

# The S-F Story

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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



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# The S-F Story

Where S-F Ranch now stands was once an unbroken forest. No roads or trails intruded into its silences, save only those used by deer, buffalo, and, at times, the wily Osage or Missouri Indian.



Missouri Indian

Then white men came - Spanish - French - then Spanish again - finally British and Americans. Dreams of Empire were there, and games of political chess were played by a mere handful of indomitable men in an area which was measured in hundreds of miles and millions of acres.

Questing ever for undiscovered riches of gold and silver, or for a water route to the Orient, men of many nations crossed and recrossed this country, probing the hills for

minerals, trading with the Indians for furs, warring with each other, and being vastly puzzled when European wars and intrigues changed overnight the ownership of the land.

And always, always while looking for the glamorous silver and gold, they overlooked the real riches of the land, as stated in a letter of Father Gravier, "For they do not seek lands to cultivate. They have not yet found the mines they sought, they care little for those of lead, which are very abundant."

Date: Late summer of the year 1541. Place: The wilderness valley of the River of the Holy Ghost, later to be called the Colbert, and finally, the Mississippi. Two men in armour approached the little spring of salt water. Who are they? Hernando de Silveria and Pedro Moreno, natives of Galicia, "diligent men to whom anything could be entrusted." Their errand; to bring back salt to DeSoto's expedition which was camped near the present boot-heel of Missouri, for "more than sixty Spaniards died during the time when they had no salt, which was almost a year."

Unwittingly, these two had stumbled onto a saline spring and the beginnings of the "Three Notch Trail", which lead to Mine La Motte, now the S - F Ranch. DeSoto's original map shows the spring as "Fuente de que hacen sal" - the spring from which they make salt.

Members of St. Louis Explorer Post 319, sponsored by the Webster Gardens Lutheran Church, have followed the "Three Notch Trail" using a compass course discovered a few years ago in the National Archives of France for the Colonies. It is dated July 10, 1719, and can still be followed by a determined Explorer with a compass.

Decades passed while the forest was silent. Only wild animals visited the spring, or an occasional Osage or Michigamia Indian. Finally one hundred thirty years after DeSoto, in 1673 Father Marquette and Louis Joliet passed the same place, being the second known party of white men in the middlewest. Visiting a tribe of Indians just west of the Mississippi, they were greeted: "How beautiful the sun is, oh Frenchmen, when thou comest to visit us. All our village awaits thee and thou shall enter all our cabins in peace."

Another thirty years passed, and then a few Jesuit priests and some French traders and trappers, accompanied by the Kaskaskia Indian tribe, founded the town of Kaskaskia just across the river from the salt spring. Destined to be the center of French power in the midwest, supported by Fort Chartres, the Gibraltar of the Mississippi Valley which never heard a shot fired in anger, Kaskaskia never had more than a few hundred inhabitants.



Hernando de Soto

Why had the French undertaken the settlement of several small villages so many hundreds of miles from their other outposts? What were the strategies that dictated the construction of the great Fort Chartres in the heart of a wilderness? Why didn't the French settle on the seacoast like the English and then expand inland as they gained strength?

Robert Cavelier de La Salle, dreaming dreams of an immense inland empire for France, did much to make it a reality. He saw that France had control of the main arteries of commerce in the north of the continent with Quebec being the control at the exit, and Detroit and Michillimackinac controls of the Great Lakes. When Marquette and Joliet discovered the Mississippi for the French, the transportation route was complete. Voila! A strong fort where New Orleans now stands, a control point or two on the Mississippi, and the French would have the whole midwest in their hands. From then on, the course was clear. Keep the English bottled up on the east coast by keeping them from crossing the Appalachians and keep the Spanish from leaving the far southwest around Santa Fe. Funnel thousands of immigrants into the midwest through Quebec and New Orleans, and in no time at all the English could be pushed back into the sea and the Spanish chased back into Mexico City. Such was the dream of La Salle, a mighty dream which guided the destinies of New France for over seventy-five years. Many of the Indian raids on the English were the result of this plan.



[illegible]

several Indians. LeSueur had a rough time of it. His provisions gave out and game was scarce because of the high water. He did visit the salt springs and mentions a great lead mine that the Indians told him about. He seemed confused as to just where it was, so it cannot be claimed positively that he visited the S-F Ranch territory.

During the period starting about 1710, things were not going too well in France because of the wars in Europe. France was forced to withdraw her assistance of supplies and money from the small colonies in Louisiana. Fearing that the territory might fall into the hands of the English, Louis XIV conveyed to Anthony Crozat for a period of fifteen years beginning Sept. 14, 1712, the exclusive rights to develop the territory, including mineral and trading privileges.

Louisiana under Crozat's charter was made a dependency of the government of "New France" or Canada as we now know it. An entirely new corps of officials were appointed to govern the Louisiana Country. Crozat meant business and he went about his work in a serious and thorough manner. In looking for a man to act as Governor of Louisiana, he picked Sieur Antoine de la Motte Cadillac. Cadillac was a man of brilliant attainments and a great favorite at Court. It was there that Crozat met him.

now known as Missouri, left Canada during the summer of 1714 on orders of Governor Bienville. It was headed by Charles Claude du Tisne who marched from Canada to Mobile through the unbroken wilderness. Arriving at Kaskaskia he crosses the Mississippi River and travelled up the Saline and followed the ancient Indian trail that lead to the interior of the Lead region. He reports material signs of lead ore, probably at Mine



Du Tisne had made a number of trips from Canada into the interior, by order of Governor Bienville. Besides Du Tisne's own reports, he is mentioned by Margry and somewhat extensively by Bossu. Bossu's writings are not entirely reliable because of his rather active imagination. They are always interesting. He leaves some amusing facts about Du Tisne.

Bossu enjoyed a practical joke so maybe this story is one of them. Consequently his writings are taken with a grain of salt and they also cast doubts on Du Tisne himself.

When Du Tisne arrived at Mobile in 1714, he brought with him from the Illinois country two pieces of ore which he asserted had been dug in the vicinity of this district. Cadillac had them assayed and they proved to contain a high



percentage of silver. Who fooled whom? Did Bossu give them to Du Tisne or was the joke original with Du Tisne? Or was this a case of mine "salting"?

Cadillac, suddenly and forcefully reminded of his directive to search for ores, secretly organized an expedition and left Mobile post-haste. With him was his son and a body of experienced miners with ample tools for digging. Arriving at Kaskaskia, he crossed the Mississippi River and followed the Indian trail to the interior of the lead district. His journey lasted for some nine months and he made a thorough search for ore. Wherever he found signs of ore he dug test pits.



Father Marquette

Arriving in what is now Madison county and the district that bears his name, he dug samples of lead, iron and copper ores that appeared as if they might contain the gold and silver that was so urgently sought. For this reason he made particularly accurate observations and took astronomical bearings which were filed in the archives and gave the district his name.

By 1716, Anthony Crozat had spent vast sums of money in trying to develop the trade of Louisiana as well as the mines discovered, but even with the wealth that he possessed, he is found a poorer but wiser man who returned his patent to his King and reported failure. La Motte Cadillac, too, returned to France during the later part of 1716 and he died there in 1730.

During 1717, shortly after Crozat returned his charter to his King, a new association in Paris took over the exclusive privileges in Louisiana. It was known as "The Company of the West". Their charter was granted for twenty-five years and in many ways it was more liberal than Crozat's had been for the inhabitants as well as the Company's goods were free from taxation.

Stock was issued by the new company and cost 400 livre for each share. (A livre was about the equivalent of 25¢ in our coin.) Stock could be sold or withheld as deemed wise. A holder of fifty shares was entitled to one vote

in the affairs of the company. The King appointed the directors for two years and after that others were to be elected every three years by the stockholders.



M. de La Motte Cadillac

Apparently, the sale of stock in the Company of the West brought abundant revenue into the company, for in 1719, John Law, a wily Scot, who was director general of the Royal Bank of France saw possibilities of an immense development and he is given credit of combining the Company of the West with the Company of the Indies, thus forming a new corporation called the Royal Company of the Indies. Du Pratz states that the great sale of stock in the new corporation was due to the fantastic reports of minerals discovered in Louisiana. The real results were that this was the biggest stock swindle of the century, the so-called "Mississippi Bubble". Law manipulated the stock in every conceivable manner and finally skipped when the plan blew up in his face. France was broke, and no one wanted to invest in mines any more. Could Du Tisne have forecast all this when he played his "joke" on Cadillac?

However, the enterprise of John Law in raising vast sums of money for the Royal Company of the Indies quickened the tide of immigration of miners, mechanics, and farmers from Canada and France. French officials listened to every imposter who claimed ability to mine and smelt ore and to find the gold and silver that was believed to lie under the surface ores of lead.

Father John Rothensteiner unearthed two valuable documents in the National Archives of France for the Colonies, at Paris. One was written by Des Ursins and entitled, "Detail of the Journey to the Mines". A few extracts from his letter follows:

"On June 6, 1719, we crossed the Mississippi River and spent the night one fourth of a league below Saline River -- on the tenth we made the workmen dig into the shaft which Mr. de la Motte had made. It was only four feet deep; the rock was untouched. We dug deeper into the earth than de la Motte had -- on the eleventh, Sunday! we commenced a shaft which is larger than the two preceeding ones, two hundred feet west of the last one -- the earth, to a depth of six feet is mixed with lead; it is black and heavy, mixed with yellow earth. We also found pieces of lead ore and silver ore which we have tested right here."

Most of the ventures up to this time were exploratory only and no serious attempt had been made to produce finished metal in any quantity. Failure of the previous mining expeditions was largely due to ignorance of methods of ore reduction and lack of proper tools and equipment to do a real job of mining.

A subsidiary company was organized in 1719, called the Company of St. Phillippe, under the leadership of Philip Francois Renault, son of Philip Renault, a prominent iron founder in Consobre. Young Renault knew the necessity of



proper equipment and tools as well as skilled labor. He organized a working force of miners and mechanics composed of two hundred men. He even had the bricks made in France for his furnaces and brought them with him. Leaving France during 1719 he arrived at the newly established New Orleans and embarked in pirogues to make the trip to Kaskaskia. Renault arrived at Fort Chartres in 1720 but established his headquarters a short distance from there at a place he named St. Phillippe. He immediately sent out exploring parties and soon located lands upon which previous mining had been done. The most promising seemed to be those that DesUrsins had visited the previous year at what is now Mine La Motte. DesUrsins was at Fort Chartres and gave to Renault the value of his explorations. Schoolcraft says that he started mining at a place that M. la Motte had discovered.

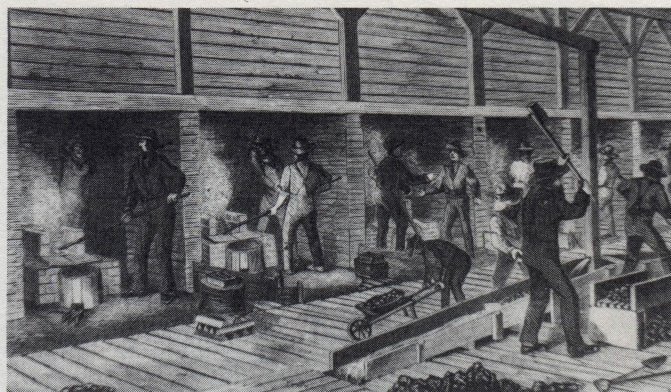


John Law

The second document unearthed by Father Rothensteiner was written by Sieur de la Renaudiere on August 23, 1723. Condensing his document and using only such statements as prove that he actually mined at Mine La Motte before Renault was there. Renaudiere stated, "It is about fourteen leagues from Kaskaskia to the Mines of M. de la Motte. In some places the ore is only one foot below the surface as one begins to dig, going down to the rock where pieces of lead weighing from twenty to thirty ounces may be found. We have penetrated this rock about seven feet, the lead is disseminated in it. I worked it and found a little silver."

Apparently, the tonnage of lead shipped to France did not justify the expenses for by September, 1725, Renault's credit had been cut off. The Sauk and Fox Indians brought marauding bands to the territory and Renault had trouble keeping his men at work. The Royal Company of the Indies was broke and the territory retroceded to the crown. Renault continued his mining for some time until he sold his holdings to the government and returned to France.

France concluded that she could never become wealthy from what she might find in America, besides she was badly beaten in the French and



Early Lead Furnaces  
In Mine La Motte Area

Indian Wars. As a consequence, in 1763 France signed a peace treaty, ceding all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River to England. At the same time, secretly, France ceded all of the western part of Louisiana to Spain. Thus, technically, the S-F Ranch became a Spanish colony although it was some time before Spain actually took over the territory.

This really left the inhabitants of the Kaskaskia area in a quandary. All the little French settlements in this area were on the east side of the river save only Ste. Genevieve.

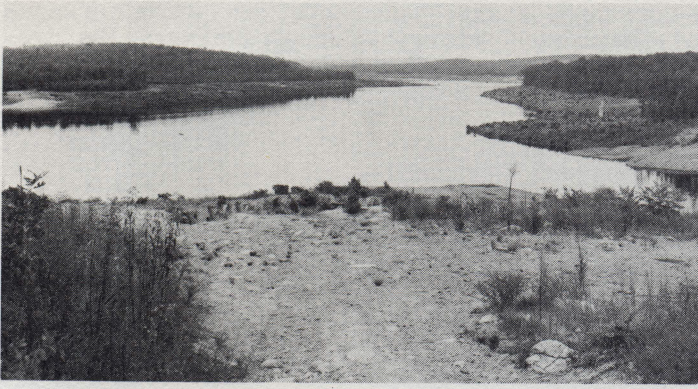
Almost at once there was a spontaneous immigration of French settlers from the eastern or British side of the river to the western or Spanish side. Of course, there was a Spanish governor, and a few Spanish soldiers, but life went on much as before, and almost everyone still spoke French on the streets.

A few English-speaking settlers moved from the east to Kaskaskia or Cahokia under the British rule, but the Spanish had posted "Keep out" signs on the west bank of the river by the time they arrived, which didn't seem quite neighborly.

As early as 1763, it appears that Francois Valle, pere (Senior) explored the tract of Mine La Motte land. He and his men, using the remains of the furnaces and equipment left by Renault, mined there somewhat steadily through the years. On one of their trips to the mines a band of Chickasaw Indians attacked them and killed eight men. They were Joseph Valle, son of Francois, an American named Phillips, Jacques Parent, Auguste Chatel, one Dupont, one Menard, one other white man and a Negro named Calise. This unfortunate event caused them to abandon, for a while, their attempts to work the mines. A few years later another attempt ended disastrously when one of the men was caught by the Indians and burned to death.

Seventeen hundred seventy-five arrived and George Washington and his boys started having trouble with the "Redcoats". Kaskaskians heard about it, of course, but they were so far away from the fighting that they just went on with "business as usual". That is, until one fine night when they were having a big dance at the town hall. Everyone was all gussied up, and all the side arms were checked at the door.





The 270 Acre Eugene D. Nims Lake at S-F

Suddenly, someone noticed a tall, red-headed stranger, somewhat dusty from a long hard trip. He was looking in the door, watching the festivities, and leaning on his long rifle. "Go on with the dancing, folks", said George Rogers Clark, "This here dance isn't British any more, it's American." So, everybody went on dancing, and Kaskaskia was captured without a shot being fired.

Sometime between 1780 and 1782, Valle again resumed work at the mine and he and his associates remained in peaceful possession. Jean Datcheret had a claim for part of the Mine La Motte Domain and about 1798, the Valle heirs bought his rights and thus considered that they "owned" the entire domain.

Lieutenant-Governor Charles DeHault Delassus had been appointed by the Spanish authorities in 1799 and he urged that those who had land claims apply for grants. Such a request for a grant was made on October 15, 1800 by Jean Baptiste St. James-Beauvais, Francois Valle and Jean Baptiste Pratte. They never received a grant from either the French or Spanish governments because of delays in processing their claims.

During the Spanish Regime, although the settlers in Spanish territory could ship their lead and other products to Europe through New Orleans, American farmers on the east side of the river found that they couldn't. The Spaniards wouldn't let them.

Long and loud were the wails when they found that out. They wrote the newspaper; they wrote their congressman; they wrote the President, Thomas Jefferson. And he did something about it.

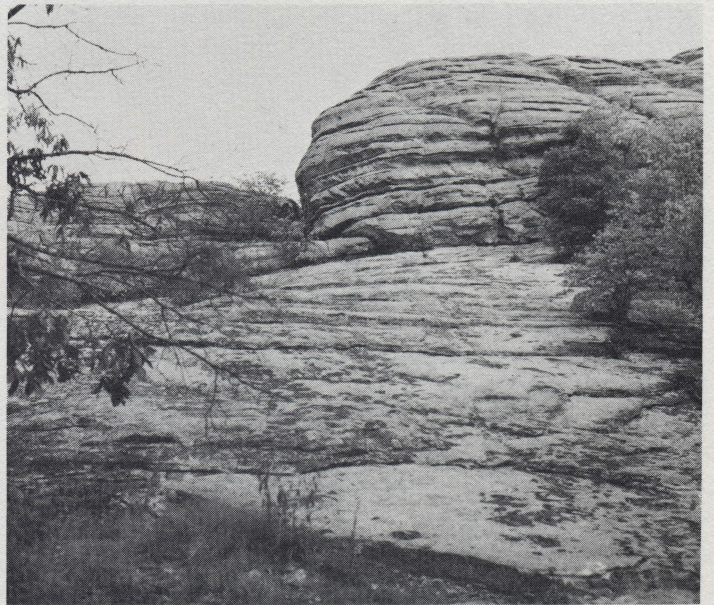
All the President wanted to do at first was to buy New Orleans and take the stopper out of the Mississippi. Meanwhile, Napoleon, in exchange for setting up the son-in-law of the king of Spain as a king, had forced Spain to cede the Louisiana territory back to France. Thus, what is now the S-F Ranch again came under the French flag, but only nominally, as French troops were unavailable to take possession.

Because of France's difficulties, President Jefferson was able to complete the largest land purchase to date, making a really "big" nation although the United States did not take

possession until March 8th, 1804. So, at last, we find that Mine La Motte, and consequently S-F Ranch, has been under three flags, but in five different time periods. First the Spanish flag by right of DeSoto's discovery. But Spain didn't follow up by settlement. Next, the French flag, because of Marquette's discovery of the Mississippi, and with subsequent settlement by the French. Third, the Spanish flag again for forty years. Fourth, the French flag again for a very short time. And finally "Old Glory".

The original two square leagues of land forming Mine La Motte was the very first land grant in what is now Missouri. Mine La Motte itself was the first commercial venture of the French settlers, and the Three Notch Trail was the first trail of the white men in the entire midwest.

The Valle and Pratte families tried to get grants for their property at Mine La Motte from the French, Spanish and American governments but met with no success for various legal reasons. There seemed to be no way to get confirmation of their claim except by a direct



"CASTLE ROCK"-- Destined to be a favorite point of interest for Scouts and Explorers at S-F

appeal to Congress for a special act which was approved May 24, 1828 granting Francis and Jean Baptiste Valle, Jean Baptiste Pratte and St. James-Beauvais, twenty-four thousand and ten acres, known as the Mine La Motte tract of land.

One of the most colorful characters of the early nineteenth century in this section, enters our picture of Mine La Motte. He was Dr. Lewis F. Linn, of Ste. Genevieve, "The Model Senator from Missouri". Space prohibits a full sketch of his life. In 1832 he was appointed a Commissioner to settle French land claims in Missouri. During his work in that field he became acquainted with the Mine La Motte claim and found that Francois Valle (Pere) died in 1783 leaving two sons, Francois (fils) and Jean Baptiste who were doing some



During 1869, Radcliffe B. Lockwood, whose address at that time was New York, and William H. Scott of Madison County made several important stock purchases, but the big one occurred on July 8, 1869. Robert Fleming, administrator for his father's estate, sold their interest in the Mine La Motte Domain for the sum of \$544,615.00 to R. B. Lockwood. Later in 1869 a corporation called the "Mine La Motte Company" was incorporated with three directors to serve the first year. They were Rowland G. Hazzard of Rhode Island; William A. Scott of Missouri and Radcliffe B. Lockwood also of Missouri.

During 1869 the famous "Jack Diggings" were discovered. Phenomenal in the value and percentage of lead in the ore, the Mine La Motte Company produced nearly twenty-two hundred tons of lead that year. In 1870 they shipped more than twenty-five hundred tons of lead.

Apparently, Scott and Lockwood had made enough out of their investment for on March 1, 1870, Radcliffe B. Lockwood, William A. Scott and his wife Adelaide conveyed their shares in the Mine La Motte Company to Rowland G. Hazzard.

During 1872 a serious fire destroyed twelve furnaces which reduced the tonnage of lead substantially but by 1876 shipments rose to more than twenty-nine hundred tons.

Hazzard set up the property on the "Contract System" where each miner was allotted a plot of ground to work. Hazzard bought the ore mined. In 1875, the operation of the claim was placed in the hands of Hazzard's son, Rowland Hazzard, Jr., who operated it on the same basis. Available is the original book which the miners signed for their plots of ground and it makes an interesting "directory" of the early citizens of the area.

Young Hazzard operated the property until 1898 when S. H. Leathe of St. Louis bought it for \$750,000.00. Four years later during July 1902, Leathe sold the property to Dougherty and Albers of New York for one and a half million dollars.

Passing over the trials and tribulations of the various owners, we find that the St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company (National Lead Co.) operated the property for about a year during 1913-14. The Missouri Metals Company operated the property with fair success during the years of World War I.

In 1918 the Sweetwater Mining Company acquired this property. The St. Louis Smelting and Refining Company had been doing the smelting for them. In 1920 they demanded bonds as security for money they had advanced. These were produced and in 1922, the St. Joseph Lead Company obtained a lease from the Sweetwater Mining Company for the purpose of prospecting the property for lead. Considerable rich ore was found in locations not previously mined. The National Lead Company and the St. Joseph Lead Company set up a new corporation called the Mine La Motte Corporation on a 50-50 basis with the St. Joseph Lead Company operating the property. This mutual arrangement was continued

until July 14, 1958 when because of the depressed price of lead, it was found unprofitable to continue operations and the mines were allowed to fill with water. Mining has ceased perhaps for all time.

Thus comes to an end a long and interesting history of the area. Perhaps we should say it is the beginning of another long history. Now we begin the "production" of men.

In 1961, because of the helpfulness of the St. Joseph Lead Company and Mr. Elmer A. Jones, and an initial gift of the Stix, Baer & Fuller Company by Mr. Arthur B. Baer, a part of the Mine La Motte domain became known as the S-F Ranch of the St. Louis Area Council, Boy Scouts of America.



Beginning of Construction on  
John S. Swift Explorer Base

The need for this Ranch became eminent as a result of the long range plan conducted by the council in 1959 and 1960. This plan, which encompassed a study of the traditional camp facilities of the council such as Camps Irondale, Lions' Den and Brereton, pointed out the need for an area that would be large enough for the council to grow on, an area large enough to expand the program facilities on and an area rich enough in history and tradition to offer the incentive for the Scouts of today and tomorrow. The S-F Ranch now in excess of 4,200 acres answers those needs. It's development is a reality because of the efforts of the Council President, General L. J. Sverdrup, the Co-Chairmen of the Camp Development Fund Campaign Theodore R. Gamble and Nicholas P. Veeder, and the countless men and women who worked and gave the funds for the development of the property. It is a testament to the inspirational leadership of Morton D. Day, Chairman of the Camp Development Committee and the members of his committee. Their forethought, their imagination and concern for today as well as the future of camping in the St. Louis Area Council, is well demonstrated by the facilities of the ranch.





# AS I SEE IT

**RUSSELL J. HART  
SCOUT EXECUTIVE**

There are many people, of course, that have brought our Council to its present degree of excellence in camping. The history and traditions of Irondale, of Lions' Den, and of Brereton are rich and valuable. We now begin a new era.

We think this short history of the Mine La Motte Domain on which the S-F Ranch is found will be interesting and will be a start of the development of new traditions. We are thankful to Mr. Henry C. Thompson, who was the first Scout Executive of the Council and Mr. Walter H. Vesper, Jr., who together developed much of the historic statement in this Duffel Bag supplement.

This history, of course, is only valuable to the extent that it may inspire us to follow the example of those who have come before us, of those who have left their indelible mark upon us, that we likewise might impress those whom we work with today.

It is true that the S-F Ranch was one of the principle sites for the search for gold and silver, and later for the mining of lead and copper. Gold was never found, and only a small amount of silver was in the lead ore, but there are certain similarities between those mining objectives of the past and the objectives the St. Louis Area Council has today.

Through this ranch, we shall find gold in the hearts of the youth we are serving. This will be different than those early miners who never found any gold and left only ore that is exhausted, while our product of today -- boys -- is inexhaustible, for there is always a new crop of young men for us to train, develop and guide through the Scouting program.

