

MUSEUM DISCOVERIES

The Raven Knob Boy Scout Museum is operated by the Old Hickory Council, BSA/ Camp Raven Knob Historical Association.

Bruce and Marilou Bradley, Gray Martin and Ken Badgett spent parts of two days in late June on an interesting - albeit much too brief - research trip to Richmond, Virginia, in search of what remains in that city of the life of Roy Catesby Flannagan, who became the first Scout Executive in the Old Hickory Council (then known as the Winston-Salem Council) in 1919. As a matter of course, the first stop on the visit had to be the historic Hollywood Cemetery in which the literal remains of Roy Flannagan are at rest beside those of his wife and parents and thousands of other Virginians including Presidents James Monroe and John Tyler, Confederate Generals George Pickett and J. E. B. Stuart, and writers Ellen Glasgow and James B. Cabell. If eternal resting places can be ranked by solemn natural beauty, this "Camp Rigor Mortis" is bound to be near the top. However, if the heat and humidity of early summer and the smell of cedar and magnolia had been slightly more intense, several members of the visiting group might have been able to spend more time with Mr. Flannagan than they had originally planned!

After locating Roy Flannagan's grave, the researchers located what they believe to have been his boyhood home on tree-lined Grove Avenue, just west of downtown Richmond in the vicinity of Virginia Commonwealth University. Many of the Victorian-era row houses along the avenue have been or are being restored; minus the BMW's, Audi's and Ford Expeditions and plus some horse manure and coal smoke, one would almost be able to get some sense of Flannagan's childhood days.

The Virginia Historical Society was the most useful and exciting stop of the visit. The Society houses hundreds of thousands of documents related to the history of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including five boxes of papers concerning our own Roy Flannagan. There was little expectation of finding any material from Flannagan's brief career with the Boy Scouts of America. The successful year that he spent in Winston-Salem as a Scout Executive was a brief episode in his life that included more than thirty years as a newspaper reporter for the *Richmond News Leader*, recognition as a minor novelist during Richmond's heyday as the center of the South's literary culture, work as a political advisor to Virginia Governor Harry Flood Byrd, and service in active or reserve military units during and between World Wars I & II.

As was expected, the vast majority of Flannagan's papers consist of draft copies of his novels, letters to and from authors such as Sherwood Anderson and Margaret Mitchell, clippings of newspaper articles and records of his military service. Modest expectations led to considerable pleasure when folders containing letters from his old friends, namely Alfred S. "Mac" Macfarlane and William E. "Skipper" Vaughan-Lloyd, in Winston-Salem were found. Of greater interest was the discovery of an unpublished, autobiographical monograph that describes Flannagan's early experiences as a Boy Scout in Richmond.

Through reading Flannagan's boyhood memories, the researchers found themselves back near the James River where their visit began. The Hollywood Cemetery, in which Roy Flannagan is buried, overlooks the rocky falls of the James River where he spent many childhood days with his friends exploring the river's banks, looking for good swimming holes and fishing.

If you have questions, need information or want to make suggestions, please contact Ken Badgett, Association Historian, by e-mail at sckbadgett@surry.net or via regular mail at 884 Rockford Road; Dobson, North Carolina 27017.