

The WILLIE Story

Since the early days of scouting, our council has been sub-divided into districts to administer the Scouting program. Over the years from the late '20's to the present there has always been either a North District or North Star District. Up until about 1964 there was no unique logo for the district. However, for obvious reasons the council's identification number for our district has always been the number ONE.

John Hansen, a camporee committee member in the mid '50's, designed a cartoon character to be used on the 1956 Winter Camporee patch. This cartoon character became a big hit with both the boys and the leaders. The character appeared regularly on most all district camporee patches. The name of Willie North was adopted for this lovable character.



In 1963, Grant Christian, a commercial artist and Scouter, was charged with designing a district logo or patch. His design incorporated the outline of the number ONE, that the council has assigned us, and the side view of Willie North pointing the way. Willie wore a khaki uniform and had a Commissioner's badge on his sleeve. The commissioner's status of Willie probably explains his pot belly and bald head along with the long nose that was always into everybody's

business. This design was adopted as the "official" logo for North District. This remained the design until 1972.

Another design circulating in the early '60's was a rectangular 3" x 2-1/4", fully-embroidered, blue patch. This patch had, on the left half, a dark blue field with a large white "N" and star; and on the right half a lighter blue field and a red number "1". This design was adopted by the district's training committee as its symbol. It was never considered the district's "official" emblem.



Willie has remained the "official" logo of the district from 1963 to the present except for 1973, when the logo was changed to the "Mercedes" design. This design change was brought about in 1972 when Central Indiana Council merged with Kikthawenund Area, Delaware County, and Whitewater Valley Councils and became Crossroads of America Council. At this time also, the district's name changed from North District to North Star District, and the leadership felt a new design was needed.



The new design was a 3-1/4" round, blue twill patch with a golden yellow rolled edge. It had the wording "NORTH STAR DISTRICT - BSA - INDIANAPOLIS" in white around the outside, a green wreath inside the wording and a golden yellow fleur-de-lei superimposed on a large three-pointed star, similar to the Mercedes logo. This design

change was extremely unpopular with the majority of the district's volunteers, and Willie was quickly reinstated.

But Willie still needed modification to reflect the district's name change. The wording at the bottom was revised to NORTH STAR and a small star was added over his finger. His name was also changed to North Star Willie.



In 1982, Willie was again upgraded by Craig Devine. Willie's uniform was changed from the older khaki uniform and overseas cap to the newer tan shirt and baseball cap. The patch was fully-embroidered

and is the current design.

There have been several variations in the coloring and detail of the Willie patches. The background has varied from a light lime green in the beginning through darker lime greens, aqua, light blue and dark blue. The current background is a turquoise blue. Likewise, his uniform has also varied from khaki to brown to a bright green.



The "official" district shoulder patch is approximately 4" tall. There are various types of Willie insignias including the small Willie patches. These small Willie patches varied in size (1-3/4" to 2-1/2") and were initially worn by the boys.

In the early '70's, the small patches were sewn onto the front of a red baseball cap to make up what is known as the district's "RED HAT" award. This is the symbol for the "Fellowship of Faithful and Faultless Camporee Campers". But that is another article for a future *Starlighter*.



Willie has also been made into small hat pins and large 6" chenille jacket patches. He appears on the district's flag, computer clip-art, rubber stamps, Firecrafter's North Star ember logo, and the wooden 3-foot high traveling "North Star District Camporee Award".

An ad-hoc group of North Star Wood Badgers is called the "Willie Gillies" after North Star Willie and Gilwell, the location of the first Wood Badge course. This group assists the district when needed.

For 40 years, the both laughable and lovable character we've known as either Willie North or North Star Willie has always been identified with our district. He is a constant reminder that scouting must be fun, and that we must not take ourselves too seriously.

Now you know the whole story of Willie!

By: **Uncle Mike**