

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 12

“The Empire Strikes Back”

Transcript

(Provided by listener Tom B.)

[music: Fanfare]

Three months in and the war with the Boers has so far given the British nothing but bad news. Sieges of their garrisons, defeat and humiliation in the field, international embarrassment. In early February 1900, two weeks after the defeat at Spion Kop, a motion was introduced into the House of Commons to censure the government over its conduct of the war. Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain took to the floor of the House to defend government policy and the motion was defeated.

What next? The British have their backs to the wall, to settle for anything short of total victory now would be a body blow to British prestige. The Germans were already watching the situation closely, and for that matter, so were the Irish. Britain would do whatever was required to turn this war around and she had an Empire's worth of resources to draw upon and draw upon them she did.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 12. The Empire Strikes Back.

We left off last time at the low water mark of British fortunes in the Boer War. You may recall that every attempt by Sir Redvers Buller, the British general in command in South Africa, to relieve the three British garrisons under siege has ended in bloody and embarrassing defeat. You may also remember that the government has given up on Sir Redvers and is searching for a new commander. They chose the 67-year-old Field Marshal Lord Roberts, probably the most respected soldier in the country.

Lord Roberts was a veteran of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and had fought in British colonial wars and served at posts across the Empire, including previous postings in South Africa. He

assembled an all-star cast of officers to assist him, including Field Marshal Lord Kitchener who had made a name for himself fighting in the Sudan and then afterward as its governor-general. Also bear in mind that British troops are continuing to pour into South Africa.

At the beginning of the war three months ago, the Boer forces actually outnumbered the British by perhaps three to one. By January 10th, the day Lord Roberts arrived in Cape Town, the British had more than evened the odds. Roberts had some 37,000 soldiers at his command in the Cape Colony, while Buller remained in command of his force in the Natal.

As Britain's embarrassments in South Africa mounted so too did its diplomatic troubles. At about this time, Kaiser Wilhelm had contacted his grandmother, Queen Victoria, and his uncle, the Prince of Wales, to report that his government had received overtures from the French and the Russians aimed at putting together a coalition to force the British to quit the war. He insisted that he had rebuffed these overtures and would never consider making trouble for his beloved British relatives. In fact, he said, since he turned down the French and the Russians, he wouldn't be at all surprised if either Paris or St. Petersburg contacted the British government and claimed he was the one pushing for a three-nation anti-British alliance.

Of course, he wasn't fooling anyone but himself, certainly not Lord Salisbury, who in his role as foreign secretary was by now quite familiar with the Kaiser's little games. Because he demonstrated so clearly while pretending to be everyone's friend that no one in their right mind should ever trust him, this week's Kaiser Wilhelm II award for making an ass out of yourself goes to

[sound effect: bell]

Kaiser Wilhelm the Second.

[sound effect: applause]

Anyway, in South Africa, Roberts had learned from Buller's mistake and would return to the original strategy, mass British force striking for the hearts of the two Boer republics. He did not go directly up that main rail line. Rather, he sent a small diversionary force to engage the Boers at Colesberg and disguise the fact that the real attack was in the west toward Kimberley.

On February 12, Roberts' army was on the move. He had his infantry engage the Boer defenders at Magersfontein. Instead of relying on yet another frontal infantry assault against entrenched sharpshooters, Roberts had organized 5,000 cavalry under the command of Major General John French. French's cavalry were ordered east, that is to say to the British right, to ride into the Orange Free State around the Boer defenders and then westward to Kimberley, a maneuver they completed in three days of hard riding, breaking the siege of Kimberley on February 15.

The Boer commanders at Magersfontein Piet Cronjé and Christiaan de Wet had gotten used to the idea of the British following rail lines and plugging forward with unimaginative frontal

assaults. They never dreamed the British would try anything like this and the maneuver caught them entirely by surprise. Worse for the Boers, they had been cut off from their own lines of communication to the east back to the Orange Free State. They had no choice but to withdraw from their fortified positions at Magersfontein and make a mad dash east back to their home country.

Did I say mad dash? For all the Boer's vaunted mobility, the troops at Magersfontein were fighting a conventional war, and they had a conventional supply train of horse-drawn wagons. They made their way east as best they could but the British pursued them. On February 27th, Cronjé and 4,100 of his men were surrounded by a British force now numbering almost 10 times as many and surrendered.

The surrendered Boer soldiers amounted to something close to 10% of the total number of Boers in the field and the loss was a significant setback to the Boer cause. The British now had the unexpected problem of more prisoners than places to confine them. The British also had to worry that Afrikaner sympathizers in the Cape Colony might try to free captured Boer fighters. This is where the British begin their policy of shipping Boer prisoners out of Africa. By the end of the war, there will be thousands of them at St Helena, in India, and in Britain's Caribbean possessions.

Meanwhile, over in Natal, Buller had not been idle. During February, British forces had managed to clear out the last Boer positions on the hilltop south of the Tugela River crossing at Colenso. British artillery now occupied these positions. On the same day that Cronjé surrendered, Buller launched another infantry assault across the Tugela at Colenso, this time relying on a creeping barrage from his artillery. A creeping barrage is when an artillery barrage begins firing at a certain range and then gradually moves forward, giving the infantry the opportunity to advance under its cover.

This battle was one of the first to employ the new tactic, and it proved capable of neutralizing the Boer defenders one trench at a time. The Boers withdrew and Buller's forces entered Ladysmith the following day. Boer morale was devastated. Two weeks ago victory seemed within their grasp; now all their victories had been undone. Lord Robertson's force, following the surrender on February 27, continued to march east toward Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State.

Boer commandos under the command of Christiaan de Wet and Koos de la Rey did their best to harry the British, but it was no use. Roberts took Bloemfontein without a fight on March 13. The government of the Orange Free State fled to Kroonstad in the north. At Kroonstad, the military and civilian leaders of the two Boer republics held a summit meeting to discuss their next step. It was decided that conventional warfare and the slow supply trains it required had become impractical and the Boers shifted to a hit-and-run guerrilla war.

At Bloemfontein, Robertson's army rested for two months and reorganized their supply lines in preparation for an attack northward into the Transvaal, which they considered likely the last offensive of the war. The Boers were not done yet. During this period of reorganization, Boer commandos harassed the British throughout the Orange Free State, including one spectacular raid on the Bloemfontein waterworks. This raid captured hundreds of British prisoners, a large supply of weapons and ammunition, and cut off the water to the town long enough to trigger a typhoid epidemic, which sickened large numbers of the British troops.

On May 17, and as a sideshow to the main event, British soldiers relieved Mafeking, the last British garrison still under siege. I haven't said very much about Mafeking yet and I need to because it's too good a story to pass up. In a war otherwise notably lacking in British war heroes, it's important to take note of the contribution of Colonel Robert Baden-Powell.

Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was born in 1857. His father, a teacher and clergyman, died when Steve, as he was then called, was only three years old. He was a gifted artist, musician, and performer who indulged in amateur theater, but he loved the outdoors and was known to spend hours in the woods as a boy even to the extent of capturing and cooking his own meals. He became a career military man. He spent time as an intelligence officer who would scout military outposts in foreign countries under the guise of a butterfly collector. He knew nothing at all about butterflies, but if stopped or questioned, he could produce a sketchbook with detailed drawings of butterflies found in that region. No one noticed that carefully hidden in the details of the butterfly wings were drawings of military fortifications.

Baden-Powell taught army courses on scouting and shortly before the war had published a manual on the subject, *Aids to Scouting: for NCOs and Men*. In the run-up to the war, Baden-Powell, now the youngest colonel in the British Army and who had previously served in South Africa, was sent back there to raise troops. The British had anticipated that in the event of war, the main Boer attack would be into the Natal, so Baden-Powell was ordered into the Northern Cape Colony on the opposite side of the Boer states in the hopes of forcing them to divert soldiers west.

Baden-Powell decided that the best way to tie down Boer forces was to fortify and occupy the town of Mafeking. It was located along the Western Railway north of Kimberley, close to the point where the Cape Colony, the Transvaal, and British Bechuanaland all meet. Since the town sat on the main communication line between Cape Town and Bechuanaland, Baden-Powell figured it would be an attractive Boer target in any case, so he stockpiled provisions, dug trenches, and encouraged the non-combatants to leave town.

Mafeking was the only one of the three besieged British garrisons that was under siege by design. Baden-Powell had decided that the best way to tie down Boer forces was to hunker down in Mafeking and force a siege. To the 800 soldiers he had already recruited, he added 300 white

soldiers recruited in Mafeking, which was a whites-only town, plus 300 Black Africans from Black settlements on the outskirts of the town.

A group of boys, too young to bear arms, were recruited as the Mafeking cadets. These boys were assigned support tasks like delivering messages and manning observation posts, which freed up the fighting men for combat duty, and not unintentionally, created the impression of a larger garrison than Mafeking actually had. When the Boers arrived with some 8,000 soldiers and heavy artillery, they surely thought they were up against a much larger force than Mafeking actually held.

Piet Cronjé, who was in command of the siege before departing to the South to defend Magersfontein, was particularly annoyed that Baden-Powell had armed Black Africans. He sent Baden-Powell a note calling the move an “enormous act of wickedness” and added, “Disarm your blacks and thereby act to the part of a white man in a white man’s war.” Baden-Powell for some reason was unmoved. It seemed he was unwilling to disarm 20% of his force just to appease Boer racism. Go figure.

Now that he’d successfully duped the enemy into thinking he had a larger force, Baden-Powell set to work to convince them that an assault on Mafeking would be suicidal. One of the military innovations of that time was barbed wire, and this was the first war in which barbed wire was used. Now, Baden-Powell didn’t have any, but he correctly guessed that the Boers had been warned to be wary of the stuff, so he instructed his troops when moving between trenches to take elaborate back-and-forth walks meant to create the impression that they were walking around lines of barbed wire between the trenches that didn’t actually exist.

I did mention he was into amateur theater, right? He sent troops out into the field with empty boxes that they pretended were landmines. They would carefully bury them in the ground and run wires back to Baden-Powell’s headquarters. Occasionally, he would have soldiers set off a stick of dynamite here and there to make the fake minefields look more convincing.

At this point, I need to interrupt to mention Lady Sarah Wilson. She was among the non-combatants who had left Mafeking at the beginning of the war, but she got herself trapped behind the enemy lines. She tried to send a message back to Mafeking by carrier pigeon but was betrayed when the bird flew straight to the nearest Boer encampment and was shot. The information and the message the bird was carrying were all they needed to track her down, which the Boers regarded as yet another sign that God was on their side.

Lady Sarah was traded back to the garrison at Mafeking as part of a prisoner exchange and there became a correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, sending dispatches describing daily life in Mafeking during the siege. This makes Lady Sarah probably the world’s first-ever woman war correspondent. By the way, her maiden name was Lady Sarah Isabella Augusta Spencer-Churchill. Yes, Churchill as in those Churchills. She was Lord Randolph Churchill’s sister, and therefore, Winston’s aunt.

Back to the siege. Baden-Powell arranged Sunday ceasefires to give the civilians in the town a day when they could come out of their shelters and enjoy the open air. They put on cricket matches and amateur theater productions to provide entertainment. Morale stayed high throughout most of the siege, although food ran low and eventually disease began to strike the town. Still, Mafeking held out for 217 days until a detachment from Roberts' force in Bloemfontein arrived to break the siege. The survival of the garrison and the conduct of Baden-Powell were a source of tremendous pride to the British. Baden-Powell became a celebrity and then the youngest major general in the British Army.

Before we leave the subject of the sieges, I have to say there's not much evidence for the same kind of enthusiasm for the British Army in the towns that were actually under siege. Although there is a report that a small number of residents in Mafeking were there to sing "Rule, Britannia" as the army marched into town. For the most part, the reaction of the townspeople seems distinctly tepid. I'm sure disease and a lack of food of something to do with this. It's hard to throw a party when you're sick and starving, but there also seems to have been a distinct attitude of, "What took you so long?"

Meanwhile, back in the Orange Free State, Lord Roberts was on the move again. Having sorted out his supply problems and weathered the typhoid epidemic, he and his army headed north with 100,000 soldiers toward Pretoria. The Boers had fewer than 10,000 with which to oppose him. It was a drive of some 300 miles but Lord Roberts and his troops reached Pretoria in less than five weeks. Although the Boers had forts on the outskirts of the city, they withdrew without a fight and Roberts took the city on June 5.

Now, as far as the British were concerned, the war was over. They should have asked President McKinley his opinion. Like the Filipinos, the Boers were not ready to quit. The conventional war was over; the guerrilla war had just begun. Captain Lyle March Phillips was a cavalry officer in Lord Roberts' force. On June 6th the day after Pretoria fell, he expressed his bewilderment this way.

It is generally considered a coup in war, I believe, to take the enemy's capital, isn't it? Like taking a queen in chess? We keep on taking capitals, but I can't say it seems to make much difference. The Boers set no store by them, apparently; neither Bloemfontein nor Pretoria have been seriously defended, and they go on fighting after their loss just as if nothing had happened.

The two Boer republics were annexed and the government in London was ready to declare victory, but Lord Roberts came to understand that all he controlled was a railroad line. Over 20,000 Boer soldiers were still raiding across the territory of the two republics, an area almost twice the size of Great Britain. The British were dependent on the railroads for supply, but the Boers could move almost anywhere and count on local people to support them. They did not engage the British directly. They attacked railroad lines and supply depots, and cut telegraph lines, hindering British communication and supply.

The British chased after larger Boer formations and even forced the surrender of over 4,000 Boers on July 30, but it was not enough to end the war. In particular, the Boer commander Christiaan de Wet became legendary for his ability to escape every British attempt to capture him. At one point, some 50,000 British soldiers were in pursuit of de Wet and perhaps 2,000 Boer fighters. They never would catch him.

In London, flush with a sense of victory, the government of Lord Salisbury did what all British governments do when things are going swimmingly: they called a general election. It would be the last general election of the 19th century and the last during the reign of Victoria. This election is known to history as the Khaki Election because it was held during the war. The term “khaki election” is sometimes still used to this day to describe an election being held during wartime.

Lord Salisbury himself was 70 years old at this point and still devastated by the loss of his beloved wife the previous year, so most of the campaigning was done by Joseph Chamberlain and the Boer War was issue number one. Chamberlain was closely identified with the war, even Lord Salisbury had taken to referring to it as “Joe’s war.” He campaigned vigorously for the government with the slogan, “Every seat won by the Liberals is a seat won by the Boers.”

The Conservative-Liberal Unionist alliance was returned to power. They lost nine seats in the end but that was an insignificant change given the large majority they had to begin with, although Chamberlain was a bit disappointed with the outcome. Among the new MPs seated after that election was Conservative Winston Churchill, now 26 years old. Chamberlain had campaigned for him.

In South Africa, guerrilla harassment of the British continued. The guerrillas thrived in the rural parts of the republics, drawing on support from the civilians. Frustrated by their inability to engage the guerrillas, the British went after the farms. Lord Roberts decreed that any farm within a certain distance of the site of a guerrilla attack would be burnt down in retaliation. Later, this decree was expanded to include farms belonging to men still on commando, then to farms determined to have been providing supply to the Boers and so on.

Here is Captain Phillips again in November 1900 describing the new British policy:

Farm-burning goes merrily on, and our course through the country is marked as in prehistoric ages by pillars of smoke by day and fire by night. We usually burn from six to a dozen farms a day; these being about all that in this sparsely inhabited country we encounter. I do not gather that any special reason or cause is alleged or proved against the farms burned. If Boers have used the farm, if the owner is on commando, if the line within a certain distance has been blown up, or even if there are Boers in the neighborhood who persist in fighting, these are some of the reasons.

Of course, the people living in the farms have no say in these matters and are quite powerless to interfere with the plans of fighting Boers. The men belonging to the farm are always away and only the women left. Of these, there are often three or four generations, grandmother, mother and family of girls. These folk we invite out onto the veldt or into the little garden in front, where they huddle together in their cotton frocks and big cotton sun-bonnets while our men set fire to the house. Sometimes they entreat that it may be spared, and once or twice in an agony of rage they have invoked curses on our heads, but this is quite the exception. As a rule, they make no sign and simply look on and say nothing.

The British now resorted to Butcher Weyler's innovation and opened concentration camps to house the displaced civilians. There were concentration camps for the Boers and separate concentration camps for Black Africans. The British would round up some 200,000 civilians before the end of the war. In December, Lord Roberts returned to Britain to take up his new position as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. Lord Kitchener replaced him as commander in South Africa and instituted a full-on scorched earth strategy against the Boers.

As 1900 passed into 1901 and the twentieth century began, Victoria was still Queen, but she would pass away on January 22, marking the end of a century and the end of an era. Her grandson Kaiser Wilhelm II, despite his tempestuous relationship with his English relatives, rushed to Britain as soon as he heard she was on her deathbed and was at her side when she died. In some accounts, she died in his arms.

Chamberlain, flush with the election victory and at the height of his political power, took advantage of the Kaiser's presence in the country to discuss an Anglo-German alliance, which had been a pet topic of Chamberlain's for some years. He dreamt up what he called the "new Triple Alliance," Germany, Britain, and the United States, three countries Chamberlain saw as natural allies.

Germany and Britain had been doing a diplomatic dance for about 10 years now. At first, Germany wanted an alliance and Britain was skeptical. Now Britain wanted an alliance and Germany was skeptical. At various times, the two countries seemed on the threshold of ironing out their differences and forming a concrete agreement, but it never quite happened.

[music: Elgar, *Enigma Variations*]

The British humanitarian activist Emily Hobhouse had heard of the distress of the Boer civilians, mostly women and children, in the concentration camps. She raised funds for relief supplies and traveled to South Africa at the beginning of 1901 to distribute them. She had expected to find people in need. What she actually found was a crime. The camps were overcrowded, unsanitary, and the inmates were not being adequately fed.

The British Army had found it difficult enough to provide supplies and health care to its own soldiers. Concentration camp residents were low on the list of priorities. Starvation and disease

were rampant. Photographs of dying children in these camps are as horrifying as anything you might see from future concentration camps.

Hobhouse returned to Britain and reported on what she found. She wrote, "It is such a curious position, hollow and rotten to the heart's core, to have made all over the state large uncomfortable communities of people whom you call refugees and say you are protecting but who call themselves prisoners of war, compulsorily detained and detesting your protection. They are tired of being told by officers that they are refugees under the kind and beneficent protection of the British. In most cases, there is no pretense that there was treachery or ammunition concealed or food given or anything. It was just that an order was given to empty the country. Though the camps are called refugee, there are in reality very few of these."

The government denied her accusations. She was called a Boer sympathizer and a traitor, but she was telling the truth. The government appointed an all-woman commission, headed by the women's suffrage leader Millicent Fawcett to investigate the concentration camps. Fawcett was a troublemaker in the area of women's suffrage but she was pro-Empire and it was believed she would lead the commission to produce a congenial report. Hobhouse was not invited to be a part of the commission or to participate in the investigation.

When Hobhouse attempted to return to South Africa, Lord Kitchener would not permit her into the country, but in the end, the Fawcett Commission issued a report confirming everything that Emily Hobhouse had said and more. By November 1901, even Joseph Chamberlain had to acknowledge that there was a problem. Administration of the camps was taken away from the army and given to civilian authorities in South Africa with a mandate to improve conditions.

Over the course of 1902, the death rates in the camps fell to normal levels. Of the 100,000 or so Boer civilians in the camps, some 28,000 would die before the end of the war, the vast majority of them women and children. It is estimated that half of the Boer population under 16 at the time of the war did not survive it.

The camps housing Black Africans were by all accounts even worse, although this is not nearly as well documented. Emily Hobhouse had not had the opportunity to visit a Black concentration camp and the Fawcett Commission had confined its investigation to the white camps. There were 100,000 or so Black civilians in concentration camps, and officially 14,000 of them died, but given the fact that the Black camps got even fewer resources than the Boer camps, this figure seems implausibly low.

Beginning in early 1901, the Boers and the British began meeting to discuss peace terms. The Boers demanded self-government for the Boer republics, British repayment of the republics' debts, reconstruction money for Boer farmers, amnesty for Boer fighters, and that Black Africans not be permitted to vote in the republics. The British found these terms unacceptable and the talks ended.

In August 1901, a British-born Australian army captain Harry Morant, known as the Breaker, was accused of shooting Boer prisoners and then killing a German missionary who had witnessed the shootings and intended to report them to Morant's superiors. He was court-martialed, found guilty, and executed in February 1902. Although there seems little question that he was guilty of at least some of the killings he was accused of, Breaker Morant is regarded by many Australians as having been unfairly singled out for punishment by a British Army embarrassed by its own conduct and in need of a scapegoat. The case remains controversial to this day.

In April 1902, peace negotiations began again. The Boer side was much more flexible this time, as it was now clear that the war was lost, but they still insisted that Black Africans in the republics not have the same rights that they had in the Cape Colony. The British government initially resisted this demand but eventually decided that peace was worth the price, especially since someone else would be paying it, and a treaty was signed on May 31, 1902.

Lord Salisbury, now 72 years old and still grieving the loss of his wife, had wanted to resign as prime minister for some time but he felt he should hold on until the war was over. He resigned shortly after the peace treaty was signed and was replaced by his nephew, Arthur Balfour.

This war involved more British soldiers than any other military action between Waterloo and Ypres, and it subjected Britain to international hostility. Newspaper cartoons across Europe depicted British soldiers killing Boer women and children. Britons liked to think of their Empire as the most liberal and enlightened of the colonial powers and the condemnation stung.

Britain had traditionally followed a foreign policy of remaining aloof from European disputes, the so-called "splendid isolation," a policy Lord Salisbury had always supported, but the war tarnished Britain's image of invincibility and raised the question of whether Britain had bitten off more than it could chew. The war left the British government feeling vulnerable and in need of friends. If the Kaiser was going to rebuff Joseph Chamberlain, the British would have to look elsewhere for allies. This will have consequences.

The biggest losers of the war were Black South Africans. Black Africans had not even had a seat at the peace talks and the British had traded their rights away in exchange for an end to the fighting. Afrikaners received millions of pounds of British money to rebuild their farms while Black Africans got a pittance. Many former landowners could not afford to get their farms going again and were reduced to working as laborers on Afrikaner farms. Afrikaner control guaranteed that Black Africans would remain second-class citizens. The British Army was even reluctant to grant medals and other honors to Black Africans who fought with them during the war so as not to antagonize the Afrikaners.

In 1906, the former South African Republic, now the Transvaal Colony, was granted self-government by the British. In 1907, the former Orange Free State, now the Orange River Colony, was granted self-government. In 1908, an elected Afrikaner government took over in the

Cape Colony. In 1910, the four South African colonies, three of them now run by Afrikaner governments, united to form the Union of South Africa, a dominion within the British Empire.

The British dream of a South African federation modeled after Canada had come into being. In contrast to the peaceable French Canadians, the war had made the Afrikaners prouder, more militant, and less willing to compromise. Truly it could be said the British won the war but the Afrikaners won the peace.

For Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, the war marked a turning point. These countries were previously thought of as dependencies in the British Empire; they turned to the mother country in times of need. Now for the first time, the mother country had turned to them and they had answered the call. That makes them less like dependencies and more like equal partners, wouldn't you say?

What made Britain so assertive? Why were the British willing to back down in their first confrontation with the Boer republics and yet were willing to fight so fiercely in the second confrontation? I mentioned at the beginning of this story the difference between a Liberal government and a Conservative government, and that's part of it, but that only pushes the question one step back. Why did Britain have a Liberal government the first time and a Conservative government the second time, A Conservative government that held power in part because the faction of Liberals broke away in favor of a more confrontational empire policy?

Clearly, the mood is changing in Britain and elsewhere. Cooperation is out. Confrontation is in. This will have consequences.

You may have noticed that just as guerrilla went from being a Spanish word for a certain style of warfare to the name of a fighter who fights in that style, the Afrikaner word for one of their military units, *Kommando*, has in our time come to mean a certain kind of fighter who fights in a certain kind of style reminiscent of the Boer fighters. Light infantry moving quickly behind enemy lines with a limited supply train.

We'll have to leave South Africa for now, but the Second Anglo-Boer War set into motion forces that would dominate South Africa for the next century. That war opens a new chapter in the history of warfare, trenches, barbed wire, massive artillery bombardments, guerrilla warfare, scorched earth, concentration camps. We will be seeing more of all these things as *The History of the Twentieth Century* unfolds.

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I hope you'll join me next week for *The History of the Twentieth Century* as we take some time off from war and killing and consider the state of Protestantism. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus commissions his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. With European nations now dominating the globe and missionaries dispatched to every corner of the earth, some dreamed that the great commission would finally be fulfilled. What would happen instead in the twentieth century is a schism within Protestantism, perhaps the most important schism since the Reformation itself. That's next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing, when Robert Baden-Powell returned to Britain in 1903, he learned that some British boy schools were using his army manual *Aids to Scouting* in their lessons. Many teachers thought that the book taught important skills: the wisdom of the outdoors, observation, logical reasoning. In 1908, he wrote and illustrated a new version of his book aimed at boys entitled *Scouting for Boys*, and the Scouting movement began.

Boys, their parents, their teachers began forming Scout troops, first in Britain and then in other countries. In 1909, a Boy Scout rally was held at the Crystal Palace in London. There, Baden-Powell met some girls in Scout uniforms, "We're Girl Scouts," they explained to him, and so the Girl Guides came to be. By the end of the 20th century, there would be over 40 million Boy Scouts and Girl Guides around the world.

[music: Closing Theme]