

Scouting Heritage – Council History Column February – 2021

When's our birthday?

Welcome to the first installment of the Scouting Heritage, Council History Column. Last month our Council Executive Kenn Miller asked if, as Council Historian, I could provide a brief council history moment and share “Our Story” in Baltimore. Each month, the Scouting Heritage Committee will share a column in each installment of the Area Scouter to cover Baltimore’s rich Scouting history.

February is when we celebrate our National Scouting Anniversary. A question often asked of me: “When was the Baltimore Area Council founded?” there has been much confusion around this simple question for years. The Council itself has used various dates to mark its anniversary in the past. For many years, the Council used 1914 as its founding year, but this is not correct. On May 12, 1911, the Maryland Council, Boy Scouts of America was founded and headquartered in Baltimore. Now, wait a minute, “Maryland Council?” What’s this all about? Well, this is why there has been so much confusion over the years. And this is the rest of the story.

The formation of Scout councils has occurred in cities and towns except for one, the Maryland Council. In March of 1911, a group of interested community leaders wanted to promote the Scouting movement. They wished to promote it not only for Baltimore but for the entire State of Maryland. Thus, when the founding group submitted to the BSA National office for a charter, it was for all of Maryland. Our first Scout Executive, H.L. Eddy, traveled throughout Maryland from 1911 to 1914, organizing Scouting units from the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland. Around the same time, other communities desired to charter Scout Councils, such as Washington, D.C., and Hagerstown. By 1914 our Council’s boundaries were reduced to what they are today, and the council name changed to “Baltimore Area Council.” Regardless of name and boundary changes, May 12, 1911, marks the founding of our Council.

Do you have a story idea? Let us know!

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