



Bee Line Hike at Night

In the summer of 1959, Troop 200 from St. Stephen's Methodist Church in Memphis, had a great week at Slick Rock. With the normal activities, the highlights were winning the patrol competition, the water carnival and topping it all off with earning the Eagle coup stick. With Tony Dries as our Scoutmaster though, his enthusiasm and ideas still had one more adventure – a bee line hike back to main camp at night. A bee line hike in the daytime would have been an adventure, but one at night really added to the event. 'Pug' Swarner was the Slick Rock Director at the time, so he was our official staff person in charge of the trek. Starting out from the low water bridge, we set off in what seemed to be the wrong direction. With a map though, you could determine that the Slick Rock road certainly did not follow too straight of a path and a bee line with a single compass direction certainly was not going to follow its path. Going through the woods, through the brambles and over the rocks was a challenge itself and you hoped your flashlight held out. However, like the Slick Rock road, the South Fork river also did not follow a very straight path. So even though we thought we had crossed it right when we started out, we had more opportunities to meet up with it again. These times, we did not have the benefit of crossing at a bridge so when we got to it, we would go upstream and downstream with different Scouts looking for a place where it was not too deep. Even then, we still got very wet in going across each time. Now not all of the way was through the woods, as we did come across what turned out to be the infamous cornfield. It only became infamous the next day when the farmer found the swath of knocked down corn where we passed and wanted recompense. At night, though, it was just one more barrier to pass. Along the way, we had one adventure in trying to find Pug's lost contact lens. Being in the woods is not a place

where that would probably be possible in full daylight, so it is still somewhere out there near one of the river crossings if you want to look for it. Arriving in base camp, we were tired, extremely dirty and very infested as we had been gathering every tick and chigger along the path. However, with a shower, breakfast and dry clothes, we now had something to tell everyone in camp and something we could remember the rest of our lives.