

In the Spotlight

Grades
K-3, 4-6

by | Sharron L. McElmeel

Here Come the Girl Scouts, by Shana Corey, illustrated by Hadley Hooper. Scholastic, 2012.

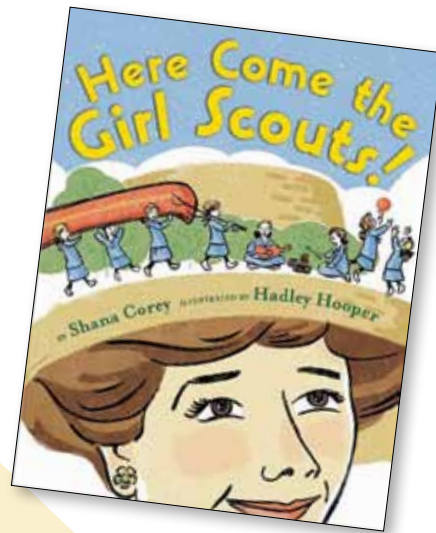
101 Years of Girl Power

What do athlete Rebecca Lobo, musician Natalie Merchant, journalist Lisa Ling, actor Lucille Ball, activist Gloria Steinem, poet Rita Dove, stateswoman Hillary Clinton, and former First Lady Lou Henry Hoover have in common? The answer: Each of these notable women belonged to the Girl Scouts, an organization that celebrated 100 years in 2012.

Here Come the Girl Scouts! tells the story of how the Girl Scouts came to be. It's also the story of the organization's founder, Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low. Throughout *Here Come the Girl Scouts!* author Shana Corey makes clear that while Low grew up a "proper young lady," she was also a young lady with "spunk," "initiative," "wit," and "courage."

Juliette Gordon was born in Savannah, Georgia, where her family was part of the high society of the city. She attended boarding school in Virginia and finishing school in New York, and in 1886 married William Mackay Low, a wealthy Englishman. The Lows moved to England, where Juliette lived until she was widowed in 1905. She then spent several years traveling and searching for something that would help her "make a difference in the world."

In Corey's telling, Juliette never let anything deter her from adventure. When she wanted a new gate for her home in England, she took blacksmith lessons and forged her own. She once left a "fancy dinner party" to go fishing with another guest at the party—Rudyard Kipling, famous author of *pourquoi* tales. And undaunted by ocean crossings, Juliette returned to America often and even helped her mother organize a convalescent hospital



for wounded soldiers of the Spanish American War. According to Corey, the Gordons were a pioneer-spirited family who "had settled towns and served in wars, written books and built railroads." Ultimately, though, Juliette wanted "something more than adventure."

Then, in 1911, she met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who had established the Boy Scouts in England and whose sister had formed a companion group for girls. Juliette returned to Savannah and got started immediately: On March 12, 1912, she invited eighteen girls to her home, and from that point on Juliette Gordon Low devoted herself to establishing the Girl Scouts.

There were to be ten scout laws—traits that the girls should cultivate: Be honorable, loyal, useful, a friend to all, courteous, pure, kind to animals, obedient, cheerful, and thrifty. Low designed uniforms (blue, later changed to green), wrote the guidebook, and set up activities to earn badges. Juliette Low was determined that "the Girl Scouts [would be] open to lots of different girls, so she organized troops in private schools and in orphanages, in churches and in synagogues, in factories and in shops," writes Corey. The activities emphasized self-reliance, nature, and doing a good deed

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every day. Juliette often traveled to raise money for her Girl Scouts, and when she was back in Savannah she visited with the Scout troops of her city. "Daisy believed that girls could do anything."

By 1920, only eight years after that first meeting in Juliette Gordon Low's home, the Girl Scouts numbered nearly 70,000. Low died of breast cancer in 1927, but the organization continued to grow. By the end of the decade there were a recorded 200,000 members, and a hundred years after the founding, more than 50 million girls have been Girl Scouts.

Shana Corey's writing is energetic and natural, well suited for her subject. Hadley Hooper's illustrations, which have been described as "folksy," are soft with blues, greens, and browns and they perfectly complement the spunky lilt of the text. Several of Hooper's illustrations for *Here Come the Girl Scouts!* may be seen on the illustrator's tumblr site, <http://hadleyhooper.tumblr.com/>.

In *Here Come the Girl Scouts!* Corey does not mention Low's friendship with Lou Henry Hoover, an important colleague who was prominent in the history of the Girl Scouts. Lou Henry grew up in Waterloo, Iowa, a girl raised to hunt and fish, and she became the first woman graduate of the geology department at Stanford University, where she met her future husband, President Herbert Hoover. Lou Henry Hoover became involved in the Girl Scouts while in Washington, D.C., during her husband's Cabinet days at the time of World War I. Juliette Gordon Low herself awarded Lou her investiture pin in 1917. From then on, Lou Henry Hoover was a supporter and leader, serving twice as president of the national organization. When she addressed the Girl Scouts on the radio in 1931 to thank them for helping the needy, she became the first presidential wife to use the radio to promote her views.

Lou Henry Hoover and Juliette Gordon Low were both passionate about nature, adventure, and encouraging girls to be all they could be. Due to the efforts of both, the Girl Scouts of the USA is the energetic and thriving organization it is today.

More Reading About Juliette Gordon Low

- *First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low*, by Ginger Wadsworth. (Full-length biography, 224 pages)



- *Juliette Low*, by Susan Bivin Aller. (Early chapter biography, 48 pages)
- *Juliette Low: Girl Scout Founder*, by Helen Boyd Higgins. (Full-length biography, 112 pages; download a sample chapter at www.patriapress.com/jlchap1.html)

Curriculum Connections: The Girl Scouts

Research for Intermediate Students

- Before reading aloud *Here Comes the Girl Scouts!* ask students to investigate the list of women named in the first paragraph (Rebecca Lobo, Natalie Merchant, etc.). Ask students to search for and compare their characteristics and achievements, and to locate any other common elements in their lives.
- Investigate the role that Lou Henry Hoover had with the Girl Scouts and her relationship with Juliette Gordon Low.
- Create a time line depicting the history of the Girl Scouts and the lives of Juliette Gordon Low and Lou Henry Hoover. Begin the time line with the year 1860, the year of Juliette Gordon Low's birth, and add other milestones in Low's life, the organization of the Girl Scouts, and the life of Lou Henry Hoover and her involvement in the Girl Scouts.

Discussion Questions for Primary Students

- What do you know about the Girl Scouts? (Primary students will most likely be more knowledgeable about Daisies and Brownies,

affiliated groups of the older Girl Scouts.

Daisies are for K–1, Brownies are for grades 2–3, and the Girl Scout levels are for grades 4 and above. Originally there was just one level for girls ages 10–17; eventually the Brownie and Daisy levels were added for younger girls and Senior level for those over age 17.)

- Inference: After reading *Here Come the Girl Scouts!* discuss why the youngest group is called “Daisies.” (Daisies are named in honor of founder “Daisy” Low.)
- What are some ways that Juliette Gordon Low showed that she liked adventure?

Activities for Further Learning

- Explore the interactive site “for girls” at <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org>, showing how Girl Scouts all over the world are changing their communities.
- Compare the Girl Scouts with what students know about the Boy Scouts of America and Camp Fire USA (www.campfireusa.org/).
- The Boy Scouts of America website, while not as child-centered, offers inspiration along with information: www.scouting.org/Youth.aspx.



Sharron L. McElmeel is director of the literacy organization *McBookwords* (www.mcbookwords.com) and an instructor of children’s and young adult literature for the University of Wisconsin–Stout’s online education programs. She often writes and speaks about authors/illustrators and their books. Visit her online at www.mcelmeel.com.

Additional Reading: Other Women Who Changed the World

- *Basketball Belles: How Two Teams and One Scrappy Player Put Women’s Hoops on the Map*, by Sue Macy.
- *Clara Barton: Spirit of the American Red Cross*, by Patricia Lakin.
- *Eliza’s Cherry Trees: Japan’s Gift to America*, by Andrea Zimmerman.
- *Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote*, by Tanya Lee Stone.
- *Girls Think of Everything: Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women*, by Catherine Thimmesch.
- *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Dreams Taking Flight*, by Kathleen Krull.
- *Mama Miti*, by Donna Jo Napoli.
- *Me... Jane*, by Patrick McDonnell.
- *Mermaid Queen: The Spectacular True Story of Annette Kellerman, Who Swam Her Way to Fame, Fortune & Swimsuit History!* by Shana Corey.
- *Redbird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native American Author, Musician, and Activist*, by Gina Capaldi and Q. L. Pearce.
- *She Sang Promise: The Story of Betty Mae Jumper, Seminole Tribal Leader*, by Jan Godown Annino.
- *Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx/ La juez que crecio en el Bronx*, by Jonah Winter.
- *Susan B. Anthony: Fighter for Women’s Rights*, by Deborah Hopkinson.
- *Tillie the Terrible Swede: How One Woman, a Sewing Needle, and a Bicycle Changed History*, by Sue Stauffacher.
- *Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom (With a Few Flat Tires Along the Way)*, by Sue Macy.
- *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!* by Shana Corey.

For a complete “Girl Power” bibliography, visit www.librarysparks.com.



About Shana Corey

Shana Corey is an editor and writer of picture books. On her website, Corey says that she’s inspired to write about “women with gumption and guts who had the courage to take a stand for the things they believed in.” In addition to the story of Juliette Gordon Low, she has written about Amelia Bloomer (*You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!*), Annette Kellerman (*Mermaid Queen*), and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (*Players in Pigtails*).

Corey was born in Savannah, Georgia, the birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low, and grew up in Georgia and North Carolina. She studied women’s history at Smith College and now lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband and two sons. Find out more about Corey and her other books on her website, www.shanacorey.com.