



## Windows to the Past

# 1930 – 1939

Girls Scouts was founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. In 1911, Juliette met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who introduced her to the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movement. Juliette brought the movement back to the United States and started the first troop on March 12, 1912. The Windows to the Past program will let your troop experience some of the activities that Girl Scouts did during the decade we are working on. Girls need to complete four activities to earn the 1930 – 1939 lapel pin that can be purchased at the council shop.





The Great Depression, precipitated by the stock market crash of 1929, opened the decade. Between 1929 and 1932 the annual income of the average American family was reduced by 40%, from \$2,300 to \$1,500. Instead of advancement, survival became the keyword. The New Deal was launched to provide economic relief and recovery for businesses, laborers, and farmers.

#### Official GSUSA slogans of the era:

- 1931-1935     *"A Girl Scout is Kind to Animals"*
- 1932           *"Keep Them in School"*  
              *"Girl Scouts are Helping"*
- 1937           25th Anniversary:  
              *"Girl Scouts Today - Leaders Tomorrow"*
- 1939           *"Girl Scouts - Half a Million Future Homemakers"*

*To learn more about the history of Girl Scouts visit [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org).*

## What was going on in the world during 1930 – 1939?

1930

Pluto is discovered by astronomers and identified as a planet.

Ellen Church becomes the first airline stewardess.

Ella Bareis Prochnow of Ann Arbor is the first woman in Michigan to own and manage an automobile dealership.

The Detroit Housewives League, the first such league in the nation, is formed to encourage African-American women to use their economic power to improve their own community.

The World Flag design is adopted.

The first all-Indian Girl Scout troop registers at the Indian Boarding School in Pawnee, Oklahoma.

1931

"The Star Spangled Banner" officially becomes the national anthem.

Jane Addams receives the Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

The Empire State Building is completed.

Grace Eldering\* and Pearl Kendrick\* of Grand Rapids develop the first successful vaccine for whooping cough. They later develop the single inoculation for diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus.

The County Extension Program, designed to train farm women as leaders of homemaker groups and 4-H clubs, is founded at Michigan Agricultural College (Michigan State University) by Edna V. Smith\*.

**1932**

March 12 is designated as the official Girl Scout Birthday.

Air conditioning is invented.

Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and across the country. Congress awards her the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Frances Perkins becomes the first female in the President's Cabinet when she is appointed Secretary of Labor.

Our Chalet opens in Adelboden, Switzerland, a gift of Mrs. Helen Storrow of Boston.

The first official African- American troop in the South is founded in Richmond, Virginia by Lena B. Watson and led initially by Lavnia Banks, a teacher from Armstrong High School.

**1933**

The Girl Scout handbook is transcribed in large print and Braille.

Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

Nellie Taylor Ross becomes the first woman to head the U.S. Mint.

Photographer Dorothea Lange and painter Alice Neel are two of many female artists who receive federal support for their art through New Deal programs.

**1934**

The Mariner Scout program is officially launched.

On October 23, American adventurer Jeanette Piccard sets an altitude record for female balloonists when she ascends 57,579 feet.

Lettie Pate Whitehead becomes the first American woman to serve as a director of a major corporation, The Coca-Cola Company.

**1935**

The First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, begins writing "My Day," a syndicated newspaper column that runs until 1962.

The National Council of Negro Women is founded in Detroit by Mary McLeod Bethune.

The Social Security Act becomes law.

**1936**

Hoover Dam is completed.

The World Center for Women's Archives is established by the New Jersey Historical Society.

**1937**

25th anniversary of Girl Scouting in the United States

The National and International Silver Jubilee Encampment is held at Camp Andree Clark; 100 girls from the USA and 26 other countries come together to celebrate.

Amelia Earhart is lost somewhere in Pacific on a round-the-world flight.

The Golden Gate Bridge opens.

The U.S. Supreme Court upholds Washington State's minimum wage laws for women.

**1938**

The Fair Labor Standards Act establishes minimum wage without regard to sex.

1939

Girl Scout membership reaches one half million.

Girl Scout program is reorganized into three separate groups: Brownie Girl Scouts, ages 7-9; Intermediate Girl Scouts, ages 10-13; and Senior Girl Scouts, ages 14-17.

Girl Scouts sell over one million boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

The Girl Scout Chalet, a miniature replica of Our Chalet in Switzerland, opens at the New York World's Fair and serves as headquarters for Girl Scouts and their friends.

The helicopter is invented.

World War II begins.

"*Gone with the Wind*" premieres.

Marian Anderson gives a concert to an audience of 75,000 at the Lincoln Memorial after the Daughters of the American Revolution prevents her from singing at Constitution Hall because of her race.

Girl Scouts sell over two million boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

The United States and much of the world were deep in economic depression during the 1930s. Few families had money to spend on toys and games. Many children worked alongside their parents on farms or in shops, or they took on more household tasks to help out. There was leisure time, but much less than children have in the 21st century. Kids had plenty of fun, but their activities were also likely to include some work, such as delivering newspapers, babysitting or picking fruit.

### Toys

Popular toys of the 1930s included Yo-Yos, wooden wagons, pick-up sticks and bolo bats, which are wooden paddles with rubber balls attached by an elastic string. These could cost anywhere from 10 to 25 cents. Bicycles were also popular, and some children constructed their own scooters from orange crates and roller skate wheels. Boys often played with metal army soldiers and meccano sets, metal construction sets with which children built structures and machines.



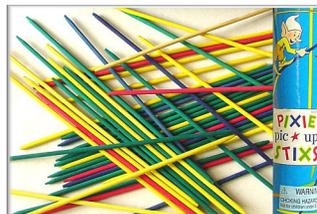
### Games

A number of board games were developed in the 1930s that are still around today. Scrabble was created in the early 1930s, and Monopoly was released in 1935. Checkers, chess and ring-toss were also often played. More open-ended games such as hide-and-seek, tag and Simon Says were also popular, in part because they were free and could be played anywhere by anyone. Children also spent time outdoors in neighborhood settings and engaged in imaginative, open play. In the winter, sledding and skating were popular outdoor activities.



### Organized Activities

Organized sports were rare outside of school settings, but children did play games in pick-up fashion, including baseball and hockey. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts also occupied children's time by teaching them the values of citizenship and community.





## Program

Complete four of these activities in order to earn the lapel pin; adapt the activities to fit your age level.

Girl Scouts led community relief efforts during the Great Depression by collecting clothing, making quilts, carving wooden toys, gathering food for the poor, assisting in hospitals, participating in food drives and canning programs, and providing meals to under-nourished children.

1

Interview someone who lived through the Great Depression to find out what it was like from someone who was there.

2

Read a book written for girls your age in the 1930s or read a book that takes place in the 1930s. Think about the differences in how girls lived then and now and discuss it with the group.

3

Turn off all electronics for a day-- the television, computer, iPod, etc. Find out what girls your age were doing to entertain themselves in the 1930s and spend time with friends and family doing those activities.

4

Get creative. Make a simple board game or toy of your own to share with friends.

5

Raise your awareness. Make a list of the agencies in your community that help those in need. Pick one agency and really investigate, find out who they are, who they help, how they help and where they get their funding.

6

Make a list of things you could do to help your community. Select one of the ideas you come up with and "Take Action" to make it happen in your town.