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GIRL SCOUTS 2nd edition

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There was noise and laughing, clapping and singing next door. I was sitting in my window sill watching and listening to the girls.

I was 10 in 1957 and living in a small town in Virginia. Next door to my house was the Girl Scout mistress, Mrs. Henson's house where she conducted all the girl scout business meetings and club activities.

Further down the street was the girl scout building we built for large events like dinners and community club meetings. The Lions Club, Rotary Club and other organizations meet there.

Several of the girls, Eloise and Mary, came over to talk to me.

"What are you going to do today?" I asked.

Mary said." We are practising the ceremony to take in the new scouts. It has to be done just right, you know. Mrs. Henson is a stickler for straight lines and everyone has to know the pledge.

Brownies are a younger branch of Girl Scouts that do most of the same things that Girl Scouts do except they are younger and they do not do overnight camping week.

Mrs Henson lived next door and was the girl scout leader. She laughed at the girls who were all running around in circles with daisy chains

in their hair. But soon the meeting was called to order. I could barely hear them as they all got in a circle on the grass and said the pledge for girl scouts. Then they sat down and Mrs. Henson started the meeting. Today they were going over the ceremony that they would have next week welcoming Brownies into the Girl Scouts.

This was a big event. Only a few "FLY" from Brownies to Scouts and it is a very special time. I know because this year I am going to be one of them. I have waited a whole year to be able to do this. Everyone meets at Mrs. Hensons' house at 10 AM with uniforms on and shoes polished.

"Ok girls, It is time to get ready". Mrs. Henson announced.

It is very formal and dignified. The Girl Scouts form two lines for the candidates to walk between and the brownies wait at the other end with the new scouts to help them through the passageway. Mrs. Henson and the president pronounce us girl scouts and pin gold metals on our scarf.

The pledge is repeated by all of us and we are now formally a Girl Scout. After that we cut the cake, decorated with the girl scout emblem and have kool-ade.

The Girl Scouts are very active and important to the youth of our town.

During the year we have fund raisers to pay our expenses. For instance last week we had a bake sale and a rummage sale. We got all the mothers to help in baking cakes, cookies and brownies. After that we went around our

neighborhoods to ask for donations of old, lightly used articles of clothes, shoes and other items we can sell. One mother offered little pots of flowers that she said we could sell. Another other made little ceramic bowls for us to sell.

The Friday before the sale we met at Mrs. Hensons' house to sort and price everything. We had a sign-up sheet to work the event and all would be ready to start at 9 AM on Saturday.

Mr. Davis, from the bank, always allowed us to use the vacant lot where the movie house used to be. It has some extra parking at the back but the front is right on the street with the sidewalk so we get good exposure.

One of the interesting things we do in the summer is camp. This is the time of year we work on most of our outdoor badges for our sashes that we wear. The Girl Scouts have a big camp ground in the country, actually part of the farm that Mrs. Henson's daughter owns. There is a bunk house, picnic tables and fire pits for our use. There is also a swimming pool. It is where we get our outdoor badges like camping, swimming, trail blazing and animal husbandry. We learned that the creek at the bottom of one of the fields has gray clay in it so we made a field trip to gather clay and make pots. We always spend a lot of time identifying birds and leaves. These are noted in our notebooks so we can get badges to put on our sashes.

One night during the week we have a chance to earn our outdoor camping badge by spending the night sleeping on the ground in a tent and making a fire.

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This is so much fun to be together and sing, making s'mores and telling ghost stories. The next morning we have to cook breakfast on our homemade stoves. These are made with large cans, like tomato juice size. We punch holes in the upper side of the cans and put sterno cooking cans underneath to cook our bacon and egg on. After much confusion, laughing and making fun of each other it works and we are ready to clean up and get back to camp. No one got much sleep that night.

Mrs Henson and her daughter were certified to teach swimming, life saving and first aid so by the end of the week we all knew how to swim and save each other.