

## 100 years of Elks in Hawaii: Elks and Scouting – The Beginning

Scouting began in Hawaii in 1911, about a year after the movement reached New York. Scouting was seen as an Americanizing influence on Hawaii's ethnically diverse youngsters, as teaching in a fun environment, and as preparing boys for eventual military service. The latter purpose was stressed as World War I crept ever closer. Scouts assisted at draft registration and War Bond rallies. City-wide Scout Alerts in newspapers called them to report for duty: "Executive Building, by troops, 7:30, uniform without staves<sup>1</sup>."

The story of Hawaii Elks and scouting starts with an Elks Lodge 616 member who never served as an officer or ER. Elk Samuel W. Robley became "Boy Scout Executive" in Jan 1921 after years as a YMCA official. He began his working career as "a professional athlete in theatrical work."



Elk Samuel Warren Robley in his snappy Scout outfit  
*Men of Hawaii*

He knew the value of networking, holding memberships in Masons, Shriners, and the Pan-Pacific, Rotary, Auto and Ad clubs, plus the Chamber of Commerce and YMCA. He knew the evils he hoped scouting would prevent in boys' lives: he served on the Board of Prison Inspectors and the Anti-Narcotic Commission. Robley was media savvy, writing a weekly scouting newspaper column with reports from each troop. The reports spoke to a special audience: "Water Boiling Contest Keen" and "Bridge Building Practice Held." He also fed news to the *New York Times* national weekly scout report. Tales of helping at Honolulu's Shriners Hospital, Kalihi scouts rescuing a dog, and especially stories that mentioned Americanizing activities made publication in the *New York Times*. Helping a rancher drive wild goats from cattle grazing land became a *Times* "Week's Best Good Turn."

In 1926, Robley first involved Elks Lodge 616 with scouting, but a troop for the sons of 616 members did not come until 1931. ER C. J. Cooper appointed a committee to organize that effort in June. Members Burns and Redmon would serve as assistant scout masters. In July they still needed another 8 boys and offered a flash light to the first boys signing up! The incentive made the difference and the first meeting of Elks Scout Troop 69 was held August 26, 1931. A cub pack followed in 1932. In Sept, for their first field trip, Troop 69 visited Schofield Barracks driven by 616 members wealthy enough to own motor cars. Troop 69 regularly assisted 616 with community welfare efforts, hiked, camped, and earned badges until the troop retired Mar 1944.

Anita Manning, Lodge Historian

### References:

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- Be Prepared!, Sales Builder 1940 10, p 2-15
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<sup>1</sup> A scouting stave was a thick, round pole or stick useful for walking over rough country and in many ways around camp. Two boys, two poles, a rope, & a blanket could be a tent, for example. Staves were standard scout equipment in the 1920s.