

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMANGAMEK-WIPIT LODGE #470

Amangamek-Wipit Lodge was founded by Navy Cmdr. Jack A. Obermeyer and Mr. Ralph P. Lutz. Obermeyer was an Ordeal member who had been inducted in 1931 by Ranachqua Lodge, Bronx Council. Lutz was a Brotherhood member who had been inducted in 1932 by Unami Lodge, Philadelphia Council. Lutz took his Brotherhood in the same lodge in 1933.

Beginning in 1946, shortly after he had moved to National Capital Area Council (NCAC), Ralph Lutz began pestering the council to create an OA lodge. The professional Scouter, who was the Director of Camping at the time, was Andrew J. Murphy. Andy Murphy had several bad experiences with the Order of the Arrow in other councils. Some of his fellow professionals had similar experiences because many of the lodges in those days did not adhere to the national policy on elections. Some lodges followed an illegal election procedure of their own in which only OA members were allowed to vote. Murphy felt that the Scout councils had little or no control over these lodges or what they did. He felt the same way about the Clan of the Mystic Oak (CMO), the existing honor camper society at Camp Roosevelt. Murphy was therefore quite adamant that he would not allow the Order of the Arrow to get started in NCAC.

Over the years that followed, Obermeyer and Lutz working independently of each other, continued to pressure for an OA lodge as part of the council camping program. Cultivating friendships with Andy Murphy, they chipped away at his resistance to the OA. Finally, after many assurances, Murphy, the Scout executive, and the council executive board agreed in late 1951 to allow a lodge to be formed and replace the Clan of the Mystic Oak. For a lodge to exist, however, it would have to absolutely adhere to the national rules.



On March 3, 1952, Andy Murphy, who became the lodge's 1st Lodge Staff Adviser, mailed an application for an OA charter with \$10 to J. Richard Wilson, National Secretary of the Order of the Arrow. The charter was granted on March 12, 1952. Jack Obermeyer, Chairman of the Lodge Organization Committee, became the 1st Lodge Adviser. There was no chief at the time and the lodge was chartered without a name. The original charter only lists the lodge number -- 470.

In early August, Scout Executive and Supreme Chief of the Fire Delmar H. "Skipper" Wilson wrote to all unit leaders, commissioners, and district executives, inviting all OA members residing in the National Capital Area Council to attend a planning meeting for the new lodge. Approximately 25 former members attended this first lodge meeting on August 14, 1952.

On August 29-31, Obermeyer, Lutz, and three OA members in their early 20s, attended the 1952 National OA Conference at Miami University in Oxford, OH. The lodge has sent delegates to every national conference since then. In September Obermeyer became a Brotherhood member at a Nentico Lodge ceremony in Baltimore Area Council.

From September 14 to 27, Obermeyer, Lutz, and other former OA members visited the various troops and posts and held elections in every unit desiring one. Only Star Scouts, or above, were eligible to be elected (this policy lasted until 1954, when it changed to First Class). Elected candidates had 18 months in which to complete their Ordeal before having to be re-elected.

Three lodge Ordeals were held that fall. The first one, on October 3-4, was conducted by Nentico Lodge #12 at Camp Roosevelt. The second one was conducted by Blue Heron Lodge #349 on October 31-November 1 at Camp Chesapeake (another NCAC camp). The third one was held on December 19-20 at Camp Roosevelt and was conducted by Nawakwa Lodge #3. Seventy-seven new Ordeal members and twelve (ten Brotherhood and two Vigil) transferees from other lodges constituted the charter members of the new lodge.

On November 4, 1952, Jack Obermeyer had to resign from being lodge adviser because he was reassigned to Bremerton, WA. Ralph Lutz became the 2nd Lodge Adviser on November 25, 1952.

The lodge's first newsletter *Arrow Activities* was published on December 15, 1952, announcing the lodge's first banquet. The banquet was held on December 29, at the YWCA. It cost \$1.70 to attend; about 100 were present. The speaker was Baltimore Council Scout Executive Robert Heistand, a past national chief. At the banquet the lodge's 1st Chief, Robert Lee Zink, and 1st Deputy Chief, Robert Glenn Geil, were elected. Zink was a senior at Coolidge High School; Geil was a junior at Washington-Lee High School.

In the spring of 1953, a committee was formed to pick a lodge totem and a name. The totem selected was an arrow and the Washington Monument superimposed on a shark's tooth. Inspired by the insignia of the Military District of Washington, the monument stood vertically in the center of the tooth and the arrow bisected the monument at an angle pointing upward to the left. The shark's tooth was unanimously chosen for the lodge name and the principal object in the totem because of the large number of shark's teeth that could be found along the Chesapeake shores of Camp Roosevelt. A committee member called an American Indian language expert at the Smithsonian Institution to find the Delaware Indian word for shark's tooth. In the phone conversation that followed, the member misunderstood and erroneously wrote down AMANQUEMACK to mean "large fish tooth." There was no American Indian word for 'shark' -- only 'large fish'. The 'tooth' part was just assumed. The lodge voted on the totem and name at their June 1953 meeting. The new lodge name first appeared on the 1954 charter issued on January 1, 1954.



A full delegation attended the first Area III-C Pow Wow on the weekend of May 2, 1953, at Camp Darden. The lodge has continuously sent a full delegation to all area and section functions since then.

The June 1953 meeting was held at Camp Chesapeake. The lodge's first self-run Ordeal was held at the same time. The first ceremony team had been formed earlier that spring. At the same weekend the lodge approved the design of the first patch - a shark's tooth shaped patch with the Washington Monument and an arrow bisecting the monument at a 45-degree angle. The patch was first sold at the lodge Ordeal on October 23-24 at Camp Wilson. Those attending were able to buy the patch at two for 50¢; any other time they were 50¢ each.

On October 7, 1953, the lodge changed the name of its newsletter to *Amanquemack News*. Also in the fall, Robert Geil was designated Acting Chief when Robert Zink left for college. This custom of designating the deputy chief as acting chief was continued each fall until 1955 when lodge elections were advanced to the fall fellowship. Dues collection began in the fall of 1953; they were \$2.00 per year. At the second annual banquet on December 29, 1953, at the YWCA, Robert G. Geil was elected Chief, Timothy H. Fine and Robert C. Diehl - Deputy Chiefs, Robert Richardson - Scribe, and James Klein - Treasurer.

Nine district (chapter) chiefs were also elected to serve on the lodge executive committee (they had no other responsibilities). The banquet speaker was Assistant National Director of Camping Dave Dunbar. Harry B. Wirin became the 3rd Lodge Adviser when Ralph Lutz stepped down to become a Cubmaster. Ralph Lutz was called out at the banquet as the lodge's first Vigil Honor candidate. He was inducted on May 16, 1954, at the Area III-C Pow Wow at Camp Rock Enon. Ralph's Vigil certificate was the only one to ever be issued with the Amanquemack Lodge name.

The first lodge Brotherhood was held on March 27, 1954. Nentico Lodge #12 conducted the ceremony at their Scout camp - Broad Creek. About 20 members were inducted. Candidates wore breech clouts and feathersets following Nentico's custom. For many years following this ceremony, it was the custom of the lodge for members to wear feathers at the ceremonies. In fact, it was written into the original *Lodge By-Laws* in 1956. One feather in a headband signified Ordeal, two feathers - Brotherhood, and three feathers or a full bonnet headdress - Vigil. Candidates for the various ceremonies purchased the materials and the ceremony team helped them make their feathersets on Saturday before the ceremonies.

At the Area III-C Pow Wow on May 14-16, 1954, at Camp Rock Enon, Lodge Chief Robert Geil was elected Area III-C Chief. He served as both area chief and lodge chief for the remainder of his term. Bob Richardson and Perry Newman took their Brotherhood at the pow wow.

Three Ordeals were held in 1954: April 9-10 at Roosevelt, June 11-12 at Chesapeake, and November 5-6 at Wilson. First Class Scouts were now eligible to be elected. At the Chesapeake Ordeal, the lodge built a campfire circle for the camp. Camp Chesapeake, a black Scout camp until 1953, was sold in 1955. The lodge was desegregated from its very beginning in 1952.

On August 28, 1954, the lodge conducted its first Brotherhood ceremony using its own ceremony team. A banquet was held at the same event at Camp Roosevelt. At the third annual banquet on December 28 at the YWCA, Timothy H. Fine was elected Chief, Robert C. Stine and Barnett O. Wirin - Vice Chiefs, James Hobson - Secretary, and Jere H. Williams - Treasurer. New district (chapter) chiefs were again elected to serve on the lodge executive committee. A Brotherhood pin was introduced at this event for \$3.00. The banquet speaker was National Director of Camping Wes H. Klusman.

In 1955, the lodge held a fellowship conference on March 26 at the Arlington Methodist Church to select the delegates to the Area III-C Pow Wow. The first fall fellowship was held on September 10-11. At this event five chapters, (Maryland, D.C., Arlington, Alexandria-Fairfax, and Rappahannock) were designated as operating organizations to have chapter meetings and to conduct Ordeals; the first chapter chiefs were also elected at the fall fellowship. The new lodge officers elected at the fellowship were: Barnett O. Wirin - Chief; Daniel Long, Mike Rucker, and Daniel H. Conklyn - Vice Chiefs; Howard C. Shaffer - Secretary; and Chester F. Kupiec - Treasurer. The lodge banquet was held at the Arlington Methodist Church on December 28.



Sometime in November or December 1955, additional research was done on the lodge name. The original telephone transcription error was discovered when the word "Amanquemack" could not be found in the Delaware Indian language. The correct word for 'large fish' was "Amangamek" and the word for 'tooth' was "Wipit." The lodge name was therefore changed to

AMANGAMEK-WIPIT - probably at the Christmas banquet. The first evidence we have of the name change is the February 27, 1956, issue of the renamed lodge newsletter - *Amangamek-Wipit News*. It is assumed that the 1956 lodge charter had the new name on it but this charter, along with the 1953 and 1955 charters, has been lost.

The lodge was a charter member of old Area III-C and hosted the Area III-C Pow Wow in 1956 at Camp Roosevelt and in 1965 at Camp Wilson. In 1973, the lodge was included in the area realignment and became an active member of Section SE-1. The lodge hosted the 1976 SE-1 Indian Seminar at Ft. Belvoir and the 1980 SE-1 Conclave at Camp Happyland.

In January 1982, Amangamek-Wipit was among the five northern lodges split off to form SE-9. Later in May, these five lodges were transferred to the Northeast Region to form the new Section NE-6. In June 1988 three Pennsylvania lodges joined NE-6, in June 1994 the section was renamed NE-4C, and in July 2008 the section was renamed NE-6A. The lodge hosted section conclaves in 1985 at Camp Happyland and in 1991 at Prince William National Forest for NE-6; in 1996 at Camp Rock Enon and in 2003 at Goshen Scout Reservation for NE-4C; and in 2009 and 2013 at Camp Snyder and 2016 at Goshen Scout Reservation for NE-6A.

Since formation, Amangamek-Wipit Lodge has produced one national vice chief; two region chiefs; two area chiefs and three vice chiefs; 14 section chiefs, 11 vice chiefs and 10 secretaries; one section adviser; two region OA chairmen; nine national OA committeemen; five national OA committee vice chairmen; one *National OA Bulletin* editor; and 24 Distinguished Service Award, 120 Founder's Award, and 2,308 Vigil Honor recipients. The lodge has been recognized with three E. Urner Goodman National Camping Awards. In recent years, the lodge has consistently been the first or second largest lodge in the Order and has often achieved National Quality Lodge and Journey to Excellence Recognition.