

Chi Sigma Society



From the Pages of Scouting History Scout Honor Societies

By David L. Eby and Paul Myers Jr., Scouting Historians

"A History of Chi Sigma and Arcoon Lodge 1934-1976" by Edward J. Quirk, Jr.

CHI SIGMA 1934-1947

During the 1922 camp season at Camp Barton, located on the shores of Cayuga Lake, a small group of leaders met under the leadership of Samuel D. Bogan, newly appointed Scout Executive of the Ithaca Council, BSA to form a camp honorary society. Members of this group included distinguished faculty members of Cornell University such as J. Chester Bradley, E. Lawrence Palmer, and other prominent Ithaca Scouters.

It was decided to organize a camp fraternity based upon camp spirit, camp loyalty, and good camping. A ritual was developed and the name Chi Sigma, standing for "camp spirit", was chosen. New members were proposed by inducted members, and discussion of the individual candidates' qualifications would be held. Of special concern would be the candidates' exemplification of scout spirit and loyalty and their consideration for others. Election would follow. Approximately 5% of the seasonal camp membership was usually elected. The Greek letters CS (Chi and Sigma) were chosen as the symbol. Chi Sigma would prosper and serve well at Camp Barton until 1948 when the Boy Scouts of America formally adopted the Order of the Arrow as a national institution.

Upon joining Quinnipiac Council, Sam Bogan sought to build upon the traditions of scouting in the New Haven area. In 1934, Chief Bogan applied to Camp Barton to establish a Sequassen Chapter of Chi Sigma. That Summer Dr. I. T. Beach and about half a dozen scouts and scouters from Camp Barton journeyed to Camp Sequassen to install the new chapter and to hold the first induction of members.

The ideals of Chi Sigma, those of camp spirit, loyalty and friendship were to be continued at Camp Sequassen. Future members were to meet and select candidates for their ranks.

Upon being selected the candidate (unaware that he was chosen) was notified after taps that the Chief wanted to see him. He quickly left with the messenger who was also his guide. Upon the trail he was stopped, advised of his selection, blind folded and led by his sponsor to the ceremonial grounds.

Ceremonies took place at the Red and White Grounds, which were located to the rear of Northrup campsite. Upon passing his test of membership, the blindfold was removed. The new member pledged their loyalty to scouting and Camp Sequassen. They further pledged to keep secret the ceremony and to accept fully the responsibilities of their newly attained blood brotherhood. All at the ceremony drank of a water mixture from the Hermit's Spring. Songs were sung and the support and loyalty of each brother for his fellow brothers was promised.

Each member was given a red and white ribbon bar to wear above the left pocket of his scout uniform, to signify that he was a member of Chi Sigma. The red stood for the ritual of the ceremony. The white for the ideals of scouting and Camp Sequassen.

The group met regularly during the camp season to consider and vote upon new members. A secretary was annually appointed and he was the only officer keeping records of the membership. The group occasionally gathered during the winter months if their aid was needed for a service project.

CHI SIGMA CHAPTER #369 ORDER OF THE ARROW 1947-1951

During the 1940's, The National Boy Scouts of America began encouraging scout council to switch from their separate honor groups to Order of the Arrow Lodges.

The membership of Chi Sigma voted during the 1947 camp season to install an Order of the Arrow Lodge because of its national scope and other advantages. Assistant Scout Executive, George H. Walper, and Field Executive, Warren S. Green, provided the guidance and leadership needed for the transfer during these early days. The name Chi Sigma was retained rather than an Indian name in honor of Sam Bogan, founder of the earlier organization.

Final approval was obtained from the National Order of the Arrow and the Quinnipiac Council Board of Directors and the Lodge was assigned Number 369 and the name Chi Sigma Lodge on November 19, 1947. On Monday evening, December 29th, a formal installation of the lodge was held at the Council offices.

Ed Quirk is the author of a book on the history of Chi Sigma and Arcoon Lodge 369, which is privately published. If you have an interest in the book, please contact [Ed Quirk](#).

Source: <http://usscouts.org/honorsociety/chisigma.asp>