



Old Tavern Tales

By Leonard D. Hubbard

Edited by Richard Forselius

Associate Editor: Carolyn C. Cooper

Photography Editor: Alan P. Haesche

Joel A. Flanders
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The Scout Cabin

IT WAS A LATE FALL AFTERNOON IN 1927. Two youths, about fifteen years old, tall skinny lads, were hiking along a trail in West Woods. Suddenly, before them, was an area devoid of large trees and covered with brush left from a timber cut-off.

"A match dropped in here would start an awful fire," said one lad.

"With a bit of wind the whole West Woods would go, nothing could stop it," replied the other.

"Hey, wouldn't this be a good turn for our Scout troop to clean up this mess? The land owner and the whole town would profit from it, and the boys could sharpen their skills at brush cutting," said the younger lad.

This was not at all a surprising statement from this lad. He had already accomplished one good turn by painting the name "Guilford" in large letters on a barn roof to help aviators flying over to know where they were. (In those days, many flyers had no charts or maps to follow; they followed the highways and train tracks, many times not knowing what towns they were over.) His name was Boynton Beckwith, who later became Guilford's first Eagle Scout.

The boys first contacted their scoutmaster, Clarence C. Loomis, about the project. He immediately agreed. Next, Len Hubbard, the other lad, contacted the landowner, who had no idea that his woods were left in such bad shape. First of all, he said, "No!" He wanted to make the lumbermen clean it up. Of course, he hadn't put anything about cleaning up in his contract with them, so there was nothing he could do but accept the offer of the Scouts to clean it up.

A few days later, Len was looking the property over to figure how the Scout

troop would do it and where they should start, when he noticed that many of the treetops still had many logs 8 to 10 inches in diameter. He marked off and counted up all he could find, then discussed with his father, who was a carpenter, the possi-

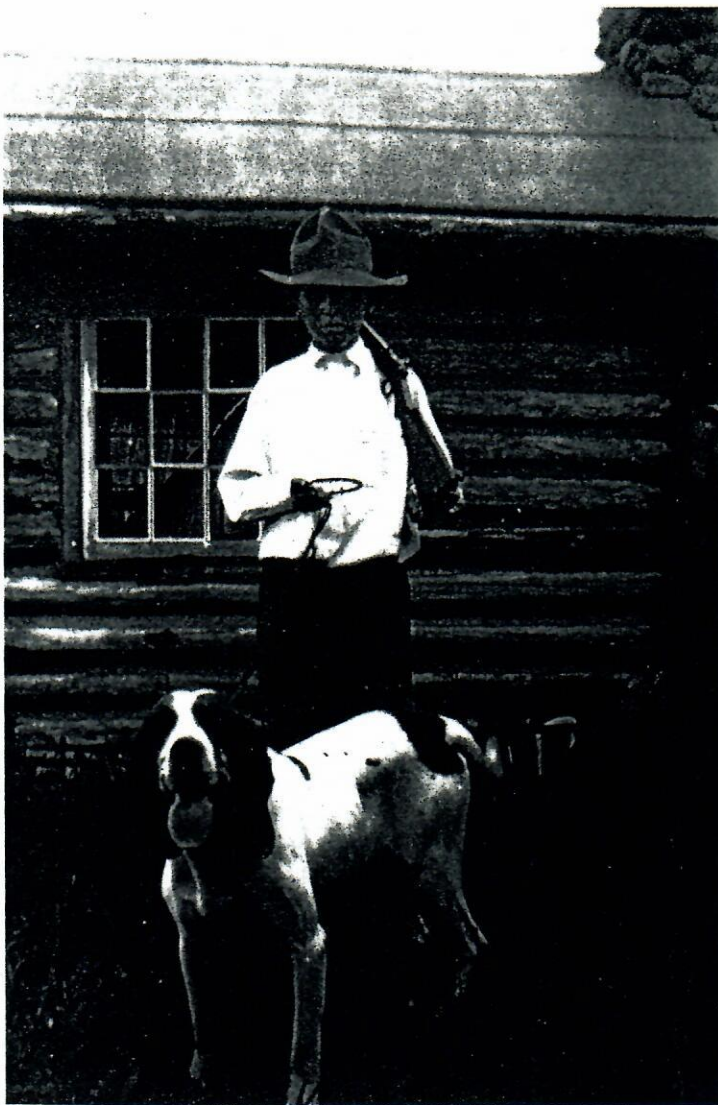
bility of building a cabin. His father, Norris Hubbard, told him he could probably build a cabin 12 feet by 16 feet. He also suggested they build it over the boundary on his land so that it could remain for the Scouts. The boys picked the highest point on the edge of a ledge to build it.

The rest of 1927 and most of 1928 were spent cutting and burning the brush on this twenty-five acres of land. During the two weeks vacation at Christmas, the boys had a continuous brush fire going the whole time, camping out at night by the fire.

Next came the job of building the cabin. We cut four large red cedar trees, about 12 inches in diameter at the butt end. Two were cut 18 feet long; two were cut 14 feet long. Six inches from each end of the eighteen-footers, a notch was cut. The fourteen-footers were notched six inches from each end to match the notches in the longer ones. Now we had our sill laid for our twelve-by-sixteen cabin.

Then we laid out the rest of the plan: a four-foot fire place in the center of the north end; a window large enough for a twelve-light sash in the middle of the south end; two same size windows on the west side; one window and a three-foot door on the east side. These were marked by vertical eight-foot two-by-

fours. Logs were placed between uprights with the four corners being notched. Logs were fitted with ends reversed, that is, if the butt was to the south, the log above was butt to north. Openings were left for the fireplace and door. After reaching three feet up the sides, the window openings were left open. All logs ending at two-by-fours were spiked to the two-by-fours.



GKS COLLECTION

FIG. 61
The Scout Cabin. This Boy Scout is probably twelve-year-old Reeves Spencer, who built the fireplace and chimney.



GKS COLLECTION

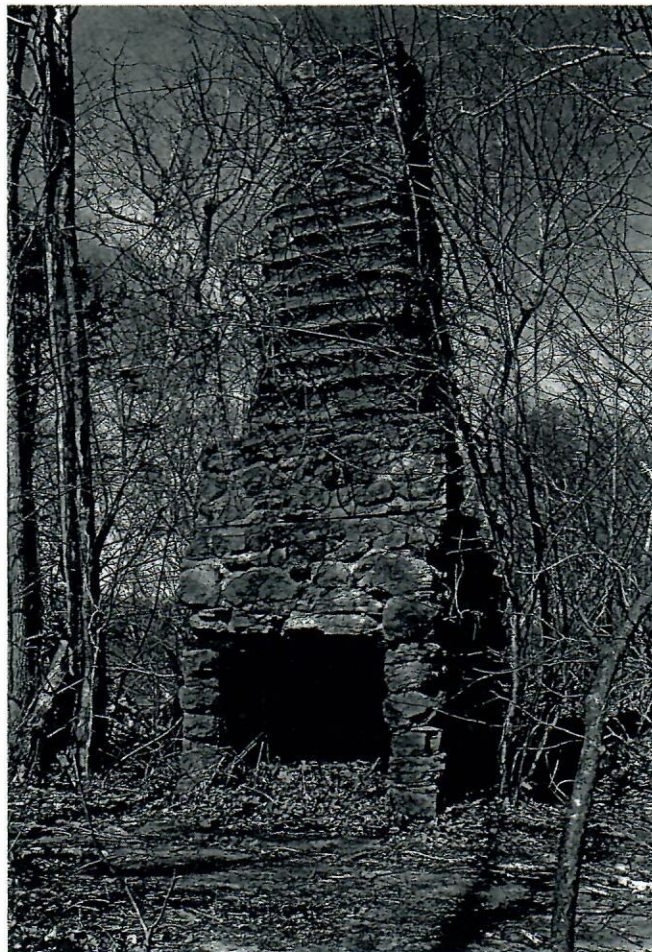
FIG. 62

The suspension bridge to the Scout Cabin.

POSTSCRIPT

The cabin was built by all the Scouts of Troop 1, Guilford. [FIG. 61] One of these was Reeves Spencer, another was Norman Spencer. Reeves' uncle's horse and wagon were used to cart cement from the sandpit across the street. Later the Scouts went on to build a suspension bridge across a ravine to the south of the cabin. Cables from the old abandoned shoreline trolley were used to support the walkway. [FIG. 62] This cabin stood until the mid-1980s, south of the tavern. At that time it was burned down. No one knows who burned the cabin. [FIG. 63]

—Editor



HEATHER GALLI

FIG. 63

The cabin burned down c. 1985, but the fireplace and chimney stonework still stand.



Guilford Boy Scout Cabin Ruins — January 12, 2013



Cross anchor for one end of suspension bridge

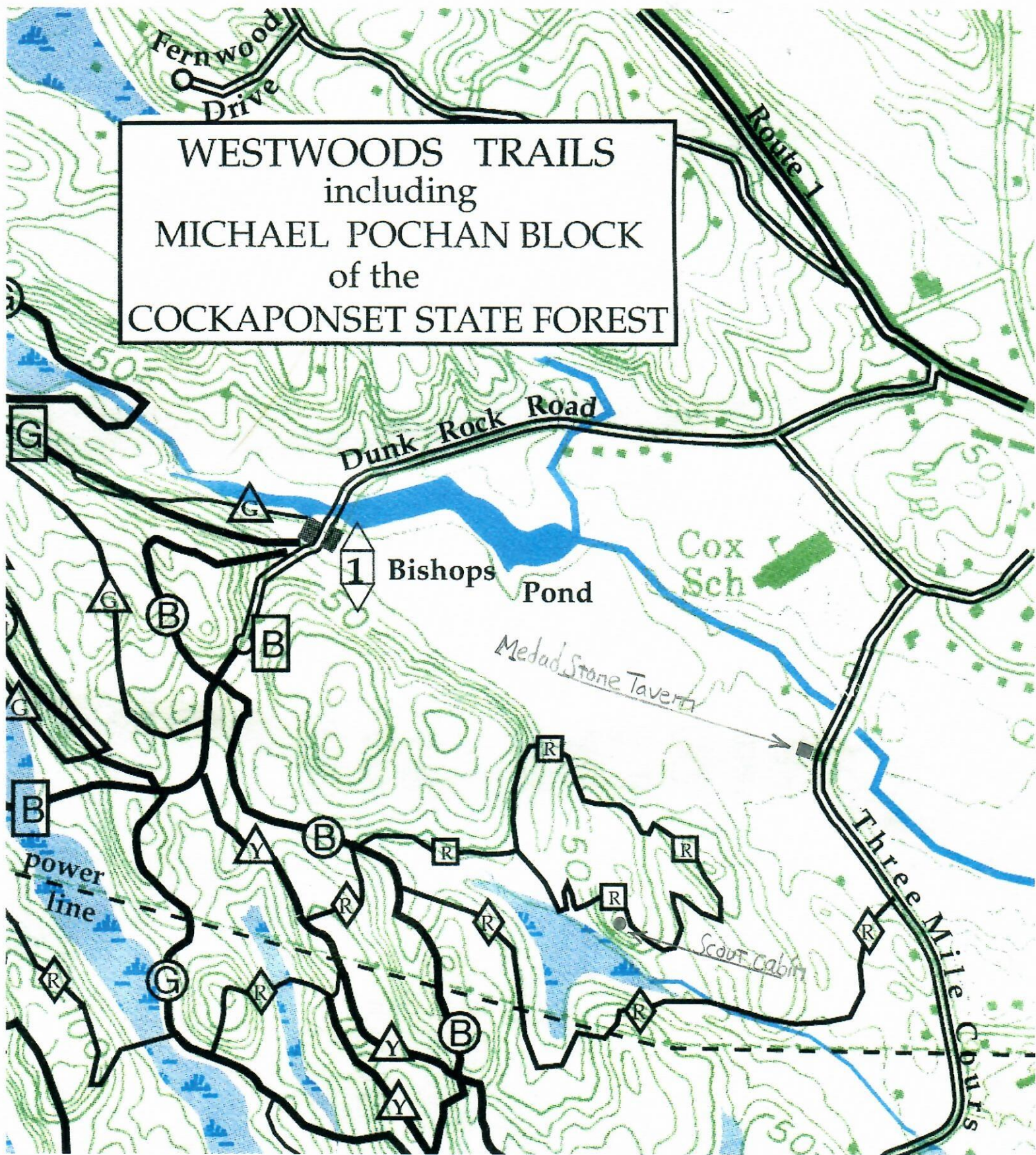
January 6, 2013



Sycamore - holly - mistletoe - cedar - and other - Chocoma Trail.

Jan. 10, 1911. J. T. ...

WESTWOODS TRAILS
including
MICHAEL POCHAN BLOCK
of the
COCKAPONSET STATE FOREST



(No Scale)