



**Jack J. Keith, Scoutmaster  
Troop 8 (1922 – 1924)**

Mr. Jack J. Keith started his scouting career as the Scoutmaster of Troop 8 (1922 - 1924) while he was serving on the staff of First Baptist Jackson as the assistant to the pastor.

From the memoirs of Jack Keith as told by his wife:

*"Coming back to Mississippi College (after his war service in the Navy), he relinquished his dream of being a doctor. .... He worked for the YMCA in summer guiding a big group of college boys to the wheat fields of Kansas to earn money in the harvests. When I got to Clinton, he was in the senior year, Editor of the College Annual, and busy in many other organizations.*

*"We were married on the promise of a job with the State Y. ....But the (Y's) money ran out in three months. Mississippi did not want Boys' Clubs..... (He was offered the job as) Young People's Director in the First Baptist Church of Jackson. It paid the munificent sum of \$200.00 a month, furnished a Ford car, and we would live in town. Quickly, we were installed in the Baptist world, fixed up with an apartment in an apartment (building) contrived out of a tall-ceiling antebellum house (\$25.00 a month), and engaged in a new life that taught us a great deal.*

*"Jack worked with the leaders of the city, all good Baptist deacons and church members. His immediate boss, Dr. Hewitt, pastor of the church, was a quiet man with a great talent for leadership and ability to bring out the best in his staff. Mrs. Hewitt, a modest, unselfish, little lady, certainly rubbed some of the raw edges off of me....."*

*".....Jack, Jr., was born on Good Friday (1922), the first baby born in the new Maternity wing at the Baptist Hospital. The Glee Club from the Blind School across the street sang hymns at my door. The Church adopted him, I think. Flowers poured in....."*

*"One of Jack's jobs was to run the church Boy Scout troop. He was not enthusiastic over it. There was a military flavor about the khaki uniforms, and he, like everyone else, was tired of war. But he was so successful, and enjoyed it so much, he became convinced it is the finest program ever devised to influence young people in the right way. It was not hard for a National Scout man to persuade him to go into Scouting as a profession.*

*"I have been proud that, in later years when we visited Jackson, we found the leaders of the town "graduates": of Jack's troop. They, with their parents would have a party for him when he went back. The mother of Bill Morrison always said that Troop 8 turned her son in the right direction, that without Jack he would have become a criminal. Jack thought if that were only partly true, he had accomplished something with his life. It think it was true in many instances, and in many places. My secret belief is that such is our immortality -- the influence we leave in the world when we die.*

*"We had begun to make lifelong friends. In Jackson, it was the Gaskin family. In Jack's troop, there were three Gaskin boys. (A fourth was a Boy Scout too, but he elected to not be in the troop with his brothers.) All four of them eventually went into professional Scouting. The youngest, Spurgeon, practically adopted us, and a wonderful (for us) thing it has been. He spent several summers in our camps after we moved to Monroe; then came with his dear new wife, Carlee, to be on the staff in Oklahoma City. After his war service he was with us in Houston. We visited back and forth through all his subsequent successful career, they fished with us at Pimushe (MN), and when we moved to Florida his position as Regional Director of Region Six drew us into many Scout affairs. Since Jack died, they have been wonderful to me."*

**Thank you to Mr. Keith's son, Jack, for sharing this information with Troop 8!**

**Note: Picture above is from Mr. Keith's junior or senior year copied from the Mississippi College yearbook**



Ring #38  
**Jack J. Keith**

Presented at Retirement - September 17, 1959

**Scouting Record**

Scoutmaster - Troop 8 - Jackson, Mississippi 1922-1924  
Scout Executive - Ouachita Valley Council,  
Monroe, Louisiana 1924-1928  
Scout Executive - Ouapato Area Council,  
Little Rock, Arkansas 1928-1932  
Scout Executive - Last Frontier Council,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 1932-1935  
Scout Executive - Sam Houston Area Council,  
Houston, Texas 1935-1946  
Scout Executive - St. Louis Area Council,  
St. Louis, Missouri 1946-1959  
Retired - St. Louis Area Council 1959

Note: This is a copy of a page in a binder kept in the Greater St. Louis Council. It is of men that the Council recognized as making major contributions to their Council.