

History of Wyona Lodge 18

The Order of the Arrow was brought to the Columbia-Montour Council in 1923 by the first Council Scout Executive Earle H. Blake. Earle came to the Columbia-Montour Council from the Philadelphia Council where he was a Field Executive and friend of OA founders E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson. Earle was one of four men who wrote the original by-laws of the OA in 1921, and he played an active role at a national OA event into the 1950's. Under Earle's guidance, Wyona Lodge was established in 1924 and chartered by the Grand Lodge in May 1925. At the 1925 meeting of the Grand Lodge, the Vigil Honor was bestowed upon Earle making him Wyona Lodge's first Vigil Honor member.

It is believed the name Wyona was derived from Winona, a Native American woman who was buried at the site of the council's camp in the 1800's when it was a Native American campground. The elk was chosen as the totem of the lodge. In 1926, when the Grand Lodge assigned numbers to all lodges, Wyona Lodge was assigned the number 18. The activities of the lodge in the early days primarily centered on summer camp although Wyona Lodge contingents did attend most regional and national OA events during this period.

In the early 1950's, Wyona Lodge fell on hard times and did not renew its charter for several years. Then in 1954, six young men from Columbia-Montour Council traveled to the Area 3-D Pow-Wow at Camp Acahela where they were inducted as Ordeal members thus reestablishing Wyona Lodge. These same six boys traveled to Treasure Island Camp, birthplace of the OA, in the summer of 1955 to become Brotherhood members. In 1956, Wyona Lodge hosted the third Area 3-D Pow-Wow at Camp Lavigne. The lodge continued to grow and hosted Area 3-D Pow-Wows in 1962, 1968, and the final Area 3-D Pow-Wow in 1973. In 1972, Wyona Lodge was honored to have Mike Wagner elected as Area 3-D Chief.

In 1973, Wyona Lodge joined Section NE-5B. Mark Pyles was elected Chief of Section NE-5B in 1975 and 1976. Wyona Lodge hosted section NE-5B conclaves in 1979 and 1986. In 1990, a realignment of lodges and sections then placed Wyona Lodge in section NE-4A. Wyona Lodge hosted the NE-4A conclaves in 1994, 1999 and 2007. Wyona Lodge had the honor of having brothers Lance and Lucas Miller as Section Chiefs in 1992 and 1993. A realignment of the Sections in 2008, then placed Wyona Lodge back into Section NE-5B where it currently is joined by Unami 1, Witauchsoman 44, Lowwapanau 191 and Woapeu Sisilija 343. Wyona Lodge continues a strong tradition of award winning ceremony teams begun in the 1950's.

Throughout its history Wyona Lodge has remained dedicated to the purpose of the Order of the Arrow by cheerfully serving the scouting program of the Columbia-Montour Council. In recognition of this service, Wyona Lodge was awarded the E. Urner Goodman Camping Award for 1995, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009 which is presented to only eight lodges per year.

Courtesy of Charles Gregory
Updated by Adam Folk