

## Blue Springs Scout Reserve Gilwell Reunions

From the July 1937 BSSR opening Wood badge Part 11 graduates continued the Ontario Gilwell practice of Gilwell graduates getting together or attending the weekend current BSSR Wood badge Part 11 course at the invitation of the Gilwell Camp Chief. During WW2 there were few Gilwell Part 2 courses held and fewer Gilwell reunions. In November of 1947 what is now Scouts Canada adopted the British Scouts practice of having an Annual Gilwell Reunion on the Thursday preceding the Easter weekend to commemorate the 1<sup>st</sup> Gilwell reunion at Gilwell Park in May 1921. Fixing a date for a Gilwell Reunion in March/ April was not practicable as Canadian large Camping areas do not open until the end of May. During an August/ September 1950 Trainers Conference/Course at BSSR the following happened (as posted left below).

### Gilwell Re-union

THE never to be forgotten thrill of a Gilwell Part II course was relived by those holding the Wood Badge in the South Central District of Ontario. Some thirty Gilwellians gathered at Blue Springs Scout Reserve for a week-end of fun, camping experience and above all to renew their pledge to remain faithful to their duty to give their Scouts, Cubs and Rovers their very best by refreshing their training. During the week-end the Scouters took up a collection to purchase a new blackboard for the training camp and thus establish contact with the classes to come. Each Scouter present agreed to make a supreme effort to have at least one other Scouter from his district take advantage of the training courses which will be offered next summer and to do all in his power to make it easier for Scouters to obtain the necessary time off from work, etc.

The next year in August/September 1951 more BSSR Scout Gilwell Part 11 trainers showed up to discuss the idea of having all Gilwell graduates attend at Gilwell Reunion at BSSR in September not just the Gilwell Part 2 Instructors. In the fall of 1952 the first Official Gilwell reunion was held at the Boy Scout Reserve at Blue Springs. A yellow square 1952 Gilwell Reunion felt crest with red lettering was created. A white felt crest with a wagon was also created for some of these 1952 members. On Friday August 21, Saturday, August 22, and Sunday August 23 1953 a Special BSSR Blue springs Reunion was held to Honour the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wood badge Part 11 Training in Canada and a green square Ontario crest with yellow lettering saying 1923-1953 was issued. The 1954 Gilwell Reunion crest was red felt with yellow lettering but the shape was changed from square to diamond. The 1955 Gilwell Reunion crest was yellow felt with red lettering. The 1956 Gilwell Reunion felt crest was green with yellow lettering. The 1957 Gilwell Reunion was white silk screen with red lettering on a green felt background. The 1958 Ontario BSSR Reunion issued a green felt 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday pennant with yellow lettering. In 1959 the familiar diamond shaped blue felt crest with yellow lettering returned. This 1959 BSSR crest even had a red border. In 1960 rectangular Swiss embroidered BSSR crests first appeared and have been used ever since.

The Instructors on the 1<sup>st</sup> 1922 Wood badge Part 11 below were James W. Robertson who was Chief Commissioner, Rodney C. Wood, who was Dominion Camp Chief and he returned to South Africa in November of 1924, and John A. Stiles who completed a British Troop Part 2 Gilwell, in Canada when Rodney Wood was Camp Chief in 1922. (Frank C. Irwin who joined in October of 1920 and replaced Captain (Harry) Henry G Hammond in January of 1921 is sitting in the second row with the above 3 Gilwell Instructors because his comments as a student would be applied to future Canadian Gilwell Part 2 Troop courses as Frank Clarence Irwin was the Ontario Gilwell Part 11 Camp Chief). F C Irwin was also the Ontario Assistant Provincial Commissioner/ Ontario Executive Commissioner or Executive Secretary until his death on 9 December 1954.



The 1923 Gilwell Part 2 Scout Instructor /Trainers were Left to Right Frank E.L. Coombs, ( 1923 - 1935 in the Maritimes) Rodney C. Wood (1922-1924 Dominion Camp Chief), John A. Stiles (1923 -1937 Western Provinces), Frank C. Irwin (1923-1930 Ontario-Black Rapids-the farm of James W. Robertson, Ebor Park Brantford-1923-1937, Blue Springs Scout Reserve 1937-1954).Frank Coombs and Frank Irwin were Scouters with the Boy Scouts of America who continued as Scouters in Canada after 1921.Frank Coombs, John Stiles and Frank Irwin continued as Gilwell Part 2 Instructors ( staff) for about 12 years each until each retired from their Scouting Youth sections as Cub Masters, and / or Scout Masters. In the fall of 1922 Rodney Wood returned to Gilwell Park as Camp Chief .On 23 September 1923 Rodney Wood was back in Canada as Dominion Camp Chief and wrote the book Animal Tracking for Boy Scouts-Hints on Animal Tracking until the end of November 1924 when he went back to Nyasaland. Rodney Wood was in United States from 1925-29 then back to Nyasaland until1932, and working at different jobs and traveling around Africa until settling in the Seychelles and dying on 27 January1962.

On Wednesday July 5<sup>th</sup> until Saturday July 15<sup>th</sup> 1922 the First Canadian Gilwell Part 2 Troop 10 day Scout Course was conducted on the farm of Methodist preacher Benjamin Rothwell (First Concession Lot 19) east of Blair Road and north of the Montreal Road, along the Ottawa River south of Lower Duck Island in an area that is still called Green's Creek. This 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Gilwell Camp location was named Rothwell Heights after a housing project constructed in the 1950s.



## FIRST CANADIAN GILLWELL CAMP

JULY 5<sup>TH</sup> TO 15<sup>TH</sup> 1922.

1st Row, Sitting, Left to Right : Raeburn, (Windsor) ; Bratton, (Ottawa) ; Davison, (Toronto) ; Allingham, (Temiskaming) ; Bell, (London) ; Patrick, (Guelph) ; Scout Black, (Ottawa) ; Scout Gervan, (Ottawa).

2nd Row : Metcalfe, (London) ; Atkinson, (Chatham) ; Solomon, (Montreal) ; Loranger, (Welland) ; Dr. J. W. Robertson, (Chief Com.) ; Rodney C. Wood, (Asst. Camp Chief) ; Stiles, (Ottawa) ; Irwin, (Toronto) ; Lunan, (Huntingdon, P.Q.)

3rd Row, Standing : Stein, (Brockville) ; Davis, (Hamilton) ; Rev. Macdonell, (Stratford) ; Rev. Love, (Cowansville, P.Q.) ; Terry, (Lindsay) ; Johnston, (Ottawa) ; McConnell, (Oshawa) ; Rev. Warren, (Danville, P.Q.) ; McCann, (Own Sound) ; Boyd, (Chesterville) ; King, (Ottawa) ; Riddell, (Ottawa).