees built notable records of achievement. The Indian Heritage dance team won Section competitions in 1976, 1978, 1979, and 1980. Most importantly, they performed a valuable service by performing at countless unit, district, council, and community events - becoming an annual highlight of summer camp call-outs and the Scout Country Fair.

The Publications committee fulfilled a long-frustrated ambition by producing a regular Lodge newsletter, *The Fame*.

The Camp Promotion committee produced a series of slide shows about summer camp; and began presenting programs at troop meetings with eight slide projectors purchased for this effort. A small "Where To Go Camping:" guidebook was printed in 1974; then five years of effort went into a much larger edition in 1980. A particularly good campaign in 1979 crowned the committee's record for the decade by winning the national E. Urner Goodman Camping Promotion Award.

The induction and introduction of new members was the focus of much attention during the decade. In 1972 and 1973, weekly Ordeals during summer camp were tried; but then the Lodge returned to holding separate Ordeals at the end of the summer. Extensive slide presentations - designed to insure that new members understood the Order and to encourage them to become active members - were produced. Most of these programs were suspended in 1977 and 1978, when Ordeal orientation was turned over to Elangomats, members who took individual responsibility for training a group of new members. A shortage of properly dedicated Arrowmen ended that experiment in 1978.

In 1974, Indian Creek Scout Camp was closed and the Lodge took an active role in preparing facilities at Bear Creek Scout Reservation. 1975 saw the beginning of the E. Urner Goodman Memorial Campfire Ring. The Lodge took responsibility for designing, financing, and constructing this major camp improvement project. Special Lodge flap patches issued for the OA's Sixtieth Anniversary in 1975 and the American Bicentennial in 1976 helped pay for the costs of the project.

Fanatic promotion efforts brought fifty-six members - the largest Lodge delegation - to the 1975 National OA Conference in Ohio, where the ATH Pre-Ordeal ceremony team won a First Division rating. A highlight of the conference was the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award (DSA) to Carl X. Forrester and Sterly G. Dossman. The DSA is the highest honor the National OA Committee can award. The 1980's have also been a successful decade for the Lodge. In 1981, the E. Urner Goodman Memorial Campfire Ring was formally dedicated, in honor of our founder, who had died the previous year. Later that summer, ATH celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary with a weekend-long celebration. Arrowmen from several states joined the Lodge as we recalled our past and rededicated ourselves to unwavering cheerful service. In August, the National OA Conference was held at a site

close to home, The University of Texas at Austin. The highlight of the Conference was the bestowing of the DSA to Jerry Harben.

In the summer of 1982, ATH Arrowmen joined Brothers from South Central and Southeast Texas at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville to bid farewell to SC section 3-A (southeast Texas) and SC Section 3-B (south central Texas) and to welcome the newly-formed SC Section 5. At this conclave, the Lodge ceremony teams won the overall ceremony championship. This victory was the beginning of a domination of section ceremonial competition by the Lodge. From 1982 to 1986, ATH won an overall bisection championship, an overall section championship, a section Brotherhood championship, a National Brotherhood championship, and a National second place award for Vigil Honor competition.

At the 1982 Winter Banquet, the Founder's Award, a newly established National OA Committee award for exemplary service to the Lodge was presented for the first time. Robert A. DiMambro, Sr. and Mark A. Lyons were the first recipients.

In 1983, ATH joined the Brothers of SC Section 5 for the first conclave of the new section. It was held at Texas Lutheran College in Seguin, where it would be held from 1983 to 1987. At the 1983 national OA Conference held at Rutgers University in New Jersey, then Council Scout Executive (and OA Supreme Chief of the Fire) Robert Shoemaker and Council professional staff member James "Skip" Montgomery were presented with the Distinguished Service Award.

In 1984, a new Lodge event was started - the Inter-Lodge Fellowship. With the establishment of the new section the previous years, there was a new emphasis on communication among the lodges in the section. The officers of ATH and Tonkawa Lodge in Austin met and decided to organize a joint fellowship. The event was held at Lost Pines Scout Reservation near Bastrop, the council camp of the Capitol Area Council of Austin. The event was a rousing success, featuring training sessions, patch trading, fun and games, a Brotherhood ceremony, and a Vigil Honor Call-Out. At the Lodge's Ordeals, the Elangomat program was supported by the use of an Ordeal orientation slide show. This approach of Ordeal orientation was found to be successful and remains in use.

At the 1984 SC Section 5 Conclave, the Lodge was presented the Lodge Achievement Award, recognizing ATH as the best lodge in the section in regard to it's high conduct of OA program and administration.

The Lodge neckerchief, discontinued in the mid-1970's, was reintroduced with an attractive new design. Other items added to the Lodge's Trading Post included a Lodge baseball-style hat, and a Lodge hat pin in the shape and design of the Lodge's flap patch.

In the Spring of 1985, the Council celebrated the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the founding of the BSA with a Council-wide Camp-O-All involving many of the units in the Council. The Lodge provided the main entertainment of the event, a multimedia extravaganza celebrating the BSA's theme of "Footsteps of the Past, Foundation of the Future."

In August 1985, several ATH Arrowmen joined Brothers from throughout the nation at the first national outdoors-emphasis in OA history, the National OA Philmont Trek. Held at Philmont Scout Ranch, this event celebrated the Seventieth Anniversary of the Order.

In the Fall of 1987, the Council underwent a major reorganization as it expanded from eight to fourteen districts: and the Lodge Executive Committee voted to suspend the operations of the existing set of chapters - in place since the late 1960's - for a period of one year. During this trial period it was noticed that an organization so large and geographically dispersed as ATH needed some structure below the Council level for effective administration and leadership development. Attempts to meet this need through a lodge-level subcommittee structure were unsuccessful, and experience indicated that a detailed successful structure would not evolve without identifiable chapters, preferably tied to district boundaries.

In the summer of 1988, a special ad hoc committee considered the alternatives for the best organization of the Lodge in light of the Council's reorganization. The committee studied objectives, organizations, programs and initiatives that would make the Lodge a successful operation for service to the Council and its new districts. At the 1988 Fall fellowship, the Lodge executive Committee and the voting general membership present adopted most of the committee's proposals including, a revamping of the lodge officer leadership structure, and a new set of Lodge Rules.

Many Arrowmen have passed through the ranks of the Aina Topa Hutsi; yet, in a sense, they and we are one - united in the spirit of Uncas. Therefore, we perpetuate to them the names and tokens of this Brotherhood of Cheerful Service.