

*Celebrating
50 Years!*

Remembering B.-P.: 8th World Scout Jamboree 1955

by Anthony Roberts



In 1955, over 11,000 Scouts from 71 countries gathered in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario for the Eighth World Scout Jamboree. In 2005, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of this historic event.

Jamboree of New Horizons

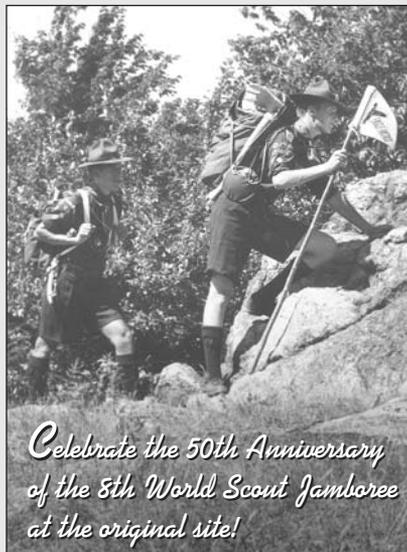
WJ'55 was a historic event for Canada and for World Scouting. It was the first major international gathering of Scouts outside of Europe. In recognition of this, the theme was "New Horizons".

The Jamboree was held in a tent city next to the recently-reconstructed Fort George. It was the first World Jamboree to be broadcast on television. The CBC provided both radio and TV coverage. All cooking was done the modern way: over charcoal. Three Brazilian Scouts travelled to the Jamboree by jeep.

The event generated huge and enthusiastic support within the country as a whole. An Honourary Advisory Committee was struck, chaired by the Governor-General and Chief Scout of Canada the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, who also officially opened the Jamboree on Saturday, August 20. The committee included Lester B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs (and later Prime Minister); Donald Gordon, President of Canadian National Railways; W.A. Mather, President of Canadian Pacific Railways; and Leslie Frost, Premier of Ontario. The Camp Chief was Jackson Dodds, C.B.E., Deputy Chief Scout of Canada and retired General Manager of the Bank of Montreal.

Part of the site was then under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada (through the Department of Defence), which supplied facilities and equipment, RCMP and military personnel, and a grant of \$50,000. The greater portion of the site, including Fort George, was

maintained by the Niagara Parks Commission, which landscaped and planted the area in front of the main arena. The Commission monitored the traffic during the Jamboree, and estimated that 80,000 vehicles entered the area, representing over 130,000 visitors, which included diplomatic representatives from at least 20 countries. The Province of Ontario supplied highway signs, snow fences and a grant of \$25,000.



*Celebrate the 50th Anniversary
of the 8th World Scout Jamboree
at the original site!*

Many organizations provided huge amounts of assistance. The Ford Motor Company loaned 45 vehicles and drivers. Bell Telephone Company provided a switchboard and 24-hour staffing. Canada Post issued a special commemorative postage stamp.

Work on the site was almost completed when, on Saturday, August 13, it was struck by Hurricane Connie. Volunteers from local fire departments, service clubs, Scout groups and private individuals rushed to help in such numbers that some actually had to be turned away, and everything was restored in time to welcome the first arrivals on Thursday, August 18.

Many high-level Scouting officials from around the world were in attendance, but the most popular was probably Olave, Lady Baden-Powell, World Chief Guide and wid-

ow of the Founder of Scouting, Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell.

On Friday, August 26, the Scouts were taken by bus, train, and boat to Toronto, where they paraded through the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition. The salute was taken and the Ex was officially opened by the Chief Scout of the British Commonwealth, Lord Rowallan. After the parade, the Scouts were allowed to tour the Ex for the rest of the day, with instructions to reassemble at four o'clock. Everyone made it home.

The Jamboree was a pivotal event in the lives of those who attended. To quote one of them, "(It was) an event that played a major role in my early years, and assisted greatly in my future endeavours". Today, these Scouts are in their mid-sixties.

Celebrate with Us

The 50th Anniversary of the Jamboree is an opportunity to celebrate the important role Scouting has played in Canadian society and the long-lasting positive impact Scouting has on the lives of its members.

All Jamboree attendees, Scouts, family, and friends are invited to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 8th World Scout Jamboree. The commemoration will be held September 16-18, 2005 at the original Jamboree site. A commemorative plaque under the auspices of Parks Canada will be unveiled. The celebration will coincide with the Scout Brigade of Fort George, a camporee that annually attracts about 1500 Scouts from Canada and the United States. This event will be a reunion of attendees and an opportunity for former Scouts to reconnect with the Scouts of today.

A commemorative crest, based on the design of the original WJ'55 crest (see above right), is available. It can be ordered through our web site.

Our current challenge is to get the word out to Jamboree attendees and others who would be interested. More information is available on the event web site: <http://wj55.org/>.
— Anthony Roberts Scouts in Ontario.