



PIEDMONT SCOUTING

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## Piedmont Council History

The Piedmont Community Church and Wallace M. Alexander played pivotal roles in the formation of the Piedmont Council. Motivated by what he heard about Scouting, Reverend Stuchell, pastor of the newly formed Piedmont Community Church, launched Piedmont's Scouting movement in 1910 and enlisted the help of Wallace Alexander, an early benefactor of the Piedmont Community Church. Later, other churches and organizations, led by community leaders, created the six Boy Scout Troops and four Cub Scout packs that comprise the Piedmont Council. Today, the Piedmont Council serves more than 1000 youth in both its traditional Scout programs and through its coed programs, Venturing, Explorers, Sea Ship 16 and Learning for Life.

### The First Years

The Reverend John Evans Stuchell, first Pastor of the Piedmont Community Church (PCC), was an outdoorsman as well as a church leader. In 1910, the Rev. Stuchell was seeking a new type of organization for the boys of Piedmont. He had heard:

*"...Stories (that) were told of how splendidly effective the boys had been at the Siege of Mafeking, during the Boer War, under the direction of General Baden-Powell; and how later he had organized the lads into a distinct group with striking uniforms, with emphasis on things in which boys are naturally interested."*

Later, an article in Outlook Magazine of New York, caught his attention. The article described the organization of the Boy Scouts of America, which was based on the same principles as those of Baden-Powell of England.

Inspired, Reverend Stuchell organized a meeting and camping trip in Redwood Canyon on October 10, 1910. The group consisted of about 25 boys and several adults. Subsequent meetings were held at the carriage house of Mrs. Thomas, mother of Harry Thomas (Harry Thomas later served as Council President from 1951-1953). Reverend Stuchell served as Scoutmaster and was assisted by Milt Robertson. Rev. Stuchell's original committee consisted of General D. F. Long, Adolf Uhl, Robert Tyson, Wallace Alexander and Will Robertson. After that, the group met at the carriage house every other week and went camping every other week, weather permitting.

Throughout the United States, communities were embracing the Scouting concept. With strong support from many, the Boy Scouts of America was chartered by Congress on June 15, 1916. Encouraged by the early success of Scouting in Piedmont, the Piedmont Community Church sponsored Troop 2 in January of 1918, with S. Leslie Oliver acting as

the first Scoutmaster. As time went by, the group operated independently from PCC. With the group's evident success, it was not long before other troops were formed in the Bay Area, such as those sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church in Oakland and the First Congregational Church.

The Piedmont Council was chartered on March 21, 1921, becoming the 42nd Council in the U.S. Since Piedmont and Troop 2 did not apply for a charter to the National organization until 1921, one or two of the later-formed Oakland organizations were chartered ahead of Piedmont.

### **Wallace Alexander**

Wallace Alexander was a very influential person, playing major roles in the shipping and sugar industries. He headed the great steamship company, Matson Navigation, was the President of Alexander Baldwin Co., served on Stanford University's board, and was a board member of numerous large companies. During the course of his life, he was also a great philanthropist.

Wallace Alexander served as the first president of the Council from 1921-1935, despite having no sons and only one daughter, Martha. He was instrumental in obtaining the 1929 Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture Special Use Permit issued to the Piedmont Council for Camp Wallace Alexander near Keddie, California, on the Feather River. (In 1934 it cost \$58.50 to send a boy to Camp Wallace Alexander for six weeks. This included bus transportation! ) Mr. Alexander also provided work experience for Scouts. At least ten Scouts from the 1920's worked at Mr. Alexander's companies. Fittingly, Wallace Alexander received the first Silver Beaver awarded by Piedmont Council.

Mr. Alexander was a major benefactor to both the Piedmont Community Church and the Piedmont Council. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander donated one and one-half acres, along with \$50,000, to the building fund of the Piedmont Community Church, which was dedicated in 1918. When Mr. Alexander died of a stroke at the age of 70 in Honolulu on November 22, 1939, there were two charitable donations in his will; they were to the Piedmont Council (\$5000) and the Piedmont Community Church (\$2500). His estate was the largest the State of California had ever probated at that time. Evelyn Pattiani Craig stated in her book *Queen of the Hills*, "Their (the Alexanders) prominence and generosity extended over a generation becoming a constructive and dominating influence in the city's progress." Mrs. Alexander continued to donate to the Piedmont Council even after her husband's death. As recorded in Board minutes, she gave at least \$22,000 as well as \$5000 earmarked to PCC for the Scout Council's building fund.

### **The Piedmont Council Office**

The Church sponsored many of the original troops and provided a meeting place for them. Originally, all the troops met in the basement of the church. The Council Executive's office was also located there. However, in 1935 Mr. Alexander offered to pay half the cost of new Scout offices and a new Sunday school at PCC. A Scout building, designed by well-known architect Albert Farr and fondly remembered as "the shack," was erected in 1935.

In 1946, the church decided to build the present church building and asked the Scouts to raise \$5000 toward the effort. Mrs. Wallace Alexander donated \$5000 to this fund. However, she may not have been the community's biggest donor. On September 19, 1949, the minutes show that the Scout portion of the building was made possible through a contribution by Mr. Witter in memory of his son. The Scout portion of the building was dedicated to Jean Witter, a former Scout who died defending his country in World War II. A plaque in his memory remains over the door today. The total cost of the building (Scout office and Sunday school) was \$150,000. Upon completion of this new building, the Council office relocated to the site where it remains today.

## **The First Council Executive**

Mr. Alexander hired George Kenneipp, a very enterprising and forward thinking young man of 22 years, to be the Council Executive in 1921. Mr. Kenneipp served from June 30, 1921 - October 31, 1927. Besides organizing a new council of Boy Scouts, Mr. Kenneipp organized a program for younger Scouts aged 9-11 called the Boy Pioneers. In Mr. Kenneipp's handbook, to earn a gold stripe, a Boy Pioneer "must break at least one bad habit." In a report submitted to the Council in 1922, Mr. Kenneipp stated that there were four troops totaling 113 Boy Pioneers. The Pioneers and the Scouts went weekend camping at Camp Scout on Hampton Field and Tyson Lake where they built several buildings. Boy Pioneers also attended ceremonies at the War Memorial on Decoration Day. The National Boy Scout Organization used Mr. Kenneipp's program and handbook as one of the models to form the Cub Scout Program, which was adopted nationally on April 1, 1930.

Mr. Kenneipp also stated in his report in 1922 that:

*"There was a time when this church was unwillingly called upon to witness the work of Piedmont boys before the Piedmont Scout regime. A time when boys would take keen delight in running around on the roof of the church during Sunday school hour, ringing the church bell, jumping out the Sunday school windows and in general making life miserable for those in charge."*

He also stated, "There was no question the Boy Scout rooms are used more than any other rooms of the church. And there is no more important activity being carried out in our fair city today than the work of developing fine upright citizens of tomorrow."

## **Current Statistics**

The Piedmont Council enjoys a high participation of Piedmont youth in our programs. Although levels vary, approximately 50% of the available youth are enrolled in Scouting programs. Since 1921, 1000 Boys have earned the rank of Eagle and each year five percent or more of our registered Scouts attain that rank.

## Notable Dates for Piedmont

Wallace Alexander	President, Piedmont Council	1921-1935
Rev. Stuchell	Not identified with a troop	October 10, 1910
Scout Troop 2	Sponsored by Piedmont Community Church	January 1918
Scout Troop 1	Sponsored by Piedmont Community Church	May 1920
Scout Troop 3	Sponsored by Piedmont Community Church	1 <sup>st</sup> Chartered in 1920
Scout Troop 4	Sponsored by West Piedmont Improvement Fund	1 <sup>st</sup> Chartered in 1921
The Boy Pioneers	Predecessors to Cub Scouts	At least as early as 1921
Camp Wallace Alexander	Ceased operation after August 1971. Camp improvements were sold for \$1000 as salvage in 1974 when no buyer was found.	1 <sup>st</sup> opened in 1929
Den 1, Pack 1 Mrs. Edelman Herb Samuels	Meeting at Beach School Den Mother Den Chief	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting December 10, 1931
Ship 21		Organized April 30, 1939
Explorer Post 514 Explorer Ship16, "The Revenge"	Organized by Scott Ramsden?	1946
Rowing Post 8 Later became Crews, & 10 Oakland Strokes	Edwin E. Liskiss, organized 8,9, first in the Nation; now a nationally recognized source for college NCAA Division 1 recruits.	1974
Tree Lot	Major Council fundraiser, first organized by Corpus Christi Men's Club	1 <sup>st</sup> operated, 1969 as fundraiser, 1970

## Scout Executives of the Piedmont Council

6/30/21-10/31/27	George E. Kenneipp	6 years – 4 months
10/31/27	Robert H. Condie (acting)	1 year – 2 months
1/1/29 – 9/15/31	William Finlay	2 year – 11 months
9/1/31 – 9/30/38	Edward A. Davey	7 years – 1 month
12/1/38 – 10/15/44	George G. Winchester, Jr. Promoted to Exec San Joaquin Council. Later became regional exec in approx. 1951	5 years – 10 ½ months
11/1/44 – 6/30/45	Victor E. Teany Resigned for health reasons	8 months
1/2/46 – 1/31/48	M. Paul Webster	2 years – 1 month
1/19/48 – 12/31/57	Henry Blaylock Transferred	10 years
1/1/58 – 3/14/66	Charles B. Warner Retired	8 years – 2 months
2/1/67 – 1/30/74	Wesley F. Wilson Transferred, remained in Scouting until approx. 1990 in Bakersfield. Became deputy in charge of district	6 years – 11 months
3/1/74 – 12/31/76	J. Dean Kernham Transferred, became Assist. Scout Exec, San Gabriel Valley Council	2 years – 9 months
2/1/77 – 6/30/85	Marlin C. Bates Resigned, served as dist. Exec at Conquistador Council	8 years – 5 months
8/1/85 – 12/31/91	Paul Mayer Resigned, became Director of Camping, Orange County Council	6 years – 4 months
1/1/91 – 9/30/98	Valerie Ridgers Council Administrator Resigned, Director of finance, Mt. Diablo Council	7 years – 9 months Served a total of 23 years in Piedmont

11/20/98 - 2010

Josephine Pegrum Hazelett  
Executive Director  
Scout Executive

2010 -

## Merger Discussions

Merger discussions have occurred a number of times before, including October 16, **1945** at Camp Dimond in Oakland, where a discussion was held which concluded that Piedmont's Camp Wallace Alexander would remain in the hands of Piedmont men as trustees but be operated by the Oakland staff. Problems existed in finding a Scout Executive. Mr. Carlson of the Regional office suggested that Piedmont merge with Oakland. This proposal was rejected by the board.

In **1963**, when merger plans were again under discussion, Mr. Frank Adams, the twelfth boy to earn the Eagle rank in the Piedmont Council (he earned 30 merit badges over a period from 1921-1925) pointed out the necessity for keeping Piedmont a separate council. He stated, "It was a model for success in Scouting." The Piedmont Council voted 31 to 6 in favor of rejecting the merger. This action seemed to solve the problem.

In **1964**, the Oakland and San Francisco Councils merged to form a group of 30,000 Scouts. In an article in the Oakland Tribune it was noted that Alameda, Piedmont, Marin, San Mateo and Mt. Diablo "rejected unification."

In **1966**, merger discussions began once again in very much the same way as they would years later in 1992: "Piedmont is a dead end council for executives," stated Mr. Whidden of the Regional office. At the time, a former Piedmont Eagle Scout and Scout Executive Mr. George G. Winchester, Jr. of Piedmont Council was serving as one of Mr. Whidden's deputy executives! This was by far the most serious threat to the Council's independence to date. There is a summary dated November 9, 1966. In the 1966 threat, there was a report which stated that the Piedmont Council be phased out by January 1, 1968. The issue was finally resolved when the Board voted to send Chet Cook and Bill Mackay to the Regional Conference in Hawaii. Somehow between these two men's efforts in Hawaii and lobbying and politics by others such as Ken Bechtel, the Council was saved. At that time, the council was without a Scout Executive for almost a year.

In **1973**, there was another merger incident when Harry Meade was then President of the Council. A proposal to establish a "Metropolitan Council" (another layer of bureaucracy) was rejected by the Board.

The latest attempt to merge the Piedmont Council occurred in **1992**.