

# ORDER OF THE ARROW

National Brotherhood of Boy Scout Honor Campers

Calusa Lodge No. 219

Sunny Land Council

## TRADITION AND FELLOWSHIP AND SYMBOLISM

The Calusa Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, from my perspective, as background, must include much of my personal experience as a Boy Scout and can reach no further forward than the Area J meeting in 1950.

The Boy Scouts of America, in retrospect, beyond any doubt, has been the most influential institution in my life. This would include my professional life and 8 years of college. These memories, associations and influences span 50 years. For certain the Calusa Lodge was the highlight of the Boy Scout experience. I became inactive after serving as a Den Dad, Cubmaster, and an Assistant Scout Master in Gainesville, Florida from 1975 to 1983.

My summer of 1946 was traumatic. My family moved to Fort Myers, Florida, from Michigan. I was 13-years-old and had just completed the 7th grade. I had completed the three ranks of Cub Scouts there, but for the preceding year (1945), I lived in a community that had no scouting program. When I arrived in Florida I was a year behind.

The move to Florida was like going to another planet. I didn't have a friend in the world (closer than 1200 miles away in a far corner of the galaxy). We lived with my grandparents in the "wrong end of town." I had gone from a very small town somebody to a much larger town nobody. I was insecure, lonesome and mostly miserable.

Milton Wilson lived across the street from my grandparents. Our paths did not cross until we discovered each other in the same school in the same grade (8th). He did not have any friends nearby, so we became good friends. He suggested that I join his scout troop, Boy Scout Troop 14, sponsored by the "uptown" First Methodist Church.

Milton was a patrol leader, already a First Class Scout, and would help me "catch up." I figured that if he, living

in the "wrong end of town," was acceptable as a leader in a prestigious "uptown" troop of a prestigious "uptown" church, then... maybe I had a chance, too. I jumped at it. It was several miles downtown to the then centrally located First Methodist Church, and when we could not "catch a ride," we rode our bicycles.

Boy Scout Troop 14 was prestigious. It came to pass that Troop 14 was to dominate the Calusa Lodge for a period of about 5 years, produce a number of leaders from late 1947 to early 1952, and provide scouting with adult leadership for at least half a century.

The word "prestigious" as seen by the boys of Troop 14 and the leadership of the church was somewhat in conflict. Most of the boys thought the church was too "high society" and I am certain that the church often considered the boys as too "low society." There were all kinds of boys who came from all over the community. In a way it was a wonder that there was a troop. No one really lived near the church. It was a collection of "total characters" who were a wild and wooly bunch. More than one time a boy or several boys would be taken to task by the adults for "questionable overt behavior", in particular as directed toward the manicured grounds and well maintained buildings. We were a rowdy bunch. The church grounds were our playground and a Sunday school classroom our meeting place. We had rollicking good times. Often I went home with a tear, or a badge or patch missing from my uniform. We were expected to come in uniform. The only problem was that the official uniform did not include combat helmets. Boy Scout Troop 14 was definitely for boys and I fit into all the raucus and ruckus like glove. If Hell could actually have been raised, I am certain it would have come up under Troop 14 (to the on-going dismay of the church.) Any perceived similarity between Troop 14 and any other Boy Scout troop is purely coincidental!

Much of the prestige of Troop 14 came from its advancement record and its leadership. Lodge Advisor, Eagle Scout, Ralph Hauser Jr., who now holds the Vigil Honor, was a vigilant counselor of young men, even in those days; he was the Scoutmaster of Troop 14. His brother, Eagle Scout George Hauser, was the Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and his father, Ralph Hauser, Sr., was the church troop committee chairman. I am sure Ralph Sr. saved the troop from extinction many times, interceding for our multitude of sins.

Eagle Scout William E. (Bull) Shultz, was the Senior Patrol Leader. He was one of the earliest holders of the Brotherhood Honor in the Calusa Lodge. He preceded me as Lodge Chief of the Calusa Lodge. For several summers, he was the "Doc Shultz" in-charge of the First Aid Lodge at Camp Flying Eagle. He attended the International Jamboree in Paris, France. Bill was never at a loss for words and dominated the politics of the Lodge for at least 4 years.

I achieved my Eagle rank and became Senior Patrol Leader when Bill Shultz became Jr. Assistant Scoutmaster. Jerry Brown took over my old patrol, completed his Eagle, and also became a Calusa Lodge Chief. He began his Camp Flying Eagle Staff career as a kitchen helper. He was selected to represent the Sunnyland Council in a special "survival" expedition at Philmont Scout Ranch. He had a great singing voice and served on the dance and degree teams.

I was tapped to the Ordeal Honor the summer of 1948, was elected Lodge Chief in 1949, and served most of 1950. I was the Naturalist at Camp Flying Eagle in the summer of 1949, was the Camping and Pioneering counselor in 1950 and was elected to the Brotherhood Honor that summer. I Jimmy Ritchey and I ( and a few other lodge brothers) attended the National Jamboree at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1950. I went to Philmont (SX-10) as the invitational Junior Leader of a provisional troop from Jacksonville, Florida, in the summer of 1951.

Troop 14 was a proud, high-flying, high-achieving, complement of boys. The early lodge had other members from Troop 14: Earnest "Boney" Middleton (1946), Jimmy Ritchey (1949), and Gene Gibbs (1949). From 1942 through 1949 Troop 14 scouts represented 10% of the total Calusa Lodge membership. It thrived on Tradition, Fellowship and Symbolism. For me, it is simply inappropriate, to recall the early Calusa Lodge

without tying it to its "core of scout leadership" from Troop 14, Royal Palm District, of the Sunnyland Council, of Fort Myers, Florida.

I first went to Camp Flying Eagle in the summer of 1947. At that time I knew very little about the Order of the Arrow. I had no appreciation for its youth in the Sunnyland Council. Then, there were only 8 Brotherhood Honor Members and 55 active members. The Vigil honor was seen as aloof and unattainable by boys. No one held the Vigil Honor. I knew that Bill Shultz and Ralph Hauser, Jr. were members and they wore the arrow sashes. Bill had a special neckerchief, as did all the members who were at camp that summer.

There were about a dozen in camp who wore the white neckerchief with the red arrowhead crossed by the flying eagle just above the mysterious W. W. W. Later I was told that Eagle Scout (Fort Myers, Troop 9) and now retired Boy Scout Area Director of the Southeast Region, Tom Burgess, was the Lodge Chief that year. He designed and hand carved the linoleum block from which they were printed. They were printed at Flying Eagle and distributed there by Tom. No one seems to know exactly how many have been printed. In 1992 I discussed this with Tom and he was quite sure that he made less than 50. Bill Shultz talked about making more after I became lodge chief. My wife hand-embroidered one from Tom's pattern, identifying it as one worn by a Lodge Chief. It is truly beautiful and is one of my favorite possessions. I wore it to Lodge meetings in Jacksonville during the time I was an assistant scoutmaster in Gainesville. It was made following the dissolution of the lodge and was never displayed to any lodge members until the fellowship reunion at Flying Eagle on December, 12, 1992.

It is strange, some of the funny things you remember or recall happening as a kid; some you actually are a part of, and others you just remember hearing about, when you were there. I will never forget "Uncle Bill" Ennis. He was a Field Executive at the time and the Official Camp Director my first summer at Flying Eagle. He was a neat person and always insisted that we boys were clean and dressed in uniform for the Flag retreat. Eagle Scout Delbert Ammons (Sarasota), who was Lodge Chief before Tom Burgess (in 1946), was the Assistant Camp Director and excellent bugler (Cornet, I recall?) His retreat and taps were beautiful... nothing fake or scratchy, like some of these gawd-awful recordings; he played the real thing like a professional.

Bill Ennis tolerated no foolishness and insisted on reverence during grace and during pre- or post-“prouncements.” However, he also had a somewhat perverted sense of humor and at times it would prevail. He had a bridged tooth which he could remove or replace with his tongue. Poor Delbert (“Dilbert”) would just get serious about some part of the program and “Uncle Bill” would protrude that single tooth from between his lips, attracting as much conspicuous attention as possible behind “Dilbert’s” back. Of course, any of the scouts who saw this just roared. Poor frustrated Delbert would turn around and stare at “Uncle Bill”, glaring. He knew what Bill had done. “Uncle Bill”, having returned the tooth to its proper slot, would just sit there smiling... a sh\_\_ eatin’ grin. Occasionally, to make matters worse or to pacify Delbert or to satisfy his personal devil, would admonish the entire dining hall complement for being rude and rowdy, knowing full well he was the cause of all the ruckus. Bill Ennis is now (1992) retired and living in Bradenton, Florida.

Raymond “Tiny” Edge, was a big kid. Although now, I probably weigh as much as he did at 19 (300+), he was definitely about as big an over-grown kid as I had ever seen. He was strong as a bull, keenly intelligent, and had a habit of frequently releasing voluminous, loud, atrocious-smelling, rectal gas. Tiny was on the waterfront and went around dressed in a T-shirt and sort of split-out, worn out bathing trunks. One fateful day, when Tiny was “fuming,” he made the regretted error of directing his posterior to the proximity of “Uncle Bill,” A quick flick of Bill’s Zippo (they didn’t have BICs in those days) and Tiny was singed, but good. He howled and ranted and raved and took off to find “Doc” Shultz to nurse his wounds. However, other than a slightly toasted testicle, the only wound was to his vanity. Assuredly, from that moment to this, Tiny’s bowels are under control when “Uncle Bill” is close by.

Former Lodge Chief Jerry Brown and I came into the lodge together, in the summer of 1948. I am not sure how we managed to do this, as I don’t think we had that many boys in camp... we would have needed 16. I think Jerry was elected via the staff route.

The Order of the Arrow was a major attraction to come to Camp Flying Eagle. Elections were only during summer camp. There was no such thing as “home troop elections.” Then, there were only three ways for a boy to become a candidate.

Be elected from your own troop (with one prior week in camp) that had at least eight boys in camp that week.

Be elected from a provisional troop (with one prior week in camp) that had at least eight boys in camp that week.

Be elected from either Sr. or Jr. Staff while serving on the staff on Camp Flying Eagle. The lodge by-laws were very strict about campaigning or politicking. These rules applied both to individual boys and to troops. It was true that being on camp staff was a sure route to membership and many saw lodge/staff as one word. Please understand the term Lodge/staff... because of the way a person became a member and other lodge activities, you would find most of the former lodges membership very uncomfortable separating Camp Flying Eagle events and activities from those of the Calusa lodge of the Order of the Arrow. Ex-staff, Pre-staff, and Former-staff, you are talking about Calusa Lodge Leaders and membership. During my tenure, activities were exclusively at Camp Flying Eagle and the By-Laws required that “At least one meeting shall be held during each (full summer) camp period. For many years, if it didn’t happen a Camp Flying Eagle, it didn’t happen.

At that time I think the council needed the O.A. more than the O.A. needed the council. What is meant is that the O.A. had a lot of talent in its membership and those who were not members who had talent were quickly identified and inducted. If, at that time, you had removed the O.A membership (disbanded the lodge), the junior-leadership and staff for the entire council would have evaporated and the council would have had to pay dearly for staff services that it virtually got for free.

The Calusa Lodge served Camp Flying Eagle in good standing. Before and while I was active, the lodge cleaned up Camp Flying Eagle prior to the arrival of campers, replaced step-logs on the steep bank to the river (Manatee) and the ceremonial amphitheater there, replaced window screens in the cabins, painted anything that paint was provided for, cleaned out the kitchen grease traps, sanitized the showers and toilets, cleaned up the water front, repaired boats and canoes, built nature trails, and (too) frequently mopped the old wood floor dining hall... (Besides these,) the lodge always had at least one major project. The covered water fountain (the William S. Leak, memorial) and the rock masonry lectern at the chapel are examples of these projects and the lodge/staff created spectacular Indian lore rituals for campfire programs during the weeks of summer camp.

The highlight of my experience as lodge chief was creating and choreographing, with the assistance of a most able Jerry Brown, some fine Indian lore pantomimes, as a lodge service project of the council's summer camp programs. Jerry (a natural pantomimist) as Meteu and I as Netami Sakima, together with the honor ritual team on staff (and we always tried to have the Ordeal Ritual Honor team on staff) enacted these. Enhanced by dances, and accompanied by drums, they brought the lodge many compliments, as well as to us as individuals, for their beauty, symbolism and originality. Jerry's (solo) "Death of the Flying Eagle" was a study in precision. I suspect I saw him do it at least a half a dozen times and it always gave me "goose bumps."

(At the beginning of each program) The campers and guests had all been seated after dark by ushers with flashlights. While all sat in total silence, the campfire was lighted remotely using chemicals and acid. The RED sparks of the potassium flew out the top of the carefully stacked wood, maybe eight or ten feet up into the air, with WHITE billowing smoke and an acrid pungency filling the air.

It was difficult to set up the chemical fire starter. Concentrated sulfuric acid was placed in a small salt shaker in the center of an old pie pan which contained about a cup of a mixture of sugar and some potassium compound, probably potassium nitrate. A fine wire string was tied to the top of the salt shaker threads where the lid would normally be screwed on. This wire was run about twenty feet into the woods and tied to the base of a small tree. At night the "wire puller" could not be seen.

It would take several hours to select manageable wood, cut it to size, place the pan, stack the wood, and soak the entire stack with kerosene in preparation for the fire. The trick was a last minute insurance cup of gasoline just before the campfire. The chemicals would not always get sufficiently hot to reach the point of combustion for the kerosene, but gasoline, no problem. We just had to be sure there were no live coals left from a previous fire. It was tricky business.

This was a dangerous activity (with the chemicals). That summer, our patient and forbearing Field Executive/Camp Director, Mr. Leroy M. Starrett, would place his hand over his eyes and tell us, "Don't tell me about it!... any details... I don't want to know anything about it... just do it. Its beautiful."

All went well until one afternoon, long after the fire had

been set up (and without the gasoline), a camper wandered down to the campfire ring and tripped the wire. We had tied it to a tree so that we could find it easily in the dark. The fire went up and he took off. He was not hurt at all. Actually, he never got close to the fire, and had no idea why it "blew up!" He ran back up the hill, to the dining hall, totally terrified of the flaming devil down at the campfire site. He was so frightened that he was incoherent, but we soon saw the smoke and knew what had happened. We quickly ushered him away from the others in an effort to avoid a camp panic. We had been dressing and putting on make-up. I guess our weird appearance added to his terror, but he finally calmed down. As I remember, he was very young, a first year camper in a provisional troop. Kirk Singletary (Bradenton) was the provisional troop Scoutmaster and the scout was from Arcadia. Anyway, the boy knew he had no business being where he had been and wanted us to take him to his scoutmaster, so we did, greasepaint and all."

Mr. Starrett SUGGESTED that we not do it anymore. I don't think we did; that year, anyway!

A favorite was the "Fall of Meteu." (The campfire would mysteriously and spectacularly be lit.) With a bloodcurdling scream, Jerry (Brown) bounded down the log-stairs, leaping at least fifteen feet as he threw a peace pipe at Netami Sakima's (Me) feet who was sitting behind the campfire. To the beat of drums, he gyrated motions of war and blood, dancing several times around the campfire and stomped and disparaged the ground around it. After a time, Netami retrieved the pipe and offered it to Meteu with motions of peace, and rising and lifting his arms and the pipe to the great spirit... Motioned to the four directions, to the four seasons... sitting, again offering it to Meteu, who knocked it to the ground, repeating his warlike motions and expositions. Finally, Netami Sakima arose with expressions of anger and motions of disgust. Pointing at Meteu in a dramatic sweep of his arm, he banished him, pointing to the path up the hill from whence he came. Realizing the error of his ways, Meteu hung his head in shame and made conciliatory gestures to his chief, to no avail. He'd had his opportunity and had worn the patience of the wise old chief too thin. Meteu exited up the hill, his head hanging in disgrace. This was more Tradition and Fellowship and Symbolism.

We spent many hours making costumes, and drums and other accouterments. We became experts with grease-



paint, both in creating striking designs and patterns and in their removal. We must have used a gallon of cold cream and a case of toilet paper every two weeks. Fenton Rodgers (Sarasota) was both artistic and creative. He was a great contributor to some of the detail. I vividly remember making that old peace pipe (Meteu's Fall.) I finally had to split it to hollow it out. I wrapped it back with lanyard material and made a bowl from a scrap aluminum disk of hammered aluminum. It had to smoke to be authentic, you know?

Were we authentic to the Calusa Indian? Not in the least. I am sure we were not authentic to any tribe. Of course, we considered ourselves authentic Calusa Lodge! Our best source of Calusa information was "Uncle Charlie Wilson", much loved, elderly (in 1950), retired Scout Executive and respected amateur cultural anthropologist who lived in Palmetto, Florida, near Bradenton. Charles N. Wilson received the Silver Beaver award in 1951. He told us the Calusa were not a "spectacular tribe as far as their costumes were concerned." He was not sure they even wore any kind of breechclout.

We knew that would go over big with the parents, grandparents, and sisters who sometimes attended our campfires as guests!"

Whatever else, we (he) knew that Spanish moss was a part of their apparel, perhaps as a skirt or even woven into their hair as a form of a headdress. The thought of all those redbugs (chiggers) made the old, tattered and torn, salvaged tent-canvas costumes about as "authentic" as we needed. Anyway, ceremoniously, we were definitely a spectacular tribe, and the campers, their relatives, and even the executive branch would bring honored guests to these campfire programs to be sure to catch our act. We put on a good show.

An alligator was captured each year I was at Camp Flying Eagle, to become the Lodge's camp mascot, and was turned loose at the end of summer camp. Some members of the Lodge/Staff would go to Hidden Lake, off the Manatee River, and make a night rain in "Gator country." Back then, the lake abounded with alligators. The capturing, care, and custody of the annual alligator was the responsibility of the Lodge/Staff. It was a tradition.

When it became our (my as camp naturalist?) turn to supply the alligator, I must confess I did not know very much about alligators. I was always told that the distance between a gator's eyes in inches equalled his

length in feet, and I had played around with a four-footer someone else had captured the first year I was a camper (1947). I had watched Delbert Ammons (Lodge Chief 1944-1946, two terms) put it into some kind of trance by turning it on its back and gently stroking its abdomen. However, it would awake with a start, ready to do battle. My experience with that one convinced me that it would gladly eat me, and I had great respect for its tail and teeth. But, once off the ground, with its mouth held shut, it did become rather docile (and so would you!) That was about it for me and gator experience.

The summer of 1949, (when I was also lodge chief) the camp did not yet have a mascot. Armed with all my abundant knowledge and experience, we (me and Frank Joyner, I think) were in hot pursuit at Hidden Lake. I rolled out of the canoe onto a pair of eyes about four inches apart (less I hoped!) that turned out to belong to a gator as big as I was, at least I thought so (I was six feet tall and weighed 235 pounds at age 15). I guess it had a misshaped skull. It went straight to the bottom with me holding on for dear life. I was so scared... I am sure I polluted the lake, but the gator hesitated for a moment, so I planted my foot in the middle of its back and shot for the surface. The canoe was only a few feet away, and I rolled into it like a rocket. I don't think I could have done it again, and I am not sure how I did it then. Furthermore, I don't believe that lie about eyes, inches, and alligator length anymore.

Later, I did pick up a small alligator in the Manatee River. It was about 21 inches long and... talk about mean! It was promptly dubbed "Alliwat Repikima" or "Alli" for short. I secured it with a collar and a small piece of rope about three feet long tied to a leg of my bunk in the staff cabin. We would take it out and display it to campers, those pursuing Reptile Study merit badge, and shocked parents on week-ends.

Bill Watkins, who I guess was one of the last volunteer adult lodge advisors, was inducted with me in 1948, he was probably in his late 40's when he was inducted. He was a Scoutmaster from Alva, Florida who spent several years as the Waterfront Director at Flying Eagle. He had a son named Paul who was about two years older than I. There was no woman in the family; only Paul's dog "Boots." Boots was a mouthy, female, wire-haired terrier. She was the only dog allowed in camp and was Paul's pride and joy. Paul worked in the kitchen. I was never sure whether he was a scout or not. But he thought he was God's gift to the kitchen staff which included two very attractive young ladies (Ruth Ann and ???) who

were kin to the camp caretaker whose wife ran the kitchen.

Paul liked to visit us at the staff cabin and shoot the breeze and brag about his prowess with the ladies of the kitchen. And it was a good place to hide from the kitchen where he was supposed to work. Now, Paul didn't go anywhere without Boots and every time Paul would come over to visit, Boots would have an absolute fit over my gator. She would bark and charge and carry on until Paul would have to pick her up and hold her. He warned me several times that he was having to do that to keep Boots from killing my gator. My poor little gator would sort of cower and retreat under the bunk, back its tail against the wall and hiss... as all good challenged gators should do.

One day Paul got carried away and forgot to catch Boots and hold her. But, after all, she was four times the size of that gator and she mustered all her courage and charged my bunk. Well, when she got within about three feet of the bunk, out came the gator and latched on to her pretty little nose, and turned her every way but loose. It spun on that rope like a wound up telephone cord coil and I finally grabbed it. Boots fell away...her nose was a bloody mess. Boots really wasn't hurt too bad, but Paul almost died. Both Boots and Paul learned something that day. It was about a week before Paul visited again. I had heard rumblings in camp from among the good brothers that my gator's demise was imminent. Not so, Paul came in and was tolerably friendly. Boots laid down right beside him and never even uttered a growl. My gator stayed under the edge of the bunk and didn't even hiss. I guess we had all learned something. Talk about cheerful service... Tradition and Fellowship and Symbolism.

There always was a little thing going between the north end of the council and the south. It wasn't like the war between the states, but Venice and Punta Gorda sort of got caught in the middle. Port Charlotte didn't exist. It was a small part of Mr. A. C. Frizzel's pasture. Murdock was an intersection on the way to Boca Grande, where I attended my first district camporee on Mrs. Crownshields' private golf course (as a Tenderfoot). I am reminded of tenderfeet and tender everything else because her golf course was one great big prickly pear patch. So much for my first camporee. Not all of my memories are fond!

In the last decade I have been contacted several times by those who would inquire about any information or patches or other memorabilia I might care to share. In particular, facts surrounding the mystery of the lodge's charter not being renewed, and, of course, the possibility that I might have an extra flap.

In my day there were no flaps. I would love to have an original. I do have some other memorabilia that I intend to keep, but I have given considerable thought and done some research regarding the non-renewal of the charter and Fred Treat's fateful letter. What I believe is that it is all too simplistic and the core of it goes back to before my time as Lodge Chief. There is little doubt in my mind that this all came to a head in a confrontation between Fred L. Treat and Bill Watkins. But this has a history and a rationale. We must not forget that the Order of the Arrow was not an official part of the Boy Scouts of America until after 1950. I am not sure of the exact year it was "taken over." Prior to that it was only sanctioned by the Boy Scouts of America, and had its own identity and structure. This fact would account for "older members' having a rather independent attitude toward anything that might challenge the... Tradition and Fellowship and Symbolism. It is my understanding that a number of lodges chose to disband rather than conform to policies of Boy Scout National or similarly giving up some practice or local policy that was highly revered and forbidden by Boy Scout National.

My predecessor, Bill Shultz, was a brilliant, sort of arrogant character, who envisioned himself as a Southern gentleman, politician, overseer, and leader of young peers. I loved him. So did Jerry Brown. One thing about Bill, you sort of felt strongly about him one way or another. In retrospect, Bill wanted to establish a dynasty and maintain power and visibility in the lodge with only token participation after having been Lodge Chief. One way to do this was to keep the office of Lodge Chief in the south end of the council and preferably in Troop 14. Bill devoted a lot of time to Jerry and me. Bill was Jerry's Den Chief. You might say that he saw us as his proteges'. Whatever, no one person, other than my father, had more influence over me than did William Eugene Shultz. If Bill said it was so, it was so. I can't say that every influence Bill exerted over me was to my long-run benefit, but, for the most part, he was a very positive part of my life, my role model, and my friend. I am certain, to a high degree, Jerry Brown would concur in his own behalf.

I was a high achiever, but that was expected of you if you were a member of Troop 14. Dr. Jim Goodyear took over as Scoutmaster of the Troop before I got my Eagle award. He was also a strong positive influence. He always had time for a boy, even during his normal professional working hours. He had a knack for finding simple solutions for what seemed to be insurmountable problems. I vividly recall his initiation into Troop 14. I admire his patience and tolerance and endurance. I moved up the ranks very fast and that was coming from behind, considering the year I lost in Michigan.

Actually, I was too young and immature to be Lodge Chief. Bill talked me into considering myself a candidate. I am sure he did some "smoke filled room work" that got me elected. Bill was a political animal. He introduced me to Robert's Rules of Order and told me that I was the new Lodge Chief. His passion was not only to keep the lodge's highest office under his influence, but also to legitimize it all constitutionally. His official Constitution of the Calusa was adopted July 2, 1948, at a regular meeting at Camp Flying Eagle. It was amended during my tenure to reduce the size of the necessary quorum from 1/3 of the membership to 1/10. When Jerry Brown became Lodge Chief, that made three of us from the same troop in four years. Although Jon Allyn Simmons lived in Sarasota, he and his family were actually Fort Myers people. Taking that into consideration gives us four out of four. Not too bad, Bill... Tradition and Fellowship and Symbolism. However, anyone understanding genetics will concur that inbreeding weakens the strain.

Of course it was an honor, and I am so proud to have served, but had I been a year older and had the benefit of a strong advisor volunteer, professional or peer, I would have done a better job. Had I known what I know now, I would have done some things differently. Bill went off to college, again setting me up to follow and expand his political aspirations when I entered the University of Florida, and I was lost.

A District Scout Executive probably does not have time to be a good advisor. Anyway, I don't recall ever receiving any advice, good or bad, from that level. From my perspective I got the impression that he was always more concerned about what the lodge could do for the council than what the council could do for the lodge. If there was a formal adult volunteer advisor during my tenure, I don't remember anything coming from that direction, either.

If there is any message here to boys who resent adult leaders and adult leaders who only pursue titles, honors, and memorabilia, so be it.

I am ashamed that the Lodge ceased to exist in the manner in which it appears to have, if for no more reason than my contributory negligence. I, too, went to college in 1951 and left Jon Allyn Simmons in a position perhaps worse off than I was a year earlier. I was quickly absorbed into college life and other than an event I attended at Camp Wallwood, near Tallahassee, I do not recall receiving any formal or even informal communication from the Lodge while I was in college. I was unaware of any difficulty or problem. True, to a degree it was my responsibility to find out, but I do not appreciate the lack of communication. The Constitution called for biennial meetings, and at least one to be held during each summer camp period. Someone might have taken the initiative to contact former Lodge Chiefs to be sure that they could not or would not attend these meetings. Chapters that drop members from mailing lists or membership, simply because members fail to pay dues within typically restrictive time frames, do themselves a great disservice. Those who are delinquent should be contacted by a human being and there should be a level of accountability to the Lodge for those who are to be dropped.

The ages of 18 to 24 are particularly vulnerable and transitional. Many who are dropped would at least appreciate bulletins and notices until such time as their lives take stable directions and they can find time or the inclination to restore a level of activity in the brotherhood. Form letters are very impersonal, and they, too, frequently get lost in the mail as young men move into fraternity houses, change schools, jobs, and begin families. Chapters might be well advised to have membership committees whose primary service is to maintain the membership through personal contacts or cheerful service, preserving... Tradition, Fellowship, Symbolism, and Brotherhood.

What I suspect is that Fred L. Treat and Bill Watkins agreed to disagree. Bill Watkins probably stood his ground and said that the Lodge would not do something or cease to do something. Knowing the two gentlemen involved, you may be sure that this would be like the irresistible force meeting the immovable object. I suspect David Blake and the Lodge Chief were pawns in this game. I further suspect that had the membership been advised of these problems there would have been an

outcry for compromise... again, lack of communication. There were SIX MONTHS OF OPPORTUNITY between July 3, 1955, and December 15, 1955. I find the statement "No effort will be made at this time to reorganize the Lodge" REPULSIVE. Shame, shame on you, Mr. Treat (all due respect considered). To formally disband out of conflict and turmoil is regrettable, but at least honorable. But, to be disenfranchised without reasonable notice to each member, is a disgrace. Should the differences have been truly irreconcilable, then the Lodge should have had a special meeting called and formally disbanded as did others about this same time. What was forgotten here was... Tradition and Fellowship and Symbolism and Brotherhood, the very essence of the order.

Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to bring together a quorum of as many former members of the Calusa Lodge as could be contacted who would agree to meet at Flying Eagle, perhaps after a summer camp, but at any agreeable time. The purpose of that meeting should be fellowship and brotherhood and a final set of minutes that would record the Lodge's disbanding out of respect for itself and those who loved it, honorably. Further, to publish these minutes, in sufficient quantity and make them available to collectors of memorabilia who would find the information interesting and worthwhile.

You may be sure I would attend such a meeting, bringing whatever memorabilia I could muster, and hoping the same of my brothers, that we might share one last time... Tradition and Fellowship, Symbolism and Brotherhood,

W. W. W.

Laddie R. Williams, Lodge Chief of The Calusa Lodge  
Order of the Arrow, 1948 - 1949

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laddie".