



100 years of Elks in Hawaii:  
Elks and Scouting – A Special Troop

Elk Lodge 616 sponsorship of a Boy Scout Troop did not begin in 1931 with Troop 69 for Hawaii Elk sons. In 1926, Boy Scout Executive and 616 member Samuel W. Robley (see *Aloha Elk* Oct 2004) made a plea to Hawaii Elks. Troop 12 needed \$50 to pay annual fees. Could 616 help? Of course 616 answered "Yes." The resulting relationship lasted 16 years.

When scouting took hold in Hawaii around 1911, it was seen as preparing boys for life, for the military, and as an Americanizing influence on Hawaii's diverse youngsters. Scouts soon became a part of being a boy, quiet aside from adults' goals for the activity. Nothing it seemed could stop a boy from wanting to be a scout – not even Hansen's Disease.<sup>1</sup>

In 1922, a charter was issued by the Boy Scouts of America to Troop 12 under novice Scoutmaster Enoch Aku. Mr. Aku was a 22 year old teacher at Mt. Happy School (38 children) on the grounds of the Kalihi Receiving Station. Persons suspected of having Hansen's Disease were brought to the Kalihi location for observation and testing. Infected children, separated from healthy parents, resided here until they were old enough to live alone at Kalaupapa. Located off Puuhale Rd., the hospital was surrounded by a tire recapping plant, a junk yard, and Mid-Pacific Soap & Supply. These not too classy neighbors were balanced by an ocean view from 13+ acres of well landscaped grounds.

A mystery surrounds the founding of Troop 12. Elks 616 Secretary and founding member W. N. Hanna was on the 1922 Troop 12 Committee, yet a news article refers to Troop 12 as the "Maurice Deiches Troop 12." Deiches, an Elks Lodge No. 1 member, had no obvious connection to Hawaii or Hansen's Disease. Listed as the original Troop Committee Chair, Deiches, a Wall Street attorney described as an "influential figure in Tammany Hall<sup>2</sup> for 30 years," funded the scouting registration fees for Troop 12 for 4 years.

In August 1926, Deiches failed to send the funds to cover Troop 12's annual fees. With Secretary Hanna in attendance, Scout Executive Robley asked the members of Lodge 616 to adopt Troop 12.

The Lodge did more than pay registration fees. 616 bought copies of "Boys' Life, Adventure, and Radiocraft" magazines for the troop. Elks served as members of the Troop Committee and supported scout activities. Dec 1927: Good of the Order funds purchased drums and bugles for Troop 12. 616 members visited Kalihi to present the noise makers. For decades, the drum and bugle corps turned out, marched, and played for special visitors and on holidays.

1928: magazines were collected for patients. In later years the list of wants included clothing, books, and baseball equipment for Kalaupapa. 1932: When Elk Guy Rothwell reported at Lodge on the recent Kalaupapa showing of an "all talkie photoplay program" (movie), 616 members raised funds to have a similar showing at Kalihi Receiving Station.

Troop 12's regular reports in Robley's Sunday *Advertiser* column together with Troop annual reports to Boy Scouts of America, reveal a regular troop with special facets. Each year most boys advanced at least one rank; each scout earned about 5 merit badges. A sample list of Good Turns is tough reading: organized the funeral of a fellow scout, assisted adult patients, planned farewell for scouts sent to Kalaupapa, honor guard at memorial service. Uniforms were lacking (families without money), but the students practiced marching anyway. Hiking wasn't possible (children restricted to Station grounds), but they went camping in a 'wild' area of the Station.

There were mainstream scout activities like a 1936 hobby exhibit. The years prior to World War II brought first aid courses, signaling demonstrations, and blackout practices. Competitions were necessarily between Troop 12 patrols (Hawk, Eagle and Lion), but outside Troops did visit – through a fence. Scout demonstrations and competitions made good entertainment for the larger patient population as well.

Much credit for the success of Troop 12 goes to Mt. Happy teachers / scoutmasters Frank Kaihenui (1923-27) and Albert Like (1927-1942). Mr. Like took the assignment in his first year of teaching and stayed until the school closed.

In 1924, 6 older scouts, including the Assistant Scoutmaster, went to Molokai. Their goal to start a troop at Kalaupapa was discussed in the Boy Scout *Advertiser* columns, but no Troop Charter was issued. Not until late in 1929 was Troop 46 chartered. The Troop Committee, all Elks, was Secretary Hanna, C. J. Cooper (ER 1931-32), and C. H. Siebert. The transferred Troop 12 member would be Scoutmaster with meetings in the Social Hall of Baldwin Home. The Troop 12 scouts who couldn't go camping or hiking at Kalihi were strangely free on Molokai. The first year they went on 8 overnight campouts and 14 day hikes.

The number of boys in either troop was never large – a high of 28 for Troop 12. In the first years, some Troop 12 scouts were transfers from other troops, reflecting an interrupted childhood. Troop 46 was dominated by transfers from 12, with most boys being older teens. As public health measures took hold, the number of new juvenile patients at Kalihi declined. Scout membership dropped to 9 boys in 1940. Troop 46 ended around 1937 as the boys grew up and were not replaced.

Troop 12 is listed in Scout records as closed as a "War Casualty Troop." The troop ended when the Kalihi facility closed at the start of World War II – too close to Pearl Harbor and feared enemy attacks. After a submarine sweep of the Pearl Harbor entrance, the students were shipped to Kalaupapa with a safety escort of alert military vessels. Teacher and Scoutmaster Albert Like and two nurses accompanied the students at sea. The scouts faced the perilous sea voyage to their new life dressed in their smart scout uniforms. Elks 616 could be proud.

Anita Manning, Lodge Historian

Thank yous:

Aloha Chapter, Boy Scouts of America, and Kalaupapa National Historical Park, NPS.

2004 History Day student projects about Kalaupapa brought some background information to my attention.

Finding Mr. Like's name in this research, I recalled a friend. I had the honor of knowing him late in his life. A caring and sincere man from whom I learned much, he never mentioned his role at Mt. Happy School.

References:

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*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* 1927-1951, 199K

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<sup>1</sup> Hansen's Disease is the medical name used today. References at the time use the word leprosy.

<sup>2</sup> Tammany Hall was the powerful, often corrupt, political machine running New York City until the 1930s.