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In This Issue:

*The Rediscovered 20th Century Boy Scout Dust Jacket Artwork**of New Jersey Pulp Artist Chris Schaare*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14713/njs.v9i2.335>

Christian Richard “Dick” Schaare Jr. (pronounced Shar) was arguably New Jersey’s most prolific and perhaps greatest pulp artist of the 20th century. His iconic artwork would grace hundreds of book covers, dust jackets, comic books, magazines, cigar boxes, calendars, milk cartons, and advertisements for more than 40 years from the 1920s to the 1960s.¹ His pulp fiction artwork is well-known except for 18 dust jackets commissioned by the A. L. Burt Company for their Boy Scout fiction series books published in the mid to late 1920s. That he illustrated these dust jackets, brimming with action, adventure, and drama, has been largely forgotten by time, but they highlight his iconic pulp fiction style early in his career.

***The Boy Scouts in the Rockies* (1913) by Herbert Carter and *The Boy Scouts Under Fire in Mexico* (1914) by Lieut. Howard Payson with the dust jacket art of Chris Schaare. From the author’s private collection.**



¹ David Saunders, “Field Guide to Wild American Pulp Artists: Chris Schaare,” accessed on November 4, 2022, <https://www.pulpartists.com/Schaare.html>.

Chris Schaare (Dick to his friends and business associates and Chris to his wife Evelyn) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 5, 1893.² His parents, Christian and Mary, were German immigrants and had four children; Chris was the second born. Sometime around the turn of the century his father found a job as a waiter at a New Jersey hotel and the family moved to 415 Hill Street in West Hoboken. In 1905 at the age of 12, Schaare left school to help provide for his family and began working at a local brass factory where he was trained as an engraver's assistant.³ He apparently went back to school a few years later, but would again drop out, this time from high school, in what would certainly be an important turning point in his life and his career pathway. In a 1972 newspaper article, Schaare would remember:

I dropped out of high school to go to Industrial Arts School in New York City as a kid. My dad didn't believe I could make a living as an artist and tried to talk me out of it. Finally he took me to a very well known artist, Charles Schrivogel [sic. Schreyvogel], for his opinion. He said 'the boy does alright, let him go on.'⁴



Chris Schaare through the ages. Circa 1915 (left), circa 1925 (center), and 1972 (right). Reprinted with permission of the Schaare family (left and center); *Evening Independent*, 1972 (right).

² Betty Jean Miller, "He Illustrates, Innovates," *Evening Independent*, December 21, 1972.

³ Saunders, "Field Guide to Wild American Pulp Artists: Chris Schaare."

⁴ Miller, "He Illustrates, Innovates."

It was probably quite fortuitous that Schaare's father took him to meet Charles Schreyvogel (1861–1912). Schreyvogel was an exceptionally well-known Hoboken, New Jersey, painter, specializing in western scenes. His validation of the young artist's abilities must have been important and influential. Schreyvogel would carry the mantle as the premier artist of western themes after Frederic Remington died in 1909.⁵

In 1917, at 24 years old, Schaare was living at 715 Fifth Street in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, and was employed as a sketch artist by Bashbach Advertising Company in New York City. He joined the Army that same year and served in France as an ammunition carrier. During his service he was exposed to gas on the battlefield and had lung issues for years.⁶ After the war, in 1920, he married Margaret Evelyn Licitra and they moved to a home in Lincoln Park, New Jersey. They had seven children: six boys and a girl.⁷

In 1925, his career as an artist soared and he began selling freelance pulp magazine covers to numerous magazines, continuing to illustrate pulp covers until 1940. His output was remarkably prolific with hundreds of illustrations gracing magazine and book covers for the next three decades. It was this early period in his career when he would also illustrate 18 Boy Scout dust jackets, but his credit for these has been largely forgotten or at least lost to time.

⁵ Charles (Carl) Schreyvogel, "Artist Biography & Facts," askArt, accessed on March 14, 2023, https://www.askart.com/artist/Charles_Carl_Schreyvogel/9313/Charles_Carl_Schreyvogel.aspx.

⁶ Personal Communication with Chris Schaare's daughter Darlene Schott, November 2022.

⁷ "Christian Schaare; writer, illustrator of children's books," *The Morning Call*, February 9, 1980.



Chris Schaare pulp magazine covers (left to right: December 1951, July 1930, October 1930, October 1930, November 1928, November 1935). *The Ring* reprinted with permission of Darlene Schott; the remainder retrieved from Pulp Covers (<https://pulpcovers.com>) with permission.

From 1932 to 1941, Schaare illustrated an incredible 82 covers for *The Ring* magazine, the premier boxing periodical of the period. He would continue to illustrate *The Ring* magazine covers sporadically until the 1950s. These boxing illustrations were so well-known that they were exhibited in the sports section at the 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair. Schaare also wrote and illustrated children’s books about the Wild West, all featuring his distinctive artwork style. For

these illustrations he was awarded a Eugene Field Society Award for outstanding contributions to contemporary literature.⁸ His *The Ring* illustrations would lead to a close personal friendship with Nat Fleischer, the magazine's publisher, and the opportunity to socialize with many world-famous boxers including Joe Louis and Jack Dempsey.⁹ From the late 1930s to the early 1940s he also was an artist for the comic book industry as a penciller and inker. His work appeared in Fawcett's *WOW Comics*, Holyoke's *Blue Beetle*, Continental's *Cat-Man* comics, and other titles.¹⁰

Despite his great artistic success, the book publishers paid a pittance for dust jacket and cover illustrations and Schaare had to supplement his income with other work.¹¹ In a 1972 newspaper interview, he said, "It's feast or famine as an artist—you know, either you are staying up until 2 a.m. to get your work finished, or you have one job in a week . . . Oh, I've done it all. You know you have to keep busy when you have seven children to support." To support his family, he worked during World War II as a night guard at the Picatinny U.S. Government Arsenal in Dover, New Jersey.¹² He also raised chickens and sold them in New York City on his way to art assignments and meetings there.¹³ After the war, until 1960 when he retired, he was employed as a packaging design artist for both American Can Company and Continental Can Company. In his role at the American Can Company he produced iconic advertising images, including the Sunoco logo and the Maxwell House Coffee "Good To The Last Drop" artwork.¹⁴ He also designed countless milk cartons and cigar box labels.¹⁵ After retiring, his artistic pursuits continued

⁸ "Christian Schaare; writer, illustrator of children's books," *The Morning Call*.

⁹ Saunders, "Field Guide to Wild American Pulp Artists: Chris Schaare."

¹⁰ "Pulpfest: 125 years of Chris Schaare," accessed on November 15, 2022, <https://pulpfest.com/2018/07/125-years-chris-schaare>.

¹¹ Personal Communication with Darlene Schott.

¹² Saunders, "Field Guide to Wild American Pulp Artists: Chris Schaare;" Personal Communication with Darlene Schott.

¹³ Personal Communication with Darlene Schott.

¹⁴ Saunders, "Field Guide to Wild American Pulp Artists: Chris Schaare."

¹⁵ Personal Communication with Darlene Schott.

unabated. He continued to paint pastoral scenes and portraits of friends for his own pleasure and invented a new multidimensional sculpture style of painting.



A multidimensional sculpture painting of the Greenstone United Methodist Church in Washington, New Jersey by Chris Schaare hanging in the church. The painting was donated by the Schaare family.

Schaare would relate how the discovery of his new painting technique came about in a 1972 interview, noting:

Then I was lying in bed one morning, “thinking there are thousands of artists. The trick is to develop a new technique.” I thought of the embossed cigar labels I used to design – this was way back in the early days – and I thought, “That’s it.” That’s when I developed this new technique of sculpture painting.¹⁶

¹⁶ Betty Jean Miller, “He Illustrates, Innovates,” *Evening Independent*, December 21, 1972.



The varied artwork of Chris Schaare. Reprinted with permission of the Schaare family.

It is largely unknown that Schaare illustrated 18 Boy Scout dust jackets for the A. L. Burt Company in the mid to late 1920s.¹⁷ Despite many dust jacket artists having highly successful artistic careers, it is not unusual that they received no credit for their dust jacket artwork that graced the covers of early unauthorized Boy Scout and other juvenile series books, and Chris Schaare is no exception.

Unfortunately, precise dating of the Schaare dust jackets is not possible. These reprinted editions, as is typical of many other early Boy Scout fiction series, only carry the original book publication date. Approximate dates, or at least a range, are garnered by clues including the publisher's address at the time, dated gift and other inscriptions inside the book, and books series noted on the inside, rear, and end flaps of the dust jacket. Based on these, the Schaare dust jackets are likely from the mid to late 1920s. The 18 dust jackets illustrated by Schaare were for two different Boy Scout series authored by Herbert Carter and Lieutenant Howard Payson. These books were fantastical fiction with no connection to the Boy Scouts of America. They were designed to capitalize on the incredible membership of the Boy Scout movement and sales were highly successful.¹⁸ As noted by Soderberg:

The floodgates flew open. Publishing companies rushed to place "Boy Scout" tales on the market. Some series ran to nineteen volumes. Authors dispatched fictional "scouts" to all corners of the world in search of thrills. The uniformed suberbos performed unearthly feats, ignored international boundaries, hobnobbed with royalty, advised statesmen, and behaved arrogantly under all circumstances. By 1914 more than five million "cheap books about Boy Scouts" had been purchased by young readers.¹⁹

¹⁷ E. Christian Mattson and Thomas B. Davis, *A Collector's Guide to Hardcover Boy's Series Books* (Newark, Delaware: Mad Book Company, 1997), 1–578.

¹⁸ Paul M. Holsinger, "A Bully Bunch of Books: Boy Scout Series Books in American Youth Fiction, 1910–1930," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1989): 178–182.

¹⁹ Peter A. Soderberg, "The Great Book War: Edward Stratemeyer and the Boy Scouts of America. 1910–1930," *New Jersey History* 91, no. 4 (1973): 235–48.

Between 1955 and 1958, Schaare also created the dust jackets and interior illustrations for the three-book series, *The Boy Scout Explorers*, written by Don Palmer and published by the Cupples & Leon Company. Unlike his earlier dust jacket artwork, the artistry of these three books is commonly attributed to him.²⁰

The 1920s Boy Scout dust jackets illustrated by Schaare evoke action, bravery, adventure, and drama and portray scouts in fantastical and derring-do situations largely antithetical to the goals of the Boy Scouts of America. They would replace the prosaic dust jackets of earlier editions published by Hurst & Co. and A. L. Burt Company. Amazingly, he created the dust jacket illustrations without reading the books, based simply on the title provided by the publisher.²¹

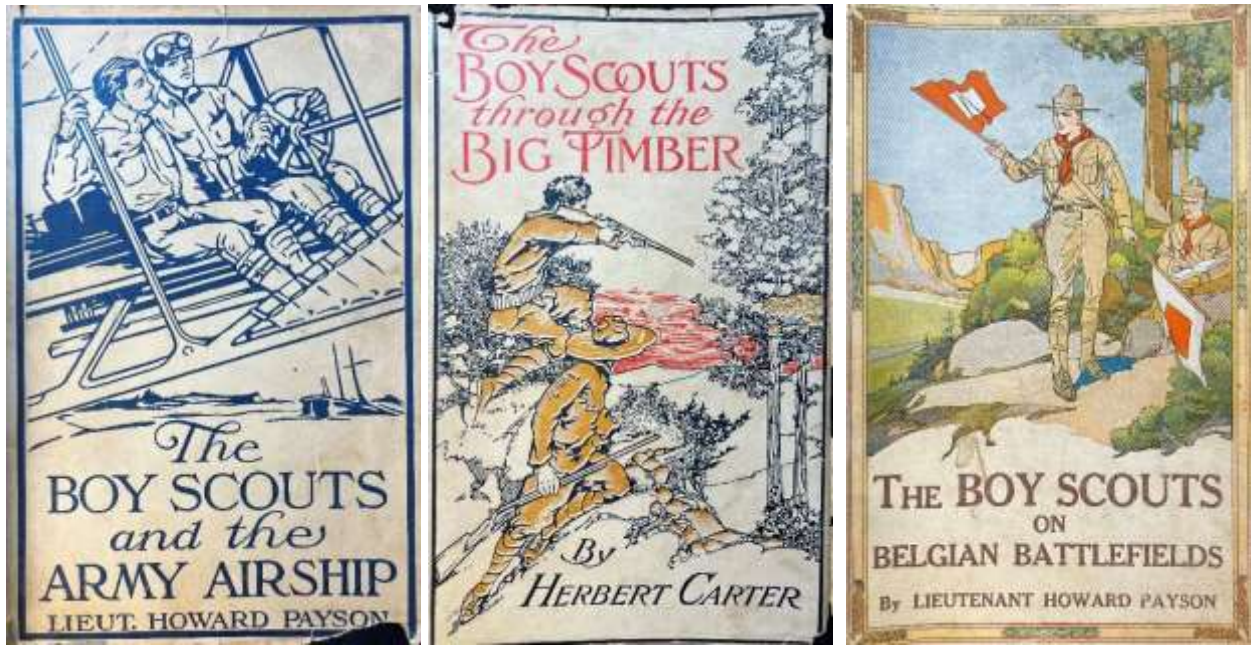
As was extremely common in early juvenile series publishing, all three authors noted on the books were pseudonyms. Herbert Carter was the pseudonym for the extremely prolific syndicate writer St. George Rathborne. Lieutenant Howard Payson was the pseudonym for John Henry Goldfrap, another prolific syndicate writer and newspaper journalist and screenplay author. Don Palmer was actually a woman, Mildred A. Wirt Benson.²² Benson, writing under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene, authored the first Nancy Drew books and is credited with creating her fictional persona.²³

²⁰ E. Christian Mattson and Thomas B. Davis, *A Collector's Guide to Hardcover Boy's Series Books* (Newark, Delaware: Mad Book Company, 1997), 1–578.

²¹ Personal Communication with Darlene Schott.

²² Chuck Fisk and Doug Bearce, *Collecting Scouting Literature: A Collector's Guide to Boy Scout Fiction and Non-Fiction* (Salem, Oregon: The Bearce's – Scouting Collectibles, 1990), 1–183.

²³ Meghan O'Rourke, "Nancy Drew's Father: The Fiction Factory of Edward Stratemeyer." *The New Yorker*, October 31, 2004, 120–129.



**Early edition Hurst & Company and A. L. Burt Company Payson and Carter Dust Jackets (1911–1918).
From the author's private collection.**

These books, along with many other fictional Boy Scout series published in the first few decades of the 20th century, were not endorsed by the Boy Scouts of America and were considered a blight that corrupted teenage boys.²⁴ The books were also cheap, published on poor quality paper, and typically sold for 50 cents (so the publishers could easily wrest the money from teenage boys). The colorful dust jackets were just an added lure to the fantastical stories in the books.

²⁴ John T. Dizer, "The Boy Scouts versus the Series Books: Part 1 – Background of the Great Book War," *Dime Novel Roundup* 61, no. 6, (1992): 102–111; Paul M. Holsinger, "A Bully Bunch of Books."

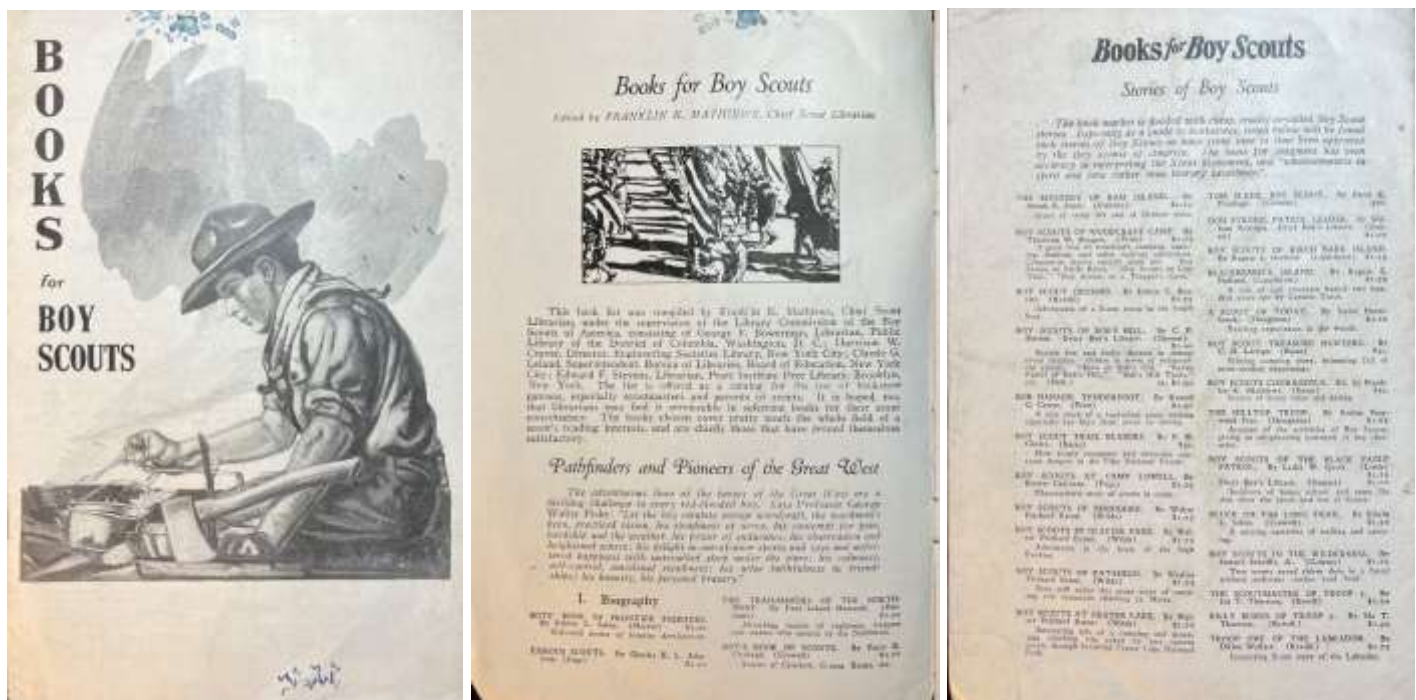


Hurst & Co. advertisement for Boy Scout Series and other juvenile fiction series 50-cent books. Circa 1911–1918. From the author’s private collection.

To counter the success of these unauthorized fiction books, the Boy Scouts of America under the leadership of New Jersey pastor Franklin Mathiews created their own fictional Boy Scout series written by New Jersey author Percy Keese Fitzhugh. They also endorsed many other fiction and nonfiction books they felt were appropriate to the ideals of the Boy Scout movement.²⁵ Mathiews would become the chief librarian of the Boy Scouts and in a famous 1914 *Outlook Magazine* article “*Blowing Out the Boy’s Brains*” railed against the publishers of the unauthorized scout books:

²⁵Peter A. Soderberg, “The Great Book War.”

Because these cheap books do not develop criminals or lead boys, except very occasionally to seek the Wild West, parents who buy such books think they do their boys no harm. The fact is, however, that the harm done is simply incalculable. I wish I could label each one of these books: "Explosives! Guaranteed to Blow Your Boy's Brains Out." . . . Story books of the right sort stimulate and conserve their noble faculty, while those of the viler and cheaper sort, by overstimulation, debauch and vitiate, as brain and body are debauched and destroyed by strong drink." . . . In the case of the modern "thriller," the author works with the same materials, but with no moral purpose, with no real intelligence. No effort is made to confine or direct or control these highly explosive elements. The result is that, as some boys read such books, their imaginations are literally "blown out," and they go into life as terribly crippled as though by some material explosion they had lost a hand or foot. For not only will the boy be greatly handicapped in business, but the whole world of art in its every form almost closed to him. Why are there so few men readers of the really good books, or even of the passing novels, sometimes of real worth? Largely, I think, because the imagination of so many men as boys received such brutal treatment at the hands of those authors and publishers who give no concern as to what they write or publish so long as it returns constantly the expected financial gain.²⁶



Boy Scouts of America *Books for Boy Scouts*. Circa 1920s. From the author's private collection.

²⁶ Franklin K. Mathiews, "Blowing Out the Boy's Brains," *Outlook*, November 18, 1914, 652–654.

Mathiew's article and subsequent efforts to promote good books for boys would eventually culminate in the creation of Children's Book Week in 1918 but would not stave off the success of the fantastical fiction books.²⁷ The Great Depression would slow their sales and boys' taste in adventure reading would change, and not much more than a decade later, all the early Boy Scout series would end. As Paul Holsinger notes:

The collapse of Wall Street in the fall of 1929 resulted in a paralysis of the book-publishing market. At the same time, with the onset of the depression, America's boy readers wanted, and perhaps needed, the vicarious excitement that youthful sleuths such as Frank Hardy and Joe Hardy could provide. There were, after all, just so many lost tenderfoot Scouts to be found, so many trails to be hiked, so many obstacles to be overcome, before an overwhelming weariness eventually set in. The novelty of Boy Scouting, so unique in the second and third decade of the century, was now, too, for many readers, *passé*. The day of Scout superheroes had given way to realism in the post first World War era. Less than fifteen years later, the last Scouting series also came to abrupt ends.²⁸

Nearly two decades later Chris Schaare would again be tapped to illustrate a Boy Scout series. His three dust jackets for the Boy Scout Explorers might have been the last Boy Scout adventure fiction series published, a very fitting pillar for Chris Schaare to be on. Chris Schaare passed away on February 20, 1980, at 86 years old, leaving behind an incredibly rich artistic legacy that should be celebrated as a New Jersey treasure.

David Moskowitz, PhD earned his Eagle Scout in 1978 and has been fascinated by early Boy Scout fiction for more than 40 years. He holds a BA in Environmental Studies from The George Washington University, an MS in Environmental Policy Studies from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and a PhD in Entomology from Rutgers University. He is senior vice president with

²⁷ William Murray, *The History of the Boy Scouts of America*, (New York, NY: Boy Scouts of America, 1937), 1–574.; John Phillips, "Selling America: The Boy Scouts of America in the Progressive Era, 1910–1921," (MA thesis, University of Maine, 2001) <http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd/205>.

²⁸ Holsinger, "A Bully Bunch of Books."

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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the Schaare family and especially Darlene Schott, Chris's daughter, for their kindness in sharing the artwork and life stories about him. I am also deeply indebted to Steve Mann for helping me acquire and build my reference library of the Schaare dust jackets. A very special note of thanks is also due to James Keeline for his review of the paper and for always so freely sharing his incredible knowledge about juvenile series books and reference materials. Two anonymous reviewers also are due thanks for their suggestions that improved the manuscript. I also thank my parents, Barbara and Stan Moskowitz for their constant support and for finding so many interesting Boy Scout books for me over the past 40 years. And finally, to Melissa Ziobro for her unerring encouragement to tell the story about Chris Schaare's life and Boy Scout book artwork.

Addendum

The Complete List of Boy Scout Book Dust Jackets

Illustrated by Chris Schaare

By Herbert Carter (pseudonym for St. George Rathborne)

The Boy Scouts on Sturgeon Island: or, Marooned Among the Game-Fish Poachers

The Boy Scouts Afoot in France; or, With the Red Cross Corps at the Marne

The Boy Scouts Along the Susquehanna; or, The Silver Fox Patrol Caught in a Flood

The Boy Scouts at the Battle of Saratoga: The Story of General Burgoyne's Defeat

The Boy Scouts Down in Dixie; or, The Strange Secret of Alligator Swamp

The Boy Scouts in the Blue Ridge; or, Marooned Among the Moonshiners

The Boy Scouts in the Maine Woods; or, The New Test for the Silver Fox Patrol

The Boy Scouts in the Rockies; or, The Secret of the Hidden Silver Mine

The Boy Scouts on the Trail; or, Scouting Through the Big Game Country

The Boy Scouts on War Trails in Belgium; or, Caught Between Hostile Armies

The Boy Scouts Through the Big Timber; or, The Search for the Lost Tenderfoot

By Lt. Howard Payson (pseudonym for John Henry Goldfrap)

The Boy Scouts for Uncle Sam

The Boy Scouts Under Fire in Mexico

The Boy Scouts on Belgian Battlefields

The Boy Scouts with the Allies in France

The Boy Scouts at the Panama-Pacific Exposition

The Boy Scouts Under Sealed Orders

The Boy Scouts Campaign for Preparedness

By Don Palmer (pseudonym for Mildred A. Wirt Benson)

The Boy Scout Explorers at Emerald Valley

The Boy Scout Explorers at Treasure Mountain

The Boy Scout Explorers at Headless Hollow

Plates - The Complete Boy Scout Book Dust Jackets Illustrated by Chris Schaare (from the author's private collection)

