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Autore	MacDonald Robert H. <1934->
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Sommario/riassunto

In *Sons of the Empire*, Robert MacDonalf explores popular ideas and myths in Edwardian Britain, their use by Baden-Powell, and their influence on the Boy Scout movement. In particular, he analyses the model of masculinity provided by the imperial frontier, the view that life in younger, far-flung parts of the empire was stronger, less degenerate than in Britain. The stereotypical adventurer - the frontiersman - provided an alternative ethic to British society. The best known example of it at the time was Baden-Powell himself, a war scout, the Hero of Mafeking in the South African war, and one of the first cult heroes to be created by the modern media. When Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts in 1908, he used both the power of the frontier myth and his own legend as a hero to galvanize the movement. The glamour of war scouting was hard to resist, its adventures a seductive invitation to the first recruits. But Baden-Powell had a serious educational program in mind: Boy Scouts were to be trained in good citizenship. MacDoanld documents his study with a wide range of contemporary sources, from newspapers to military memoirs. Exploring the genesis of an imperial institution through its own texts, he brings new insight into the Edwardian age.