

The original documents are located in Box D23, folder “50th Anniversary of Troop 215, Trinity Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, MI, February 10, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Excerpts from a Speech marking the 50th Anniversary of Troop 215, Saturday evening, Feb. 10, 1968, at Trinity Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It is said that a man never stands so tall as when he stoops to help a boy. It might be added that one boy helping another helps build our Nation and make it strong. The Boy Scout Movement is both, and therefore great good flows from it.

I am especially happy to be here tonight to help you in observing the golden anniversary of Boy Scout Troop 215--my old troop--and the 58th year since the founding of the Boy Scouts of America.

It is always good to be with friends and with the fine boys who are the hope for the future of this Nation. Attending your Court of Honor touches me deeply because it was at just such an occasion that Roger Chaffee, the brave astronaut whose memory we honor, was made an Eagle Scout. A few years before I too received the Eagle Award at a Troop 215 Honor Court and I've always cherished it.

We all know the importance that Roger Chaffee placed on Scouting and how it influenced the development of his character and the shaping of his career.

Roger would have appreciated, I'm sure, the challenging program the Boy Scouts of America and your own Grand Rapids Council have projected into the next decade to meet the compelling needs of boys from all segments of our society. Now the Scout Movement is placing special emphasis on reaching disadvantaged boys in urban and rural America--and for this I want to commend you.

Scouting is steadily growing in the Western Michigan area, just as it is throughout America.

I want to say a special word tonight about your own Council's plans to build and develop a new camp on the 1,050-acre site the Council has acquired in Osceola County. It seems mandatory to me that Scouting in this area expand to that new site. You have simply outgrown the present two camps. It seems a bit fantastic to me but the truth is that your Council now numbers 16,500 Scouts as compared with the 2,000 to 3,000 members you had when I was a Scout. You're bursting your britches, and you just need a much bigger pair of pants.

Your new camp is a most worth while project, and I'd like to see you raise every dollar of your \$500,000 goal. You can count on my help. If the United Community Services Planning Division endorses a campaign of that kind, we know it's good. My best wishes to you and my most heartfelt support.



Maybe you think that the great work being done here at Trinity Methodist and throughout the Grand River area in Scouting is only important in the immediate environs. But no, it's part of the tremendous character-building job to which Boy Scout troops throughout the Nation contribute--and it all adds up to a better America.

Last Wednesday morning I attended a Boy Scout Report to the Nation Breakfast in Washington--and it was a delightful refresher course for me.

I learned that the Boy Scouts of America plan to expand their membership by 40 per cent in the next nine years and that this will mean bringing the benefits of Scouting to one-third of all American boys.

I was gratified because I know from personal experience the contributions Scouting can make in developing physical fitness, responsible citizenship and a sense of moral and spiritual values.

Did you know that in the 90th Congress there are 328 men who were Scouts or leaders--26 more than in the 89th Congress? Of those 328 men, nine have been honored with the Silver Beaver Award by their local Scout councils, two with the Silver Antelope Award by their Scout regions, and two with the Silver Buffalo Award by the Boy Scouts of America.

It is also a tribute to Scouting that of the 47 living Astronauts, 36 are former Scouts--six with Eagle rank.

There are more than six million boys and leaders active in the Boy Scout program today, and Scouting has served more than 44 million boys since the Movement began in America in 1910.

I was delighted to learn that nearly 26,000 disadvantaged boys who are not Scouts attended Boy Scout camps in 1967, and that a goal of 50,000 has been set for 1968. Your research and experimentation program to make Scouting meaningful for disadvantaged youth is worthy of every American's all-out support.

The Report to the Nation Boy Scout Breakfast I attended gave me a broad view of Scouting today and its longrange goals for expanded service to America's boys.

Later that day I and other members of Congress introduced a joint resolution calling upon the Boy Scouts of America to involve more boys in every segment of our society in its program.

I know you will do just that. I know you will move forward in the spirit that led America to greatness, the spirit that elevated Roger Chaffee into the ranks of our country's heroes. Through the great movement of Scouting, you will grow in body, mind and spirit to assume the responsibilities of citizenship and leadership and build a greater United States of America.

STATEMENT BY REP. GERALD R. FORD

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Your new camp is a most worthwhile project, and I'd like to see you raise every dollar of your \$500,000 goal. You can count on my help. If the United Community Services Planning Division endorses a campaign of that kind, we know it's good. My best wishes to you and my most heartfelt support.



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