

History of Pellissippi Lodge #230

In 1943, Elmer Hawkins was the assistant Scout Executive of the Great Smoky Mountain Council. During the summer, he acted as camp director at Camp Pellissippi, and during the rest of the year, he served the area outside of Knoxville. Mr. Hawkins brought the idea of the Order of the Arrow to our council from the Sequoyah Council in Johnson City where he had previous experience with the Order of the Arrow. Due to his interest in forming a lodge, Mr. Orton Duggan, the Great Smoky Mountain Council Scout Executive at the time, turned the lodge organization over to Hawkins.

In the summer of 1943, at Camp Pellissippi, Mr. Hawkins called out the first members of the lodge at the last meal of the camp week. He told the story of Uncas and passed out tokens. The totems were three-inch sections of hollowed bamboo with one and a half piece of paper inside. On the Paper, the letters WWW were inscribed.

The first Ordeal was held near what is now called the Loyston Point area adjacent to camp. The arduous toil assigned to the candidates was the building of lean-tos at the outpost camp. This camp was also the location of the first Pellissippi Lodge Ordeal ceremony. Sequoyah Lodge #184 performed that ceremony, and were accompanied by Mr. Dudley Unkerfer, their Council Scout Executive.

The first year that Pellissippi Lodge was in existence, there were no lodge officers. The members chose the name for the lodge, Pellissippi, by naming it after the camp. The name originates from the Native American word for Clinch River. The Clinch flows near Camp Pellissippi. Pellissippi means “winding waters”. As the totem, the lodge selected the Silver Fox.

Since the beginning, Pellissippi Lodge has had a legacy of success. Our lodge has been quite successful not only on the local level, but also on the national level. National chiefs have been elected from Pellissippi Lodge in 1952, 1972, and 1988. Additionally, Pellissippi Lodge has hosted three National Order of the Arrow Conferences in the years 1977, 1992, and 2000. Each of these events was held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and were herald as amazing successes. In addition to hosting these NOACs, Pellissippi has also many of its members recognized at NOACs for their performance in competitions including ceremonies and dancing. Five Pellissippi Lodge members have also been honored with the Distinguished Service award, a high national honor

Despite our prestige on the national scale, our lodge continues to serve its members at home. After more than sixty years in existence, Pellissippi Lodge #230 has not forgotten the principles on which it was founded. Each year, Pellissippi Lodge finds an ever-growing membership undergoing their ordeal and more arrowmen taking part in the many activities the lodge offers.