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Fayetteville Troop 51 gets opportunity to view rare Boy Scouts memorabilia

Jan 04, 2017 [Hayleigh Gowans](#) [Eagle Bulletin, History](#)



Members of Troop 51 observe the Stephen H. Porter collection with descendants from his family. Porter was an Eagle Scout from Fayetteville in the earliest days of the Scouting movement. (Submitted Photo)

Organization solicits additional troop history for upcoming documentary

By Hayleigh Gowans

Staff Writer

Current and former members of Boy Scout Troop 51 in Fayetteville recently got the chance to see a unique and rare collection of Boy Scouts memorabilia — patches and documents from the collection of Stephen H. Porter, one of the earliest scouts in the troop.

“This evening gave the boys a sense of their place in history and the impact Troop 51 has had on the village of



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Fayetteville and town of Manlius for over 100 years,” said Scott Armstrong, executive committee member and past president of the Longhouse Council, about the Troop 51 Dec. 19 annual holiday party. “It also gave some alumni a chance to get back together and reminisce on memories and show the younger boys how much scouting has impacted them.”

Fayetteville Troop 51 is the longest serving troop in the Longhouse Council of the Boy Scouts of America which serves the counties of Onondaga, Cayuga, St. Lawrence, Oswego, Jefferson and Lewis, said Armstrong.

In 1912, Troop 1 of Fayetteville was established. To put that in perspective, the Boy Scouts of America organization was established just two years earlier in 1910. The troop was re-designated as Fayetteville Troop 51 sometime between 1916 and 1920.

Porter was a member of Troop 51 and was the 105th scout documented to achieve the Eagle Scout rank, earning the honor in 1914. His family has donated his merit badges, gear and other memorabilia to be put on display to allow BSA groups a glimpse into the early days of the organization, Armstrong said. The Porter collection recently came into the national spotlight because is considered one of the oldest, most complete and historically significant scouting memorabilia collections known to exist.

The Porter collection includes the only known copies of two merit badges — the “stalking” and “invention” merit badges. According to the troop’s website and historical archives, Porter earned 56 of the 57 Merit Badges available in 1914 and most likely went on to earn the 57th — the invention badge.

The invention badge may have been officially discontinued prior to his earning the badge, but if he did “officially” earn it he is likely to have been the first scout in BSA history to earn every merit badge available at the time in 1914, which contradicts the currently reported date of a scouts earning all merit badges in 1922 (according to an article by Boy Scout historian and memorabilia collector David Eby).

When current Troop 51 members saw the collection on Dec. 19, it was significant, said Armstrong, because it was the first public viewing of the Porter collection which will likely be brought to other museums and BSA events in the future. There are 44 active current members of Troop 51 and about 18 alumni members attended at the holiday party.

Troop 51 is currently looking for any documents, memorabilia or information that may have historical importance to the organization from former members or their families as they are currently working to make a documentary on the history of the troop, said Armstrong. They plan to have the movie finished by June 2017.

Those who would like to submit information or have questions can find contact information at the Troop 51 website, scouttroop51.com.

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I am a reporter for the Eagle Bulletin and Cazenovia Republican at Eagle News. I report on topics ranging from town and village government, business, news and features. I am a 2014 graduate of the Roy H. Park School of Communications and have a degree in Journalism and a minor in Psychology.

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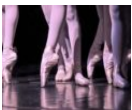
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