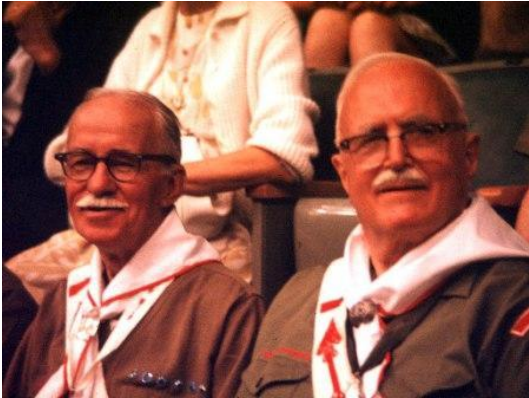


The Formation of the Order of the Arrow



The Order of the Arrow began as an honor camper organization known as the Wimachtendienk W.W. in 1915 by E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson at Treasure Island Camp, Philadelphia Council Scout Camp. The first lodge would be known as Unami Lodge 1 with a turtle as their symbol. By 1916 they came to the understanding the organization would go national and started to spread the program to the surrounding area camps.

This is how the Order of the Arrow began to spread from one camp to another, passing the brotherhood on from one brother to another. A new lodge could not form without having an already existing lodge perform the first ritual ceremony to induct the first members of the new lodge. Since that was the way the organization could grow, the growth of this new national camper honor organization was very slow. As each lodge formed, the newly formed lodge would take on a name that would reflect their area or camp along with a symbol that would represent the lodge.

The goal of the founding fathers was to have this new organization at every scout camp and for the members of the organization to set the example of what an honored camper was. In each camp that the organization took root in, the camp would become the focus of that lodge.

As the years would progress on, the O.A. (as it was commonly referred to as) took on many changes and adopted new programs and new activities to support its brothers. The first national convention was held October 7, 1921 in Philadelphia. Their goal was to establish the first National Lodge and approve the National Constitution which was ratified in Independence Hall. By 1933 the O.A. took another big step and became part of the official Boy Scouts of America program. The National Scout Committee approved this part of the program the following year in 1934. From there, the OA became part of the Scouting program and changed as the times required it to.



The Founding of Canyon Camp

In 1928, the U.S. Grant Area Council was formed in the northwest corner of Illinois and the southwest part of Wisconsin. For the first part of the council's history, scouts and leaders would spend their summers camping in different parts of the council. There was no official council camp in the





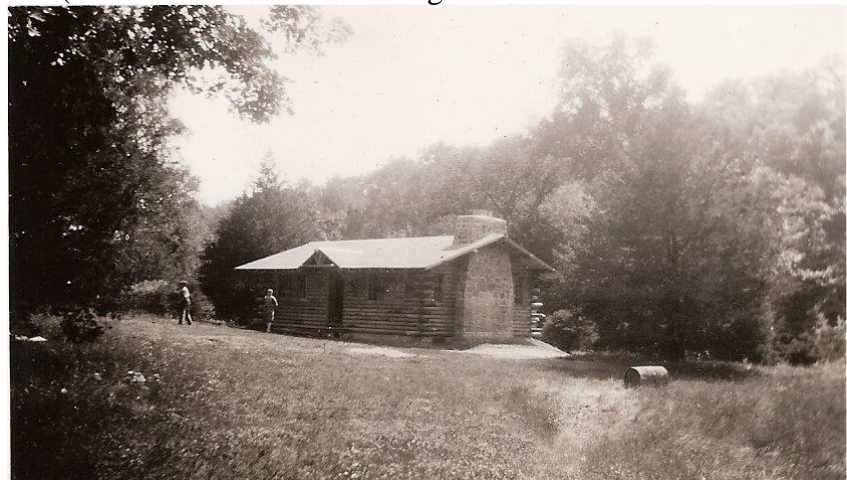
early part of the council's history. The local troops often camped in the Apple River area before the state of Illinois purchased the land for a state park.

After having to leave an area that the council enjoyed, three individuals hiked around the Apple River area and eventually settled on what would become the first officially own council camp. Those three individuals are: Scout Executive- Clayton Chatter, Scout-Paul Watz, and Eugene Vickery. The council camp would come into existence in 1936 with the purchase and donation of 140 acres of land by Robert F. and Anna M. Koenig. That summer, the local troops of the council would have their own place to call camp. This new camp that was created would take on the name of Canyon Camp due to its location in a canyon cut by Coon Creek.

Canyon Camp of then is very different from the way we currently know the grounds. In the early days there were only two structures, the Rawleigh Cabin and the Rain or Shine Pavilion (we would know this building as the modern day Dinning

Hall). The rest of the camp program was done outside in the open or under tents. The lay of the land was very different as well. All of the tall trees that we have grown to love and enjoy did not exist in the early years of camp. The land was very barren with a sprinkling of trees here and there along with tall grasses.

Now the scene has been set to usher in a new program for the U.S. Grant Council. The Order of the Arrow has made its way to the far ends of Illinois and Wisconsin by 1942. This is where the rest of the story will focus on, the development and growth of this new program. The history of that program, the lives it touched, and the legacy that it left behind will be illustrated for all to read and ponder.



The Lodge Organizes

In the early 1940s the Scouting program was flourishing as well as its camping programs. U.S. Grant Area Council and Canyon Camp were no exception to this. The Scout Executive of U.S. Grant Area Council, William C. Morgan, enjoyed the Native American Lore of the area. His love of this lore would eventually cause him to become very interested in this program called the OA. Morgan promoted the idea of the program to many people after being exposed to it from a

national meeting. The idea of brining this program to Canyon Camp caught on very quickly and gained support very quickly.

August 25th, 1942, Morgan sent an official letter to the National Lodge of the Order of the Arrow requesting a charter for a lodge to be established in U.S. Grant Council¹. Morgan also sent into the national office a copy of the newly formed lodge's Constitution and By Laws that were ratified by twenty-five Scouts and Scouters as the charter members. As part of the organization, the first lodge chief was also selected. Karl Bing would serve as lodge chief from august of 1942 to august of 1943.

At the time of the ratification, the newly formed lodge had not decided on a name yet or a totem, or symbol, to represent them. The group was researching the local history in attempts to find something that would stand out and be significant to the area. One thought was to find a Native American name that would have been given to President Ulysses S. Grant. Eventually the lodge would agree upon using the name Wetassa which translated to either "little masked bandit" or "little masked one". This new name would represent the totem that was also settled on: a raccoon.

The first members of this new lodge were not inducted by any of their own from U.S. Grant Council. Instead another lodge would have to come out to the camp, or individuals go to their camp to be inducted as brothers. The charter members invited a group of ceremonialist from Camp Lowden, Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak Lodge 140 – Blackhawk Council to come and perform the first induction ceremony.

The following summer the Order of the Arrow had become an official part of the camping program at Canyon Camp. Quickly the Summer Camp staff adopted the program and supported it. The Wetassa Lodge 227 had taken root and was off to a strong beginning.

Setting the Traditions

Elections

Starting the summer of 1943, the camp staff began to conduct their own call out and induction ceremonies. Those who were first selected into the brotherhood had to be first elected. The election was not done in the troop like today, but instead was held during summer camp. On Monday of the summer camp week, the staff would make the announcement about the election and who would be eligible for the OA. The scouts that were then eligible had till Monday to get their name out in camp and prove that they were worthy of the honor. The campers would then elect the new members on Wednesday and the call out ceremony took place later that night.

Eligibility for the Order of the Arrow was very similar to the modern requirements. Only 10% of the total camp population could be inducted into the OA. This typically meant that only eight scouts a week could be called out to become brothers. The final election held on Wednesday would then be held in the Dinning Tent when the whole camp would be assembled.

¹ Scan of original letter can be viewed on Appendix A.

The Call Out

After the elections were completed, the campers would have to wait for that night's camp fire to find out the results. Wednesday night the camp would hold a camp fire at a location that use to be between the old health lodge and the chapel. The purpose of the fire was to call out those campers who were voted into the O.A. earlier that day. The campers would be arranged in a circle with a dancer in the middle. The dancer would then dance around the circle with a bow and a quiver of arrows. Other staff members would stand throughout the circle of campers, and would signal which campers were to be called out. With the appropriate signal, the dance would stop, turn about, and fire one arrow at the feet of the camper that is to be called out. Kichkinet would then bring the camper before Allowat and Meteu.

Once all of the campers were called out for that night, they would then be led off to a ring for the Pre-Ordeal Ceremony. The Pre-Ordeal of that time simply gave the Ordeal Candidates their charge and the challenge that was before them. Once the challenge was given, the Candidates were then led off down part of the Stagecoach Trail where they would sleep the night. Other years, they would have the Candidates placed in other locations such as on top of the unused hill. This period would have dated before the camp sites were on top of the hill. During that period of time all of camp sites were along the foot of the hill.



Day of the Ordeal

The next day the Candidates would be given a cup with an egg, two pieces of bacon, and two matches. It was up to them to build a small fire to cook their breakfast. At the conclusion of breakfast the Candidates would then be gathered up and assigned to a number of different service projects around camp. This tradition of service around camp has continued to this day. The Candidates would be given a break around the time of lunch where they would have a simple lunch consisting of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The Candidates would then go back to their work projects and finish the day back in their own camp sites to have a meal with the troop. In the early days of camp, the troops were given specific days to cook their own meals in the camp site. One of those days was on Thursday.



The Ceremonies

(This next section is taken directly from a speech on the OA by Ron Sime)

The first induction campfire ceremonies were held up on the hill across the lake about straight across from the location of the swimming pool today. The Candidates were taken blind-folded and placed in canoes and taken up and across the lake. Later ceremonies were held across the ford and up the valley toward the farm at the base of a

large white pine on the right side of the valley across the creek. This time the candidates had to ford the creek twice before the circle was reached.

As mentioned above, the Candidates were blind folded and tied together at the wrist. The Candidates were then led to the ring where the ritual would be conducted. The ceremony for the most part has remained the same as it is in its present form. The ceremony teams were formed by the camp staff.

Following the ceremony, the newly inducted brothers would receive their order of the arrow patch, a round black felt patch with silk screened text and a coon on it, their felt sash with a red arrow silk screened on it, their Indian name that would be some reflection on their personality. The new member would also receive the leather for their totem – a strap of leather around the neck with a single white bone hair pipe and a red bead to signify the first degree.

End of the `40s

With the end of the `40s, Wetassa would undergo more changes that would heavily impact the lodge. New leadership at the council level would be the catalyst for much of this change. The first major change that the lodge would undergo would be the change from the raccoon as their symbol to a thunderbird. Legend has it, that the new scout executive to U.S. Grant Council was very fond of a stylized thunderbird that he seen while living in the southwest. When he arrived to the Freeport area, he brought that design along with him and had the symbol changed. The lodge changed to a dark blue felt patch with an embroidered thunderbird on it.



Another would be the change in the election procedure. No longer would the Order of the Arrow elections be held during the camping season. Instead the elections moved into the troops. An election team would travel to the different troops and conduct an election for new candidates. The membership to the OA was now based on the scout's performance at the troop level.

Other changes that would affect the new lodge would be the formation of a permanent ordeal ring at Canyon Camp. As described earlier, the ordeal ring moved around to a number of different sites in the first few years. At the start of the 1951 camping season, a new ring was built and in use. The ceremony also dropped the tradition of giving out "Indian Names" to the new brothers. The new ring was located on top of a bluff over looking the modern day archery. This ring would be used until the late 50s – early 60s. In 2006 that ring would be restored and then used again for ordeal ceremonies at camp.



The call out ceremony would also change at the beginning of the 1950s. The Wednesday night fire evolved into a family night with Native American dancing which was then followed up with the Order of the Arrow call out ceremony. The call out ceremony also changed from being at the old council ring to down by the lake front. The ground at this new area was much harder and rockier than the old council fire ring; as a result the call out team had to drop the tradition of shooting an arrow at the feet of the campers. This decision would come after an arrow being shot bounced off a rock. It was felt by the staff at the time that this could pose a very unsafe situation for the campers. The staff then developed a new method of calling out the campers. Instead of a dancer shooting an arrow at the feet, the dancer would then jump and come down on the shoulders of the campers. This simulated the greeting that the ceremonialist gave in the ordeal ceremony.

The Booming '50s

The 1950s brought great change to Wetassa Lodge and to the OA program at Canyon Camp. The camp now had a new induction ring, a new lodge symbol, and new leadership at camp. Across the nation, the scouting movement was on the rise and booming to new heights. This was also the case for the U.S. Grant Council.

Wetassa Goes to Nationals.

At the national level for the Order of the Arrow, they changed their national meeting to be called



a National Order of the Arrow Conference where lodges from all across the nation would gather at a central location in the Midwest to strengthen ties of brotherhood. The first N.O.A.C. was held in 1948 Indiana University. These conferences were agreed to be held every two years at different Midwest universities. In 1952 the Wetassa Lodge sent their first representation to that year's N.O.A.C. at Miami University, Ohio. There the Wetassa delegation was able to

take part in a number of different activities for the week and perform a skit during a camp fire where all lodges were given the opportunity to do a skit or song.

The 1956 Wetassa delegation to Indiana University had the unique opportunity to meet one of the founding fathers of the Order of the Arrow. When the delegation met Goodman, they presented him with one of their handmade neckerchief slides that were created by Lyle Novinski. After giving one of the



slides to Goodman, he then in return autographed all of the delegation slides.

Beginnings of the Vigil

The following year, 1953, was another big year for Wetassa Lodge. 1953 was the year that the first brothers were honored with the Vigil Honor. Like the first induction ceremony, the vigil ceremony could not be conducted unless another vigil honor member was performing the ceremony. This required that before Wetassa could have any of their own Vigil Honors, they needed to have a Vigil Honor in the lodge. This was achieved when Glen Bookman received his Vigil at Camp Lowden. He was then able to bring this back to Canyon Camp and induct the first members, Lyle Novinski and Vern Hollister. At that time, the Vigil Ceremonies were held through out the year. If the new Vigil Honor member was on camp staff, then the ceremony was performed while they were at camp.



The Lodge Totem

In the early `50s the lodge would add to their uniform a leather necklace which would be known as the lodge totem. This new part of the uniform was to show ones honor with out always having to wear the sash. The first totem was created by Don Hull in 1953 after the first Vigil Ceremony. The Vigil Totem was created by forming a necklace with three bone hair-pipes and three red beads joined together with a specific type of knot. Following the formation of the Vigil version, a Brotherhood and an ordeal version were also created. Brotherhood was two hair-pipes and two red beads joined with an overhand knot. The Ordeal version was one hair-pipe with one red bead joined by the same type of knot as the Vigil.

The Newsletter

In the mid-50s another addition was made to the Wetassa Lodge. The lodge developed a newsletter that would be circulated amongst its fellow brothers. The newsletter would take on the name of the "Arrowman". The "Arrowman" would be the mouthpiece of the lodge by getting the upcoming events, showcasing specific moments of the lodge, and informing people about the happenings of the camp. The newsletter would detail all of the major events of the lodge and provide news of the chapter events. The letterhead of the "Arrowman" was first designed by Lyle Novinski.

In the time that the "Arrowman" was circulated, it covered stories such as improvements at camp, changes in the staffing of canyon camp, the Wetassa delegations to NOAC, welcoming new members to the lodge, and highlighting upcoming lodge events. The "Arrowman" also did articles providing history on the OA, the founders, and many other national headlines.

Lodge Events



The lodge would hold a number of events through out the year that would help to strengthen brotherhood as well as perform needed service for the camps and council. According to the By Laws of the lodge, the lodge held three events a year. They would have a spring service project around early part of June, a fall conclave held at canyon camp in the late august, and a winter event that was held in the December-January months.

The Spring Service project was designed as a way to help prepare camp for the summer camping season and any other service or up-keeping that was needed to be completed at camp before summer started. In the fall, a conclave or gathering was held at Canyon Camp. The Fall Conclave was designed as way to bring the brothers all together for fellowship and to help finish closing camp for the off-season. It was also during this time

that the lodge officers were elected by the lodge membership. The newly elected officers would then serve from August of that year to August of the following year. In the late part of December or the early part of January, the lodge would hold a winter event for fellowship in the off season. In the early years of the lodge (mid 40s) the lodge would hold a winter camp between Christmas and New Years. Around the mid to late 50s the event changed from being a camp out to a gathering of brothers with a banquet and then some type of activity for entertainment.

Many of these events were ideas that national was supporting and suggesting for the lodges to hold. As a result, most of these events would carry on to this day. The only difference is that these events have taken on different names.

Ceremony Regalia

At the Fall Conclave, aside from doing just service projects and officer elections, the weekend was also an opportunity for its members to seal their membership with the Brotherhood honor or complete their ordeal if they did not have time in the summer to do so. In the later part of the `50s the regalia received an update. Brothers like Burt Strohecker began to build new regalia that were a much improvement from the old head bonnets. The new head dresses had many more feathers and longer trailers. They also created full leather outfits for the ceremonialist.

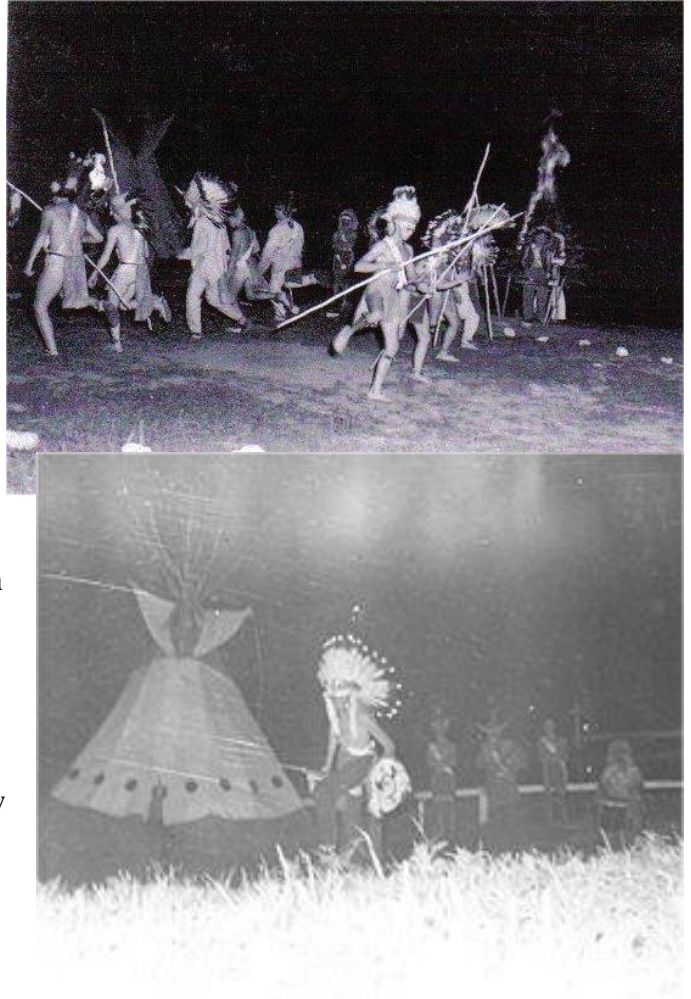
Cost of Membership – Dues

Even in the early days of the OA for this area the members had to pay for their membership in the lodge. Taken from a dues form from 1957, dues for membership in Wetassa Lodge was one dollar for a full year. This money that was raised would go to support the expenses to operate the lodge. Like the dues of today, the money would go to pay for service projects at camp and for the quarterly newsletter. A different type of membership would become to the brothers by the mid 1960s that would allow for life membership. A brother would be able to pay the fee for life membership and they would not have to pay dues again for the lodge.

Changes at Camp

The winds of change did not just stop at the lodge level. These changes continued on to affect the Wednesday night visitors night at Canyon Camp. The visitors' night had evolved from being just the simple call out, to bringing in family and friends, to finalize with Native American dancing. The visitor's night took on another change to add more flare to show. The idea of creating a fire that would float on the water was conceived and then put into action. Each week, a group of staff members would work on building the fire raft behind the commissary and then float it out to the middle of the lake for the Wednesday night show.

With a new type of fire for the Wednesday show, a new method of lighting the fire was also developed. A fire across the lake would light revealing Meteu at its base. Meteu would then fire a flaming arrow into the sky towards the floating fire. Away from public view, another staff member would have a method to trigger the fire. This added much more to the show and awe that the audience would experience while attending camp.



The method for selecting the individuals to perform the ritual also changed at camp. Where at one time any one who wished to be on the team would be permitted, in the 1958 season the ritual team was selected through an audition process. From that point, those staff members who wanted to be on the ceremony team would have to go through an audition and only the best performers were selected to serve. During the '1950s serving on the ritual team was considered to be a high honor; not any one could be part of the team at this point in the lodge's history.

As the 1950s came to a close, and the lodge ended one of their biggest years, more change was on the horizon for the 1960s. Wetassa Lodge had set down the traditions that would now govern the lodge for the remainder of its existence.

A Last Good Run for Wetassa

The 1960s like the '50s brought about more change as this lodge advanced in years. Much like the beginning to the 1950s, the lodge again changed their lodge patch. This time instead of changing the symbol of the lodge, the patch itself was changed. For the first time in the lodge's history, the members were now wearing a patch designed for their pocket flap. The old round patch was changed and altered to fit as a flap.

The Ordeal Ring would also undergo dramatic change again. The ring would be moved again for the fifth time in the camp's history. By this time, individuals in the lodge felt that the current location of the Ordeal Ring was too open and exposed for non-OA members to possibly see. Under the leadership of Charles Kranz, he hiked around the edges of camp and eventually found a gorge that was very suitable for the ceremony. The new ring was isolated away from any of the main area of camp, and was a good hike away from the main area. The ring was out of sight just as desired. The area for the new ring looked to be ideal for the ceremony. With enough hard work, this new ring was built and used for the ordeal ceremony for the next forty-six years. Under controversy of the rings location, it possibly being off camp property and the hike itself was very treacherous; the Ordeal Ring above the archery range was restored in 2006.

The old Ordeal Ring would not be completely abandoned. The ring would then be used only for the Vigil Ceremonies that were held at Canyon Camp. The Vigil Ceremony would continue to be held at this location until the late 1980s or early 1990s.

Politics like Always

No matter what type of organization people belong to, there will always be politics behind it. By the mid-1960s, the leadership that had governed the lodge in the '50s was moving on and it was time for a new group to come to the front. Many of the older ones that were moving on were not impressed by what the future lay ahead of the lodge for leadership. The remaining group selected a young up and coming scout that in their eyes met the requirements to carry on the legacy and traditions. That scout was Don Barry out of Monroe Wisconsin. Believing that he alone could not win the '64 election on his own, the group put John Swenson as lodge chief and Barry as his Vice Chief. Swenson had the ability and experience that would give him an edge over the competition and secure the election. Swenson would run as chief, fully knowing that he would be leaving that fall for college, and then Barry would be the next in line. The election went just as planned, and the older group was able to get the candidate that they wanted to be chief. Barry would go on to serve a total of four terms as Lodge Chief. To date that is the longest known individual to serve as lodge chief for this area.

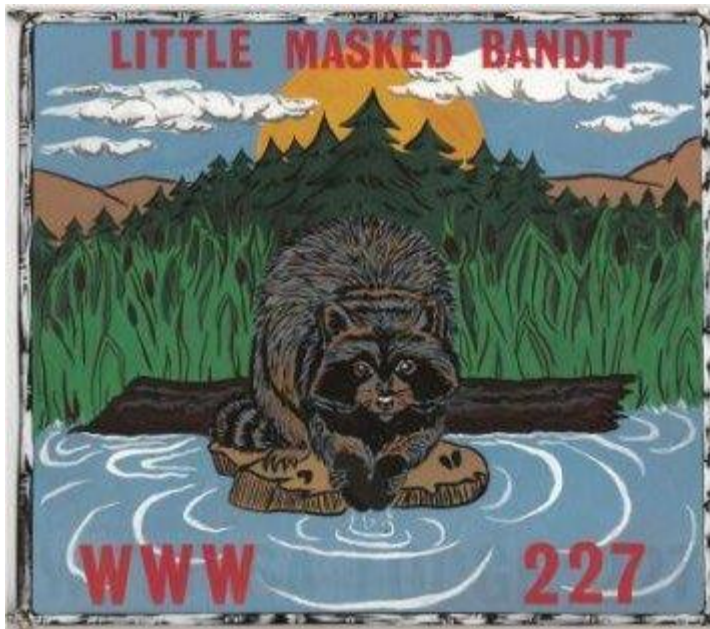
During Barry's tenure as lodge chief another highly political event would come along. George Trout began to research and compile the history of the Wetassa Lodge. In his efforts to write a complete history of Wetassa, Trout uncovered the fact that in the first six years of the lodge's history the raccoon was the symbol of the lodge. With fact being brought to light, a growing group tried to encourage the lodge to restore the raccoon as the symbol of the lodge and drop the 18 year old Thunderbird behind. This first attempt was brought before Barry and his executive board in 1966. This would silence the group for the remainder of Barry's time as chief but they would not let the idea go completely.

25 years of cheerful service

1967 also faced another big event of that year; their 25th anniversary of the lodge coming into existence. The lodge celebrated this mile stone at their winter event which was held at the V.F.W. Hall in Benton, Wisconsin. This event would be marked with a special jacket patch that featured the Order of the Arrow Legend. Each member could only purchase two patches at the event. The lodge would also invite Ron Sime to come and speak on the early years of the lodge. Sime discussed much of the early history of the lodge and its close ties to Canyon Camp.

A Lodge Divided

One year later the raccoon idea would be raised again. This time the discussion was more in-depth and the lodge became heavily divided over their views on the symbol of the lodge. The image that was to unite the group did the very opposite and extremely divided the group. One



side argued that the Thunderbird was nothing more than a symbol from the southwest and had no relevance to the U.S. Grant Council area and that a symbol that directly represents this area should be picked. That same group of people also argued that the original symbol was a raccoon and it was only appropriate to go back to that. The opposition to the raccoon argued that the symbol for the last nineteen years had been the thunderbird and why break with that tradition. The opposition also claimed that the other group was just out to create a patch for trading purposes.

The vote for symbol of the lodge came on February 22, 1969 in favor of the restoration of the raccoon. The vote was

met with hostility from the opposing party, but eventually the raccoon would be accepted. After the vote was concluded, a design for the new flap and neckerchief was decided on. Designs that were presented by Trout were accepted and the new patches were produced. This new design and life for the raccoon would be short lived for rumors of a possible merger with the big Rockford lodge were on fringe.

Two Lodges Become One

Rumors of a Merger

The winter banquet of 1970 brought visitors from another lodge. Adult and youth leadership from Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak lodge 140 attended the Wetassa winter banquet as away to meet the Wetassa leaders of the lodge and see how Wetassa lodge functioned. This would only

encourage the rumors of a merger that was being talked about. Many of the members of Wetassa feared that they were to be absorbed by the giant lodge from Rockford as they viewed it. That year the lodges started to do a number of events together as away to start the transition.

(These next three sections are taken directly from a speech on the merger by Lee Binkley)

As time moved on through 1970 and into 1971, the council executive boards voted on two different occasions. What happened from there was similar to the Civil War, it was us against them, East against West. To say the very least, it was a very messy situation, with adults making the whole scenario even worse.

The Merger

The Fall Conclave of 1971 was set as the time to officially join the lodges together. It was held August 13th – 15th at Canyon Camp. Between 450 and 500 arrowmen attended the historic event. Rules were established and strict guidelines were set to try to make the event run smoothly.

Blackhawk Council #660 was older than U.S. Grant Council #772. The same was true of the O.A. Lodges; lodge 140 was older than lodge 227. Therefore, by national rule, we were required to keep the number 140. Because the number 140 was kept, the name Wetassa was to be the new name. The name Wetassa was voted down and from the audience came a well prepared motion to adopt the Wulapeju Lodge, meaning “honorable one.” The motion was made by Mike Walters from Kishwaukee chapter, and it was made with a new flap patch design in hand.

A New Look

The two lodges combined their leather thong totem. The silver arrow head of lodge 140 was added to the bead combination of lodge 227 to create the modern totem. The new lodge symbol was voted on and a peace pipe became the new symbol of the newly formed lodge. The peace pipe was to symbolize a new peace between the two lodges. The lodge kept the Wetassa neckerchief colors of a light blue field trimmed in yellow with the new lodge patch on it.

With a new look and new leadership, this brand new lodge was about to go on to create its own history that would be unique to itself. The traditions that were set down in the Wetassa and Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak lodges would not vanish as many believed they would. Instead those traditions have lived on in this new lodge and have worked to ensure the success of the new lodge.

Blood Stains

The merger of the two lodges happened over thirty-five years ago, but the echoes of hostility can still be felt to this day. Slowly this hostility is fading as time does heal all wounds. Perhaps these words that were spoken to me will bring comfort to those who still feel the pains of the merger:

We are still Canyon Camp, our history is intact, and the spirit is alive. We have the spirit that continues, and will, whatever the ups and downs of the changing executives sent by national. We must always move ahead, our trajectory is clear, and there is some times a pressure from here or there, and then it goes away.

~Lyle Novinski, 2006

We can now look back at the past and be proud of what our members have accomplished. While the names and the symbols have changed, the spirit that drove Wetassa on to accomplishing such grand things still lives in all of the brothers who continue to embody that which Goodman and Edson laid down for us to follow. May the brotherhood of the Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, and Witahemui live on in all of us and for our future brothers.