

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island: “Shaping Girls into Extraordinary Women”

The Honors Program
Senior Capstone Project
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ABSTRACT

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island: “Shaping Girls into Extraordinary Women” is a documentary film that tells the story of 18 women who were Girl Scouts of Rhode Island during the 1930s through the 1990s. The purpose of this film is to share with others the profound impact the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island has had in modeling these women into the phenomenal individuals they are today. These women were interviewed at various venues including the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island Council Office, Camp Hoffman, and one residence. The primary research methodology used was the collection of interview tapes. In addition, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island website and several books were used to produce this film. The results indicated that while each story was unique, many of their experiences revealed a common theme: how the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island shapes girls into extraordinary women.

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INTRODUCTION

This documentary was created in celebration of 95 years of Girl Scouting. It grew out of a partnership with the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island and Professor Judy Barrett Litoff’s American Women’s history class at Bryant University. During the 2007 Spring Semester, 10 Bryant University Honors students partnered with current Girl Scouts and conducted a series of oral history interviews with women who were Girl Scouts during the 1930s through the 1990s. From April 17 through April 25, 18 women were interviewed at various venues including the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island Council Office, Camp Hoffman, and one residence. The interviews lasted approximately one hour during which a series of questions regarding their Girl Scouting experiences were asked by Bryant Honors students, current Girl Scouts, and members of the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island staff. The interviews were conducted with the intention of creating a documentary film in celebration of 95 years of Girl Scouting. The participants were informed that in addition to the production of a film, the interviews were also a part of an oral history project for an American Women’s History Honors course at Bryant University.

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island: A Brief History

Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Scouts in Savannah, Georgia in 1912. An eccentric and forward thinking woman, Gordon-Low was first intrigued by the idea of Scouting in 1911. General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, one of Gordon-Low’s closest acquaintances, founded the Boy Scout Movement in 1908. Years later, when six thousand young girls registered to join the Boy Scouts, Baden-Powell’s sister, Agnes, initiated the establishment of the Girl Guides. Gordon-Low took an active interest in the Girl Guides in 1911 and began establishing Girl Guide troops in London. In 1912, she came to the United States to set up a Girl Guide program in Savannah, Georgia. A very excited Gordon-Low announced to a distant cousin, “I’ve got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!” In the United States, the Girl Guide program grew successfully, and in 1913, the program was renamed the Girl Scouts. The organization truly began to flourish after the United States entered World War I. Girl Scout headquarters sent a telegram to President Woodrow Wilson offering their services in the war effort. The Girl

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Scouts participated in a number of efforts including assisting the Red Cross, relieving nurses, acting as messengers, and selling millions of Liberty Bonds. As a result of their dedicated service, the Girl Scouts became a widely recognized organization, with troops established nationwide (Lyon, 2-4). The Girl Scout Organization is responsible for providing girls with opportunities that were once considered unacceptable. In “Juliette Low: The Eccentric Who Founded the Girl Scouts,” Nancy Lyon describes some of the many opportunities young girls were introduced to upon joining the Girl Scouts:

“The activities of the Girl Scouts were considered radical in 1912 when the organization was founded: the girls dared to wear bloomers, go on two week camping trips, and be concerned about ecology and natural foods. They worked to earn badges in electrical work, farming, interpreting, and telegraphy. The requirements of which ranged from learning to fly an airplane to killing and dressing poultry. And they followed a no-nonsense handbook filled with practical information on gardening, knot-tying, astronomy, direction-finding, and career opportunities” (Lyon, 1).

In 1914, the first two Girl Scout troops were formed in Rhode Island. These troops held their meetings at the Darlington Congregational Church in Pawtucket and in just a few years, troops were established in Providence, Woonsocket, Barrington, and Westerly. The Red Rose troop of Newport was the first troop to officially register with the national Girl Scout organization. In 1919, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island was chartered by the National Girl Scout Organization and held legally responsible for coordinating local events, training leaders, and organizing troops. In 1920, the Commissioner of the Rhode Island Girl Scout Council, Mrs. William Hoffman of Barrington, developed the first residential camp on Prudence Island. One year later, a permanent campsite was purchased in West Kingston and named Camp Hoffman. Throughout the years, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island has acquired a significant amount of property, and today the organization owns 6 beautiful campsites including Cookie, Hoffman, Narrow River, Nokewa, Promising Acres, and Rocky Farm. In 1962, 9 Rhode Island Councils united to form a statewide organization, and it was then that Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Incorporated was officially established. Since 1975, the Girl

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Scouts of Rhode Island has been headquartered in the historic Canal House located on Charles Street in Providence (“About Us,” [Girl Scouts of Rhode Island](#)).

Documentary Themes

After watching approximately 35 hours of interview tapes, several themes began to unfold. While camping, earning badges, and wearing uniforms are all important Girl Scout traditions, a deeper, more meaningful message seemed to emerge. Perhaps it was the thoughtful way the women described their experiences that unveiled their true gratitude for this preeminent organization. Each woman told a very special and unique story. At the same time, their stories also seemed to blend in a harmonizing way. They all had very fond memories of their Scouting experiences and they all attributed at least some of their lifetime success to Girl Scouting. The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, in some way, impacted the lives of all of these women and their stories gave life to the theme of this documentary: how the Girl Scout organization shapes girls into the extraordinary women they will become.

A universal element of Girl Scouting is the importance of friendship. The Girl Scouts provides a nurturing environment where all girls are accepted and encouraged to express themselves freely without fear of judgment. From the time they are Brownies, young girls discover a universal support system and experience the strong bonds of sisterhood. Margaret Richmond, an interview participant who was a Girl Scout in the 1960s said, “I’ve made some really, really good friends, lifelong friends, and even in places where I didn’t think there would be a friendship...I’ve had a chance to work with any number of young ladies... and because of Girl Scouts I can say that I have friends all over the world” (Richmond, M. Personal interview, 21 April 2007). The Girl Scouts fosters the development of young girls through activities such as camping and selling cookies which encourages interaction and teambuilding among peers. It is through these interactions that girls learn the skills necessary to build social networks.

Several of these women still remain actively involved in Girl Scouting today. For those who are not directly involved now, their Scouting experiences remain close to their hearts – a theme evident in every interview. The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island took an active role in

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fostering their development and helping them to become strong, confident, and capable women. Marcia Tierney, a Girl Scout in the 1960s, admitted that her experiences in Scouting helped to prepare her for a career in education more than her 4 year college program (Tierney, M. Personal interview, 17 April 2007). The lessons learned through Girl Scouting are invaluable, and the memories are irreplaceable. Each woman takes pride in her involvement, and expresses true gratitude for the organization that has helped shape her life. Betty Cugini humbly states, “Girl Scouts was a wonderful thing to be able to join and it gave us wonderful experiences...and I say at this point in my life I will never live long enough to do for Girl Scouts, what Girl Scouts have done for me” (Cugini, B. Personal Interview, 25 April 2007).

Today’s Girl Scouts of Rhode Island

Today, there are 315 Girl Scout councils in the United States, including Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Incorporated. The Rhode Island council invites girls from all over Rhode Island; Pawcatuck; Connecticut; and Bellingham, Blackstone, Attleboro, Fall River, North Attleboro, Plainville, Somerset, Swansea, Westport, Wrentham, Millville, Rehoboth, and Seekonk, Massachusetts to participate in Girl Scouting (“About Us,” [Girl Scouts of Rhode Island](#)). Much has changed since the Girl Scout Movement was initiated 95 years ago. Juliette Gordon-Low created the Girl Scouts due to limited opportunities and today, young girls are presented with an array of options including access to education, athletics, and activities of all kinds.

When many of these women were young girls, Girl Scouting was their only activity and because of this, Scouting was a meaningful part of their lives. As a result of the many exciting possibilities which exist for today’s female youth, Girl Scouting is not necessarily the only way for girls to learn life skills. Now, as there are many more ways for girls to become involved, they are often faced with a great deal of outside pressure. Girls are expected to everything and they are frequently left with the responsibility of balancing multiple activities. Doing well in school, becoming an all-star basketball player, and attending weekly piano lessons are a few examples of societal expectations for young girls. It is important for girls and young women to actively participate in such activities because it allows them to explore

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new paths and express their ideas; something that was extremely rare in 1912. While this is true, participating in an organization, such as the Girl Scouts, allows girls to experience true female camaraderie. Girl Scouting not only provides females with the ability to expand their horizons and build confidence, but it also reflects the power of girls together. This power can create a force strong enough to change the world. Ways in which women can come together to share their experiences, such as camping, selling cookies, and singing songs, encourages female empowerment.

In 2006, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Incorporated consisted of 758 troops. These troops included 12,212 girls, ages 5 through 17, and 2,994 adults from 45 surrounding communities. In 2007, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island invited new communities to join their jurisdiction which allowed them to serve even more girls (“About Us,” [Girl Scouts of Rhode Island](#)). The Girl Scouts continues to be a wonderful organization for girls to join in order to develop a voice of their own. It remains a safe place for girls to form friendships, and to perhaps find relief from outside pressures. This organization has provided a network of support and encouragement for generations of women. Looking forward, the Girl Scouts will continue to be the place where girls grow strong.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Protocol: Questions for Girl Scouts Oral History

Welcome. Thank you for your time and agreeing to participate in this interview.

Introduce yourself and explain the reason for the interview and the purpose for the research. Explain that the interview is informal and promise the participant to contact her regarding the release of quotations. Explain that the interview will take approximately one hour.

When and where were you a Girl Scout? (Approximate dates, years, during what historical era)

When and why did you leave Girl Scouting?

What roles have you played with respect to the Girl Scouts? Have you been a troop leader, a board member, a supporter in some other way?

Is there a history of women in your family being involved in Girl Scouting?

How did you get into Girl Scouting? (Friends, mother/father urging, interest in activities?)

Did you remember the Girl Scout Promise?

What was your troop like? Name of leader, site of meetings, size of group, were the girls also your school friends?

What were some typical rules for girls? Did Scouting allow you to “break” some of those rules?

Do you remember working for badges? Which ones? Which were you the proudest of?

Did you go to camp? Which one? What did you learn? What was that like? Do you have special memories of Camp Hoffman?

Do you remember the uniform? What was it like? Do you remember liking it? (Film uniform if it was brought as part of memorabilia).

Do you remember selling cookies? Did you enjoy that? How did you sell cookies? Do you have any special memories about this?

Do you have any Scouting memorabilia? Can you show that to us?

Can you tell me about ceremonies, rituals and other aspects of membership like badges, patches, swap meets, flag ceremonies; bridging ceremonies, wish circles, etc.?

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Do you remember any songs that you sang? If yes, would like to sing the song?

What challenges do you think face girls today that didn't confront you growing up?

What challenges do you think you faced as a girl that girls today do not?

What opportunities do girls have now that you were denied when you were a girl?

What impression or impact do you think Scouting made on you?

How do you think Scouting modeled you into the woman you've become?

What would you like to talk about that we haven't discussed?

Thank the participant.

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Appendix B – Documentary Outline & Narration

Chapters:

1. Introduction
2. The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island – Timeline
3. Unconventional Experiences
4. Girl Scout Cookies: A Timeless Tradition
5. Building Courage, Confidence & Character
6. Friendships to Last a Lifetime
7. United in Song
8. The Woman I am Today
9. Looking Forward: Today’s Girl Scouts
10. Conclusion

Chapter Three: *Unconventional Experiences*

2) Mary Lafferty 1930s, 40s, 50s

International Round-Up Experience in Brazil **37:01 – 37:26 (1), 39:00 – 39:48 (2)**

“When it came to confidence I think the trip to Brazil strengthened that (meeting the governor and go on the radio) it was a challenge” **4:59 – 5:10 (3)**

6) Lynda Palmer 1950s and 60s

Wing Scout as a Senior Girl Scout, Aviation Experience - talks about her troop meetings in the terminal; her sponsor who took the troop all over in her plane... “It was 1961 and there weren’t that many women that were involved in Aviation at the time and it was a great opportunity for all of us” **4:58 – 7:02 (1)**

11) Marcia Tierney 1960s

Marcia talks about her experiences at the International Roundup in Idaho **(1)**

3) Betty Cugini 1930s and 40s

Discussing her experiences on the Board/President of Council/Traveling to various Conventions and around the world **9:17 – 11:17 (2)**

Chapter Four: *Girl Scout Cookies: A Timeless Tradition*

1) Babs Wallace 1930s

Girl Scout – “Was selling cookies always a big part of Girl Scouting for you?”

Babs’ experiences selling cookies **20:42 – 22:23 (1)**

(This shows interaction with young Girl Scout)

4) Freda Lehrer 1950s

“Girl Scout cookies – what I remember selling them as a girl they sold for 35 cents a box and you only went to people you knew – so I went to the neighbors that I knew, friends and

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relatives – most exciting time was when a neighbor bought 10 boxes... thin mints were still the cookie of the day even back then” **13:33 – 14:00 (3)**

13) Sheryl Rennick 1970s, 80s
Sheryl’s experiences selling cookies as a girl **12:34 – 12:42 (1)**

Chapter Five: *Building Courage, Confidence & Character*

5) Pauline Renaud 1950s
“Being a Girl Scout gives you the confidence to apply yourself... it taught you to be self confident and it taught you to expect more of yourself” **33:25 – 33:44 (2)**

8) Maureen Souza 1950s, 60s
“I think confidence that is based on actual accomplishment, not just this self esteem movement that children are good no matter what you do...from my experience in Brownies, in Girl Scouting and as a Camp Counselor, your worth is always determined by what you are willing to struggle with, and what you’re willing to actually accomplish, not necessarily winning but taking it on, and trying it, and doing it, and being able to say I did that right, I didn’t do that right, what true worth is - and with that does come confidence.” **31:29 – 32:22 (1)**

5a) Pat Rivard 1950s
“It’s made me feel better about myself and the people around me... it has taught me how to be a young women right from the get-go... you learn to be proud of yourself and if you’re proud of yourself you can do anything” **22:42 – 22:59 (1)**

14) Maryanne Clark 1970s
I think Girl Scouting does a lot of things - it teaches you about team building, working with other peers which I think is critical, no matter what type of background you come from you learn about all types of people – Girl Scouting isn’t for just one type of girl, its for everybody - Just that in itself is something that opens people’s eyes to what else is out there: different religions, different ethnic backgrounds - to be able to get along with all different personalities - you just learn to adapt and accept and I think that is pretty critical” **16:29 – 17:08 (2)**

9) Margaret Richmond 1960s
“Girl Scouts encouraged me to step beyond my illness – I had always been told what I couldn’t do, Girl Scouting told me what I could do” **22:19 – 22:42 (1)**

Chapter Six: *Friendships to Last a Lifetime*

4) Freda Lehrer 1950s
“My fondest memories of Girl Scouting have to do with friendships, absolutely has to do with friendships, and it’s the song “make new friends and keep the old” and that is exactly what Girl Scouts has done... I have friends that I’ve had forever and new friends because I do a lot

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of outdoor camping courses for the Scouts and so you make new friends every time you’re training new leaders.” **11:36 – 12:00 (2)**

1) Babs Wallace 1930s

I have so many good friends... so many people that are really close friends...” **34:34 – 34:44 (2)**

7) Donna Schmader 1950s, 60s

“I think it gave me a bond with other women, I think it allowed me to form friendships with other women in group settings” **22:52 – 23:01 (2)**

16) Judy Barrett Litoff and Kathryn Karlsson - Leaders in late 1970s and 80s

Reminiscing about how they met to form a troop for their daughters and have been very close friends since

12) Louise Moore and daughter Melissa 1960s

“I think as a whole it brought us closer together... she taught me everything I needed to know about everything” **37:16 – 37:33 (1)**

9) Margaret Richmond 1960s

“I’ve made some really, really good friends, lifelong friends, and even in places where I didn’t think there would be a friendship...I’ve had a chance to work with any number of young ladies... there is such a richness about Girl Scouts... because of Girl scouts I can say that I have friends all over the world” **24:53 – 25:58 (2)**

Chapter Seven: *United in Song*

4) Freda Lehrer 1950s

Singing a canoe song **5:19 – 5:37 (1)**

9) Margaret Richmond 1960s

Singing one of her most memorable songs **26:14 – 26:38 (3)**

10) Cindy Rollins 1960s

Singing “Barges” **20:17 – 20: 51 (2)**

16) Judy Barrett Litoff & Kathryn Karlsson - Leaders in last 1970s and 80s

Singing the Donut song **25:25 – 26:17 (2)**

12) Louise Moore and daughter Melissa 1960s – 90s

Singing “Make New Friends but Keep the Old” **36:08 – 36:28 (2)**

Chapter Nine: *The Woman I am Today*

3) Betty Cugini

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“Girl Scouts was a wonderful thing to be able to join and it gave us wonderful experiences... and I think and I say at this point in my life I will never live long enough to do for Girl Scouts, what Girl Scout have done for me” **3:30 – 3:45 (1)**

5) Pauline Renaud 1950s

“I think it made me a more independent person, it made me a survivor, and I think I’m pretty much able to handle anything that’s thrown at me” **28:11 – 28:20 (1)**

7) Donna Schmader 1950s, 60s

“I think Girl Scouts opened the door a bit especially going to the UN and studying other countries and other cultures I think that helped us to realize that there were other ways of life... I think that Rose being a drama therapist helped us to see outside the box and learn to think for ourselves... is not to just accept everything but to learn to think and reason” **17:10 – 17:43 (1)**

11) Marcia Tierney 1960s

Marcia says, “I think I learned more about working with kids in Scouts than I did in college” – shows nice interaction with young Girl Scout **23:08 (2)**

10) Cindy Rollins 1960s

“Self assurance, the realization that I can do certain things and recognize my value as a human being, as a person, as a woman” **26:07 – 26:25 (1)**

16) Judy Barrett Litoff and Kathryn Karlsson Leaders in late 1970s and 80s

“I think the woman that I am there are many more influential things than Girl Scouting, but being a Girl Scout leader allowed me to continue to do what I do professionally... for me that was really important that I connected what being a Girl Scout leader with what I do professionally” **58:03 – 58:26 (3)**

15) Christine Roy 1980s

“I think it has had a positive impact... I don’t think I’d be where I am today without it... It definitely taught me to go for what I want and to jump into things” **27:50 – 28:14 (1)**

Chapter Nine: *Looking Forward: Today’s Girl Scouts*

14) Maryanne Clark 1970s

“I think Girl Scouting always promoted opportunities – there was always ways to get involved and it’s still like that...It’s incredible all the things they can get involved in – they encourage girls to learn not only the things that girls are typically good at (woman’s type roles)...They encourage girls to be everything – Bryant University has that great activity called SMART... there’s a lot more opportunity for girls to get involved and Girl Scouting is a good way to open your eyes to all those opportunities” **17:18 – 18:13 (1)**

16) Judy Barrett Litoff and Kathryn Karlsson - Leaders in the 1970s and 80s

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“Young girls have so many more options today than they had, even in the late 70s and early 80s... Girl Scouting was founded because there were limited options for people like my mother, but today these girls have so many options – For Girl Scouts to be a viable organization it has to have its own area like going into inner city schools, working with less fortunate girls and giving middle class girls the opportunity to do that is very exciting...”

Chapter Ten: *Conclusion*

2) Mary Lafferty

“It keeps me young you know at 87 anything that keeps you young is a blessing and I count my blessings” **19:45 – 19:55 (4)**

Interview Participants:

1. Babs Wallace (2)
2. Mary Lafferty (2)
3. Betty Cugini (2)
4. Freda Lehrer (3)
5. Pauline Renaud (2)
- 5a. Pat Rivard (1)
6. Lynda Palmer (1)
7. Donna Schmader (2)
8. Maureen Souza (1)
9. Margaret Richmond (3)
10. Cindy Rollins (2)
11. Marcia Tierney (2)
12. Louise and Melissa Moore (2)
13. Sheryl Rennick (1)
14. Maryanne Clark (2)
15. Christine Roy (1)
16. Judy Barrett Litoff and Kathryn Karlsson (3)

Narration:

Chapter One: *Introduction*

This documentary was created in celebration of 95 years of Girl Scouting. It grew out of a partnership with the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island and Professor Judy Barrett Litoff’s American Women’s history class at Bryant University. During the 2007 Spring Semester, 10 Bryant University Honors students partnered with current Girl Scouts and conducted a series of interviews with women who were Girl Scouts during the 1930s through the 1990s. 18 women were interviewed at various venues including the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island Council Office

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and Camp Hoffman. The remarkable stories of each woman uncover a common theme how the Girl Scout Organization models girls into extraordinary women.

Chapter Two: *The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island*

In 1912, a forward thinking woman, Juliette Gordon Low, founded the Girl Scouts in Savannah, Georgia. This organization has played an influential role in building courage, confidence, and character in girls for nearly a century. In 1914, the first Girl Scout troops were formed in Rhode Island. In just a few, short years, troops were established in great numbers. In 1919, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island was chartered by the National Girl Scout Organization and held legally responsible for coordinating local events, training leaders, and organizing troops. In 1920, the Commissioner of the Rhode Island Girl Scout Council, Mrs. William Hoffman of Barrington, developed the first residential camp on Prudence Island. One year later, a permanent campsite was purchased in West Kingston and named Camp Hoffman. Throughout the years, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island has acquired a significant amount of property, and today the organization owns six beautiful campsites including Cookie, Hoffman, Narrow River, Nokewa, Promising Acres, and Rocky Farm. In 1962, nine Rhode Island Councils united to form a statewide organization, and it was then that Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, Incorporated was officially established. Since 1975, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island has been headquartered in the historic Canal House located on Charles Street in Providence.

Chapter Three: *Unconventional Experiences*

Throughout its history the Girl Scouts has provided opportunities for young girls to expand their horizons and break away from traditional gender roles.

Mary – International Experience in Brazil

In 1954, Mary Laferty represented the Girl Scouts at an International Girl Scout Conference in Brazil, an honor that few members have experienced.

Lynda – Aviation Program

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During the early 1960s, Lynda Palmer became one of the few women to challenge conventional gender norms by learning how to fly an airplane as a Wing Scout in the Aviation Program.

Marcia Tierney – Roundup in Idaho

Marcia Tierney, following a rigorous selection process, attended the fourth Girl Scout Senior Roundup in Idaho in 1965. She represented 1 of 9000 young women from around the world who united to embrace the theme: “On the Trail to Tomorrow.”

Betty Cugini – On the Board/Council

Betty Cugini demonstrated proficient leadership skills as President of the Rhode Island Girl Scout Council during the 1980s.

Chapter Four: Girl Scout Cookies: A Timeless Tradition

In 1917, the first Girl Scout cookies were baked in the homes of Girl Scouts with the assistance of their mothers. These simple sugar cookies were packaged in wax, and sold door to door for 25 to 35 cents per dozen. Beginning in 1930, cookies were baked in the form of the symbolic Girl Scout Trefoil. “Cooky Mints,” an early version of today’s popular Thin Mints, were introduced in 1939. By the mid 1950s, Girl Scout cookies were baked in a number of varieties including Short Bread, Chocolate Mint, and Chocolate and Vanilla Sandwich cookies. This timeless tradition gives young girls the opportunity to practice life skills such as goal setting, teamwork, and money management. Today, selling cookies remains an important part of Girl Scouting.

Chapter Five: Building Courage, Confidence & Character

Through activities such as camping, earning badges, and selling cookies, young girls build courage, confidence, and character for real world success. In an environment that fosters the development of leadership, strong values, social conscience, and self worth, girls learn to be independent individuals from a young age.

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Chapter Six: *Friendships to Last a Lifetime*

The Girl Scouts provides a nurturing environment where all girls are accepted and encouraged to express themselves freely without fear of judgment. From the time they are Brownies; young girls discover a universal support system and experience the strong bonds of sisterhood. Friendships made through Girl Scouting are those that last a lifetime.

Chapter Seven: *United in Song*

Girl Scouts are united through songs that have been passed along for nearly 100 years. Singing is an enjoyable tradition and represents a strong sense of camaraderie among Girl Scouts.

Chapter Eight: *The Woman I am Today*

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island has had a lasting impact on the lives of all of these women. While some are not directly involved in Girl Scouting today, their Scouting experiences remain close to their hearts. They take pride in their involvement, and express true gratitude for the organization that has helped model them into the phenomenal women that they are today.

Chapter Nine: *Looking Forward: Today’s Girl Scouts*

Today, young girls are presented with an unlimited amount of opportunities including access to education, athletics, and activities of all kinds. These opportunities, while integral to the development of strong women; often carry an immense pressure for girls to do more, and to be more. The expectation to do everything and the responsibility of balancing multiple activities presents new challenges for today’s girls. The Girl Scouts remains a safe place for girls to form friendships, and to perhaps find relief from outside pressures. This organization has provided a network of support and encouragement for generations of women. Looking forward, the Girl Scouts will continue to be the place where girls grow strong.

Chapter Ten: *Conclusion*

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From a group of 18 girls, this preeminent organization, dedicated solely to girls, has grown to nearly 4 million members in the United States. Girl Scouts is the largest educational organization for girls in the world. It has contributed to the development of more than 50 million girls and women since 1912.

At 87 years old, Mary Laferty remains passionate and energetic about the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island. It is her love of the Girl Scouts that keeps her young at heart.

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