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(2005)

JAMES REDDING RIVES, II

Lieutenant General/Baron Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell organized the Boy Scouts in 1908 and the movement spread from Great Britain to many other nations; it had reached the United States by 1910. The purpose of this group was to develop a somewhat chivalrous attitude in young boys, to train them in the essentials of good citizenship; a scout promised "on his honor" to help other people at all times and to do his duty to God and his country.

James Redding ("Jimmy") Rives, II, who was born on June 11, 1889, at Rives Landing on the Tar River near Belvoir, has the distinction of founding the Boy Scout troop in Greenville sometime around 1915 or 1916. This was also one of the first Boy Scout troops to be organized in Eastern Carolina.

Rives' parents were James Redding Rives (December 23, 1850-January 10, 1903) and Lucy E. Bellamy Rives (September 9, 1860-July 10, 1933). (See Entry 1070 in *Chronicles of Pitt County*.) The Rives Family originally came from County Dorset in southern England to Tidewater Virginia during the English Civil War (ca. 1640) and migrated to Pitt County ca. 1760.

Young Jimmy Rives spent his early youth at his rural family home and, later, in Greenville where, for a while, he was employed at the Flanagan Buggy Company. He became interested in the Boy Scout movement and undertook to organize a troop in Greenville (one of the "original" Greenville scouts was young Graham Flanagan). Jimmy Rives arranged with then-Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels to have a small U.S. naval boat sent up the Tar River in order to transport the Greenville scouts on an excursion to Washington, N.C.—quite an expedition for that day! In later years, when Jimmy Rives joined other members of his family who had moved to Enfield, N.C., he again became involved with Boy Scout work. Here, on one occasion, he arranged for the Enfield scouts to make a trip to Virginia Beach, Va., again, some distance for that era.

Jimmy Rives was inducted in the United States Army on March 6, 1918, and saw military service with the American Expeditionary Forces around the Somme River. He was honorably discharged on August 5, 1919. Afterward, he joined the American Legion and was an active member for many years. He frequently played "Taps" on his bugle for military funerals.

He followed a long-standing Rives Family tradition and became a member of the Masonic Order. (A Masonic apron from his family, dating from the 1790s, was presented to the Greenville Masonic Lodge some years ago.) Rives was also an active member in the Enfield Methodist Protestant Church (later, the United Methodist Church).

He was engaged in the mercantile business in Ahoskie and Baltimore, Maryland, and, in 1925, returned to Enfield where, for over twenty years, he was associated with his brother, Ralph C. Rives, in Rives and Company. Later, he owned and operated the Rives Paint and Upholstery Company.

On March 1, 1920, James R. Rives, II, married Novie Shipp (September 9, 1902-August 4, 1982). They later became the parents of a son, James R. Rives, III, a veteran of World War Two, and also a member of the Masonic order, who died on February 10, 1976, and a daughter, Jeannette Rives (Mrs. Calvin) Johnson (born on November 17,

1922) who attended Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia, and currently resides in Hampton, Va.

Jimmy Rives was a man of many talents. He was a skilled craftsman who enjoyed making, refinishing and restoring furniture. Like his father, he was an outstanding gardener and he enjoyed sharing with friends and relatives the produce he had grown. His travels took him throughout much of the United States and into Canada. For many years, he and Mrs. Rives operated a popular tourist home near Highway 301 in Enfield; this was in the "pre-motel days" and the Rives Tourist Home became a well-known business with some guests, enroute north or south, who returned annually.

James Redding Rives, II, died on February 25, 1972, and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Enfield, N.C.

His daughter has graciously donated her father's World War One diary to the Manuscript Collection in Joyner Library, East Carolina University. This diary records events and impressions dealing with military troop crossing on the Atlantic Ocean and in war-torn France.

In a letter dated March 30, 1972, Paul S. Ernst, Supervisor, Registration and Membership, Boy Scouts of America, North Brunswick, New Jersey, wrote that the boys who belonged to Mr. Rives' troops in Greenville and Enfield ". . . were fortunate in having a leader who was in a position to arrange for them trips to Washington and Virginia Beach. In all probability some of the boys would not otherwise have had an opportunity to visit either of these places. I'm sure that everyone who was connected with Mr. James Rives while he was active in Scout work will remember him with affection."

Sources: James Rives Childs, *Reliques of the Rives* (1929); *The Enfield (N.C.) Progress*, March 2, 1972; The James Redding Rives, II, Papers (East Carolina University Manuscript Collection); letter from Jeannette R. Johnson, dated March 17, 2004.

—Ralph Hardee Rives

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