



ACORN TO OAK!!!

ON OCT. 12, 1899, DURING THE BOER WAR (1899-1902), THE TOWN OF MAFEKING CAME UNDER A SIEGE THAT LASTED UNTIL MAY 17, 1900. UNDER THE COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP OF COL. ROBERT STEPHENSON SMYTH BADEN-POWELL (B-P), A COMBINED FORCE OF 700 TRAINED MEN (SOLDIERS, POLICE, VOLUNTEERS) ALONG WITH ABOUT 300 TOWNSMEN AND A LARGE ENERGETIC BAND OF BOYS, PREVAILED.



AS THE SIEGE PROGRESSED, AND DEFENDERS WERE KILLED AND WOUNDED, B-P NOTICED THAT THE BOY'S CONTINUED TO PLAY OPENLY IN THE TOWN, OBLIVIOUS OF THE DANGER.



HE ASKED AN OFFICER TO ORGANIZE BOYS NINE YEARS & OLDER AS A CADET CORPS IN KHAKI UNIFORMS WITH FORAGE CAPS AND A YELLOW PUGGREEM TO DELIVER MILITARY ORDERS & MESSAGES TO THE OUTPOSTS AROUND THE AREA'S FIVE MILE PERIMETER AND TO SERVE AS LOOKOUTS, ORDERLIES, ETC. WARNER GOODYEAR (12) BECAME THE CORPS SERGEANT-MAJOR.



SINCE MOVEMENT BY SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS WAS RESTRICTED, THE CORPS ALSO DELIVERED MAIL ASTRIDE MULES. WITH THE SIEGE CONTINUING, AND RATIONS SHORT, THE MULES BECAME FOOD FOR THE RESIDENTS. SWITCHING TO BICYCLES, THEY CONTINUED THEIR MAIL DELIVERY; CHARGING 3d BETWEEN PERIMETER OUTPOSTS AND 1d PER OUNCE IN TOWN. WITH CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SIEGE OVERPRINTED STAMPS EXHAUSTED, ON-SITE STAMPS WERE DESIGNED. GOODYEAR WAS CHOSEN FOR THE PENNY VALUE (SCOTT 178) THAT NEEDED SEVERAL SESSIONS IN A MAFEKING STREET, DISRUPTED BY SHELL ATTACKS, TO OBTAIN A PHOTOGRAPH, AND B-P FOR THE 3d VALUES, SCOTT 179 AND 180.

AT THE SIEGE'S END, THE BOYS WENT BACK TO SCHOOL CALLING THEMSELVES "SCHOOL CADETS" & "THE SCOUTS," OR JOINED THE WAR EFFORT. IN 1903, B-P RETURNED TO ENGLAND AND WROTE "SCOUTING FOR BOYS." IN IT HE RECALLS SAYING TO A MAFEKING CADET UNDER RATHER HEAVY FIRE, "YOU WILL GET HIT RIDING ABOUT LIKE THAT WHEN SHELLS ARE FLYING," AND THE BOY REPLIED, "I PEDAL SO QUICK, SIR, THEY'D NEVER CATCH ME." IN 1907, THE FIRST BOY SCOUT CAMPOUT WAS HELD IN ENGLAND AND THE WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT WAS BORN. WARNER GOODYEAR, THE FIRST BOY SCOUT, DIED IN 1913 AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 26. IN THE 2001 SCOTT CATALOGUE THE STAMPS, MINT & USED, RANGE IN VALUE FROM \$300-\$55,000.