

Some Historical Data on Camp Herms

By Victor Lindblad



The Lodge at Camp Herms

In 1929 the Berkeley Council, Boy Scouts of America, was casting about for a permanent weekend camp. The Summit Camp was not proving satisfactory for the program needed for the council.

George Friend, who had purchased a home directly across Arlington Avenue in El Cerrito from the Bates and Borland Quarry, made the suggestion to Ansel Hall that the quarry might be a desirable site for an overnight camp.

Council President William B. Herms, appointed a special committee in September of 1929 to seek out a site for a weekend camp. The committee was made up of Ansel Hall, Clarence Whitney, Col. Jack Hardy, Lewis Schuessler, and a Mr. Stringham. The committee along with George Friend looked over the quarry area as well as several other possible sites.

The committee interviewed Charley Bates relative to the availability of the quarry site, plus land contiguous to the quarry. Mr. Bates offered to sell fifteen acres, including part of the Old Glory Hole, for \$10,000.

On November 26, 1929, actual negotiations for acquisition of the property were authorized. President W. B. Herms appointed Perry Tompkins and Wallace Wood to serve with him on a special committee to secure a ninety-day option on the fifteen-acre site, plus another ten acres which was a part of the parcel of land which included the fifteen acres.

The Council was unable to raise the necessary funds to take up the option on the twenty-five acres within the ninety-day period, and Mr. Bates sold some of the property. However, early in the year (1930) the campsite consisting of eighteen acres was acquired. A Mr. Andrus, a real estate agent, had been given an option by Bates and Borland to sell the land, and the council paid half of his fee, \$212.50, for his service. The council offered Bates and Borland \$7,000 for the property and Bates and Borland asked \$10,000. They compromised at \$8,500. The total cost thus being \$8,712.50. The council made a down payment of \$1,000 and took a mortgage on the balance to be amortized at the rate of \$750 a year.

Following the purchase, the council decided to run a capital funds campaign (and made application to the Community Chest for approval) and employed a Mrs. Rutherford to run the campaign.

Mr. Ratcliffe, an architect, volunteered to lay out a building plan for the land which he did. The future plan as presented included a camp lodge, estimated cost \$1,600; swimming pool, estimated cost \$1,600; water and sanitation system, \$1,200; fencing and blasting, \$1,500; insurance and miscellaneous, \$387.50. Harold Piatt took his crew of surveyors in and surveyed the camp without any cost to the council. [Editors note: "Mr. Ratcliffe" is believed to be Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr., the famous Berkeley architect.]

In April of 1930, the Board set the date of February 25, 1931 as the date for the camp's dedication. The Berkeley Elks to have a part in the ceremony.

The City of Berkeley volunteered the use of some heavy equipment, and the equipment operators came in and leveled an area for a future lodge site.

George Budgen contributed shrubs and flowers to be planted as part of the landscaping plan.

The Berkeley Elks Club offered to take over the annual payments on the camp, but the depression canceled out this gracious offer. The Club then offered to sponsor a football game, November 14th, at the Oakland ballpark to raise money for the camp.

By the end of May 1930, considerable work had been done; a small 6' X 6' headquarters building had been started and some work had been done toward the building of toilet facilities.

The Berkeley Service Clubs manifested an interest in the camp.

The camp was officially opened for use Saturday, June 7, 1930, and Field Executive George Lafabrique was appointed as its first director.

The Scoutmasters Roundtable was very active in support of the camp property. Clarence Whitney, Scoutmaster of Troop 23, being particularly enthusiastic.

Fred Flanders, Scoutmaster of Troop 24, was appointed as chairman and director of a Scout Field Day to be held at camp on September 20th. This field day project caught the interest and imagination of Scouts and Scouters alike and it proved to be a most successful affair. Four hundred men and boys attended this first big event at the camp. (1930) The day's activities consisted of games, string burning, and water boiling contests. Woodcutting, nature, craft activities, etc.

During 1930, ten Indian tepees were added to the camp equipment and approximately \$3,764.83 was expended on improvements in the camp. This amount consisted mainly in volunteer labor. Very little actual cash was spent.

H. C. McCaulay, a member of the Council Camping Committee, was appointed as the lay chairman for Camp Herms.

NOTE: The camp was known as Camp Berkeley; the name Camp Herms coming many years later as a special recognition to W. B. Herms, the Council President who had been a member of the Council Executive Board since the organization of the Council in 1916.

During the early part (February) of 1931, the Lions Club of Berkeley agreed to underwrite three sleeping cabins at \$125 each. The unlined cabins were constructed and on May 14, 1931 were dedicated. R. E. Connolly, President of the Lions Club conducted the ceremony, and then officially turned the buildings over to Council President, William B. Herms.

The first leaders training session was held at the camp May 16th. The affair was a Junior Leaders Pow Wow under the leadership of Scout Bob Read of Troop 31 Chairman, and Scouts Paul Ehret (Troop 40). Harold Schonfeldt and Randy May as members of the committee. The principal speaker at the Pow Wow was Coach Bill Ingram.

George Lafabrique, Field Executive, continued to serve as Camp Director and under his leadership a program of activities including bone work, horn work, totem pole carving, archery, etc., was promoted. Boys could pass merit badges at camp in the following subjects -- archery, botany, camping, cooking, handicraft, hiking, leather craft, leather work, pioneering, woodcarving, woodwork, and first aid. A volunteer staff assisted Mr. Lafabrique in his work. The depression made it possible for many men to give time gratis to the camp and its program. If Scouts wished to stay overnight, they had to be accompanied by adult leadership.

The first council rodeo was held at camp September 12, 1931. A feature of this affair was the feeding of Scouts and unit leaders by members of the Council Executive Board. The Board Members barbecued the meat and fed 1,000 Scouts and leaders.

During the summer the Berkeley Exchange Club agreed to construct a rough handicraft lodge at camp. The work was started in the fall and the building which stood where the swimming pool now stands, was dedicated December

15, 1931. Exchange Club President Joe Harris conducted the dedicatory service and then officially turned the building over to Council President, William B. Herms. Fifteen Exchange Club Members attended.

In June of 1931, Dr. L. A. Martin started work on a site for a telescope.

During 1931, Scouts Vernon Hansen of Troop 36, James Shaw of Troop 16, and Richard Talbot of Troop 38, built the world's largest totem pole at camp.

During 1931, a total of 6,771 Scouts and leaders used the camp. 2,523 Scouts did day camping, 2,327 Scouts camped overnight, and 252 leaders were in camp for day activities and 8 stayed overnight.

Due to depression problems, it was decided that a general camping program would be promoted during the year 1932. The program was carefully organized under the direction of L. B. Stearns, Assistant Scout Executive, assisted by a staff of volunteer leaders.

Scouts can attend camp for a day or for a week. Each boy does his own cooking. The program provided is similar to that of 1931.

Dr. L. A. Martin and W. F. Meyer continued work on the telescope, and it was officially dedicated April 16, 1932.

The main council-wide affair at camp was the field day held April 30, 1932.

The depression continued, and as a result, many Scouts were unable to attend Camp Wolfboro or any other camp due to lack of funds. In order for boys to get a camping experience (i.e. the maximum number of Scouts enabled to attend camp) a program was set in motion at Camp Herms whereby Scouts could pool their food and prepare it in a common kitchen. The first section of the lodge was completed, i.e. the shell of the building, plus a kitchen. [Editor's note: Camp Wolfboro is in the Sierra Nevada mountains, near Bear Valley.]

The Contra Costa Council and Berkeley-Albany Council had merged, and as a result, Scouts from the area now could also use the camp.

One hundred Scouts from Richmond ran a colony camp. They pooled their food and volunteer Scouters helped in preparing the food in the kitchen.

The first council-wide Camporee was held at Camp Herms in the spring of 1933. All Patrols earning an A rating were eligible to attend the Regional Camporee to be held in San Francisco at the Golden Gate Park in the fall.

In order to provide chairs for the dining hall, the Scoutmasters' Roundtable at Berkeley promoted a plan of each member buying a wooden folding chair and giving it to the camp. The donors name to be stenciled on the back of the chair. A hundred chairs were thus contributed to the camp.

During 1933, Dr. Robert Wall died and left a legacy of \$5,000 to the Berkeley Council, Boy Scouts of America, Incorporated. This was a most vital gift as it was to prove important to the camp. Incidentally, Harold Piatt's name had been used in securing the mortgage on the camp in 1930.

At the January 8, 1934, meeting of the Berkeley-Albany division board two important resolutions were passed which involved the \$5,000 from the Wall Estate, and paid off the mortgage on the camp.

Frank Cornish moved the adoption of the following resolution: "Resolved that the President and Secretary of the Executive Board of the Berkeley-Albany Council, Boy Scouts of America, be authorized to execute the necessary documents subject to the approval of the probate court for the purchase of note and deed of trust against the real property owned by Bates and Borland of the Central Construction Company, known as the over night camp, to pay therefore the sum of \$5,000 constituting the legacy received from the estate of Dr. Robert Wall, and such additional sum not to exceed \$750 as may be required in event that the said sum of \$5,000 is not accepted by Bates and Borland of the Central Construction Company". The motion was seconded by Dr. L. A. Martin, and unanimously carried.

Frank Cornish then moved the adoption of the following resolution: "Resolved that the Berkeley Council, Boy Scouts of America, lease from the Berkeley Council, Boy Scouts of America, Incorporated, the real property owned by the Berkeley Council, Boy Scouts of America, Incorporated, known as the overnight camp, to pay therefore the sum equal to the interest on the indebtedness now held against the real property comprising said overnight camp". Seconded by Wallace Wood and unanimously carried.

During the summer of 1934, under the direction of Willard Merrill, District Executive, the camp ran a regular long-term type of camping. The four periods were as follows: June 10th to June 15th inclusive, Western Division; June 17 to June 22 inclusive, Berkeley-Albany Division; June 24 to June 29 inclusive, Scouts from entire Council; July 1 to July 6 inclusive, Scouts from entire Council. The camp was set up to serve one hundred Scouts in each period. The cost per period per boy was \$3.00. Obviously the \$3.00 did not cover even the food costs. The program was made possible through the generosity of Charles Wolfe, of Richmond. Sensing the importance of a camping experience for boys, Mr. Wolfe simply took time off from his contracting and building business and went up to camp and cooked for the Scouts. He gave his time to serve without cost and promoted much of the food from the canning companies, produce companies, and large grocery stores. A group of men volunteered their time as members of the camp staff. Without Mr. Wolfe's generosity, it would not have been possible to operate the camp on the plan as set up.

In the fall of 1934, the Region under the direction of Deputy Regional Executive Oscar Kirkham, conducted a Troop camping course. One hundred forty men attended.

Several Troops held their annual Fathers and Sons night at camp. Troops 24 and 39 were particularly successful with their outings.

During 1935 there were some general improvements made in the camp.

One activity of real interest was the inauguration of the Council Spring Training Conference for Scouters at the camp. Ninety-two men attended the first two-day conference.

Another move of importance was the employment of Larry Connell (1935) as full time camp custodian.

In February of 1936, the Scout Executive, Victor Lindblad, submitted to the Camping Committee and through the committee to the Board, a proposed comprehensive program of camp improvements to be made over a period of years. The proposals for Camp Berkeley (Herms) were as follows:

1. Construct a 35' x 75' swimming pool with dressing rooms, showers, etc. The pool to be surrounded by stone walls and the dressing rooms, etc., to also be constructed mainly of stone. The stone to be taken from the quarry.
2. The walls of the quarry to be cut down and cut back in order to do two things:
 - a. Increase the play area
 - b. Eliminate the safety hazard by cutting the quarry walls to an angle of repose.
3. The quarry floor to be leveled with enough slope to allow drainage to the west.

4. A program of systematic tree planting, inaugurated with emphasis on Coast Redwood, Monterey Pine and other trees indigenous to the area. Samples of trees of many varieties as well as shrubs to be planted and serve as part of the program for a Scouts nature tests, i.e., identifying trees, shrubs, and flowers, etc.
5. Construct the following buildings:
 - a. Resident director's dwelling.
 - b. A warehouse.
 - c. A Sea Scout Warehouse.
 - d. Extend the dining hall.
 - e. Additional sleeping cabins.
 - f. A program building.
 - g. A check-in stand.
 - h. A large double garage with repair pit and underground gasoline tanks.
 - i. A museum and nature lodge.
 - j. A permanent craft building.
 - k. Add rooms and basement to the program director's cabin.
 - l. A large toilet and shower building.
 - m. Toilet buildings on the north and south hills.
 - n. Add to the dining hall a ladies toilet.
 - o. A storage room.
 - p. A full sized kitchen.
 - q. A training room with fireplace on north end.
6. Add window casings in the dining lodge and line the building with knotty pine; also rebuild the stage, lift the building and put cement foundations under the building. Rewire the building and put in new lights plus a heating system. Rebuild the fireplace to prevent downdrafts, etc.
7. Clear the brush and fill the swamp to the west of the camp and make a two-acre play recreational area. Install proper drainage to carry off water from the spring.
8. Put in permanent water lines and build a large new septic tank.
9. Remove many of the Eucalyptus trees.
10. Acquire additional contiguous property.
11. Fence the property.
12. Landscape the area again with plan of having the entrance to the quarry flanked with Coast Redwoods.

The above plans were approved by the Board and the Executive proceeded to work out a method of financing the improvements.

Harold Piatt, a local engineer and a long time dedicated Scouter, drew up the plans for the swimming pool and director's dwelling. The pool to be a replica of an early Mayan Temple.

Overtures were made to the East Bay Municipal Utility District asking them to give the Council additional property to the east which would include the Glory Hole and land on each side of the quarry, approximately six acres.

The Scout Executive and Albert Lester approached the W. H. Gibson Foundation and asked them for \$11,000 to build a pool. They went over the plans which Mr. Piatt had prepared and balked at them as too expensive.

The Scout Executive met with the Berkeley City School Authorities and asked them to give the Scouts several buildings which were now being used as temporary class rooms. The buildings were given to the council on the basis that the Scouts would dismantle them, haul the material away, and leave the area clear and clean. This request was agreed to and the dismantling started. Volunteer Scouters dismantled the buildings, the lumber from several of them being hauled to Camp Herms to be used for construction of the Sea Scout base, the director's dwelling, the craft

building, and other repair work. Obviously the lumber was not sufficient for the completion of the buildings, but it helped materially.

Work done in the camp in 1936 included the building of a stone drinking fountain by Scouts of Troop 28, the addition of a section for a ladies toilet in the dining lodge, construction and installation of turning dome on the observatory building, a custodian's cabin, piping of water to the fire pits in the quarry and on the south side of the quarry, the re-roofing of the dining lodge and the addition of five fire extinguishers.

The first overtures were made to the Works Progress Administration for including work in the quarry in their program. The W.P.A. was very receptive. It was necessary to have a sponsor for the project and the Scout Executive and Attorney, Frank Cornish, met with the El Cerrito city council and discussed the matter with them. Inasmuch as the proposed project represented all handwork, it was tailor made for the city's unemployed and for the requirements of the W.P.A. Several meetings were held between the Scout officials and the W.P.A. during the years. During the year 1936 the camp was used by 119 Troops with a total of 3,311 Scouts and 103 leaders.

In 1937 the Scout Executive succeeded in persuading the East Bay Municipal Utility District to give the council four additional acres, extending the camp eastward just over the quarry rim and adding additional camping area to the north and south of the quarry.

Larry Connell resigned as camp custodian in 1937 to accept a position with the State of California, and the Scout Executive employed Irving Waterbury to succeed him. Mr. Waterbury had served the council for many years, his two outstanding positions being Scoutmaster of Troop 19 and Council Commissioner. He was exceptionally well qualified for the job as he not only understood the problems of maintenance and building, but also the program needs of the boy.

Negotiations continued on between the Scout officials, the city of El Cerrito, the W. H. Gibson Foundation, and the W.P.A.

The Executive made arrangements with the City of Berkeley to start cutting down the quarry walls. The City wanted the rock and rubble for construction of the aquatic park and for the road surrounding the lake. Arrangements were also made to let the state take rock from the quarry for the road over the hill to the rifle range. The City was to remove some 40,000 tons.

Five sleeping cabins were repainted.

The Spring Training Conference was held at camp. During the year (1937) 3,317 Scouts and 174 leaders used the camp.

The year 1938 marked the inauguration of a program of extensive improvements at Camp Herms. A special committee made up of Albert Lester, Harold Piatt, Lewis Schuessler, McCaulay, Frank Cornish, George Miller, William B. Herms, and Victor Lindblad (Executive), was appointed by President Herms to work out the final details with the W.P.A. and the City of El Cerrito.

The City of El Cerrito sponsored the project and the City Engineer was to act as liaison between the W.P.A. and the council. The Scout Executive was appointed as general director and Mr. Waterbury as the project officer on the grounds representing the Scout Executive and the council.

The W. H. Gibson Foundation gave the council \$2,500 for the construction of a pool and the Scout Executive accepted the responsibility of raising approximately \$125,000 in cash and materials for the project. This included the

swimming pool, widening of the quarry area, sloping the quarry walls, erection of a number of buildings, rebuilding some buildings already partially constructed, landscaping the area, building rock walls, planting trees and shrubs, construction of water lines, and fencing of camp.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the pool were conducted February of 1938 and from then on, the work proceeded rapidly. The digging of the trench from the pool to the west of camp was most difficult as it had to be dug from solid rock most of the way and reached a depth of approximately 12 feet at the outlet.

Harold Piatt sent his engineering crew in, and they did all the surveying for grade stakes where cuts were to be made and dirt removed. The pool was constructed first, and then the walls and dressing rooms started. Mr. Piatt paid for the time of his men and they were there each day and contributed his own time without cost to the council.

Dozens of individuals and firms contributed the work at camp. Among the firms were:

- Berkeley City Schools, Berkeley
- Columbia-Geneva Steel Company of Pittsburg
- Standard Oil Company of California - Richmond
- Union Oil Company of California - Rodeo
- Shell Oil Company of California - Martinez
- Associated Oil Company of California
- Rheem Manufacturing Company - Richmond
- Blake Brothers Sand and Gravel - Richmond
- Transit Mix Cement Company - Oakland
- Judson Steel Company - Oakland
- Pacific Gas and Electric - Berkeley
- Berkeley Steel Company - Berkeley
- California Corrugated Company - Berkeley
- Hill Lumber Company - Albany
- Cowell Cement Company - San Francisco
- Berkeley Horticultural Nursery - Berkeley
- Richmond Sanitary - Richmond
- Pacific Telephone and Telegraph

Materials contributed included reinforcing bar, cement, gravel, sand, wire, glass, lumber, electrical fixtures, pipe, valves, fence wire, roofing, plumbing fixtures, shower fixtures, paint and equipment of many kinds.

Troop 13 under the direction of Harry Fonden started excavating and filling for the Baden-Powell campsite and grove. Harry Fonden accepted the responsibility of watering the new trees and shrubs as planted. One hundred trees, contributed by Troop 7 of Berkeley were planted in 1938.

Troop 41 constructed a log cabin just west of the south entrance road in camp. A new chemical fire truck was added to camp property.

One of the sad things to happen during 1938 was the death of Mr. McCaulay, who had worked so hard for the camp and was chairman of the Camp Herms committee.

The Spring Training Conference of 1938 was unusually successful. Oscar Kirkham was the principal speaker.

The attendance at camp increased -- 402 units (some repeats) used the camp with 4,474 Scouts and 510 leaders participating in camp activities.

One event of major importance in 1939 was the changing of the name of the camp from Camp Berkeley to Camp William B. Herms.

During 1939 the swimming pool was completed (the stone being taken from the quarry walls to the southeast of the quarry), also the director's dwelling and the double garage with a work pit and underground gasoline storage tank. A 4-inch water line was installed from Arlington Avenue to the pool.

[Editor's note: Ownership of Camp Herms had to be actually transferred to the City of El Cerrito before the W.P.A. would agree to the project. When the pool project was completed, the City of El Cerrito was initially reluctant to return title of the valuable facility back to the Mt. Diablo Council. Fortunately, the well-known and very civic-minded Justice A. F. Bray had been involved in drafting the agreement between the City and the Mt. Diablo Council. Justice Bray had anticipated that this might happen and had included provisions in the agreement that made it very undesirable for the City to retain the property. Thanks to Justice Bray's foresight Camp Herms was soon back in the hands of the Boy Scouts. However, due to administrative oversight, the title to the property did not actually revert back to the Mt. Diablo Council for a number of years.]

Following the landscaping plan of George Budgen, trees and shrubs were planted. The trees included Sequoia (*Sempervirens* and [*Sequoiadendron*] *Gigantea*), Monterey Pine, Bishop Pine, Balsam, Douglas Fir, White Birch, and shrubs such as heather and other flowering shrubs. The year 1939 was the principal year of tree and shrub planting. Ice plant was planted on the hillsides.

One hundred eighty seven men attended the two-day Spring Training Conference in 1939. The 1939 Fall Field Day was directed by Charles Adams and Robert Pellum. The activities included log chopping, first aid, string burning, fuzz stick making, water boiling, flower identification, observation, trail marking, and games of competition on a patrol basis.

A breakdown of the 1939 use of camp is as follows:

- 149 Troops took 165 overnight hikes to camp with 2,430 boys and leaders.
- 12 Troops conducted 3 to 5 day camps with 144 Scouts and 17 leaders.
- 37 different organizations used the camp with 3,347 people participating.
- 1,246 boys used the swimming pool.

Total use of the camp 10,623 people (1939.)

Supplementing the W.P.A. workers, the Council promoted volunteer work parties practically every weekend.

Special rules and regulations were drawn up and approved for the use of the swimming pool as follows:

RULES GOVERNING USE OF CAMP HERMS SWIMMING POOL - 1939

1. Senior Life Saver (American Red Cross) to be on duty on Life Guard tower during the time pool is open. Junior Life Guards to be provided to the extent of one pair of eyes for every ten swimmers
2. Swimming periods will be:
 - A. 10:00 A.M. to 11:45 A.M. (Except Sunday morning)
 - B. 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
 - C. 7:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. (for groups by reservation)
3. Everyone will be required to conform to Buddy System of swimming. Check to be made every ten minutes.

4. Only swimmers allowed in deep water (pool is divided into three sections).
 - A. For non-swimmers
 - B. For beginners
 - C. For swimmers
5. Boy Scouts using the pool must present their physical examination slip indicating physical fitness.
6. All persons using the pool do so at their own risk. The Council will not be responsible for accidents which may result from use of the pool or its facilities.
7. Persons suffering from skin diseases, contagious diseases, or any objectionable form of disease or sore will be denied the use of the pool. Everyone must take a hot shower before going into the pool. The Council reserves the right to deny any person use of the pool for reasons which may be determined as objectionable, as for profanity, drunkenness, unwillingness to conform to regulations, etc.
8. No one will be allowed in the pool enclosure except those in swimming attire. No nude swimming will be allowed. All swimmers will furnish their own towels and suits.
9. Pool reservations for groups must be made one month in advance.
10. No running, pushing, or ducking will be allowed.

In 1940 the filter pits in the swimming pool were rebuilt to satisfy the State Health and Safety Regulations. The latter part of 1939 and the early part of 1940 saw the completion of the following projects not listed as completed in 1939.

- a. Rock retaining walls around dining lodge and down the upper hillside of the south road.
- b. Quarry walls cut back and sloped to angle of repose.
- c. Play area in quarry leveled and surfaced with a gentle slope for drainage to the west.
- d. The little conference building in the quarry completely rebuilt and inside walls lined.
- e. The handicraft lodge moved, rebuilt, and concrete foundation put under it.
- f. The quartermaster's building (program building) rebuilt and a concrete foundation and basement built under it. One room added and a toilet and washbowl installed.
- g. The dining lodge jacked up and concrete foundation put under the building.
- h. The Sea Scout Warehouse constructed.
- i. The sleeping cabins rebuilt.
- j. A flag pole erected on the west toe of the camp. This area had been leveled and a row of Monterey Pine planted around the entire circle.
- k. The north and south roads into camp were widened and surfaced.
- l. The entire camp had been landscaped and trees and shrubs planted. A row of redwoods planted on each side of the entrance to the quarry, which in time would make a most colorful approach.
- m. Approximately 100 Eucalyptus trees were removed in order to allow for growth of seedling conifers which were planted the fall of 1939. Approximately a quarter of a million dollars worth of materials, money, and labor have gone in to camp since the heavy program of building and improvement started in 1937 up to present time (end of 1940).
- n. A new septic tank was built and new sewer lines were installed to the new director's dwelling, the shower house, swimming pool, and program building and dining lodge.
- o. A new washhouse and shower building was constructed.
- p. The camp was cleared of brush and poison oak.

The past few years were busy ones at Camp Herms. During 1940, 10,983 Scouts and adults used the camp.

In 1941 the council turned its attention to program in camp. With wonderful facilities available, a volunteer staff of older Scouts and Scouters served during the summer and on weekends during the school year. Irving Waterbury directed their activities in 1941.

The threatening war clouds led to a series of defense mobilization meetings at camp and this resulted in a special training program in disaster preparedness under special leadership at camp.

A special Regional Aquatic and waterfront school was held during June of 1941.

The two-day Spring Training Conference was attended by 300 adults.

On December 14, a week following declaration of war, an emergency meeting of all leaders and key officials was called at Camp Herms to outline the council mobilization plan and the part the Scouts and leaders would be asked to play during the war. 385 men jammed into the dining hall.

A new high in the use of camp was reached in 1941. 16,624 Scouts and leaders used the camp facilities.

The year 1942 saw the camp taken over by the U.S. Army. A plan was drawn up whereby the government would pay the council \$100 a month, which of course did not in any measure pay for the monthly camp expense, but it helped. Mr. Waterbury was allowed to live in the camp to protect our interests. The Scout Executive acted as liaison between the council and the army officials. The Scouts were allowed to use the area, such as it was down on the flat to the west of camp. Due to the army in the camp, its use by Scouts fell off decidedly. 7,160 men and boys used the camp in 1942.

During 1943 the camp was returned to the council for use by the Scouts again. The camp had been given very hard use and there was need of considerable repair. An attempt to get proper redress for injury to the camp was unsuccessful.

5,209 Scouts and Scouters used the camp in 1943.

One interesting sidelight in 1943 was the planting of vegetable gardens on all available ground in camp suitable for growing vegetables. [Editor's note: "Victory Gardens" were very common in El Cerrito during the war years.]

The year 1944 witnessed a new innovation at camp -- the use of the camp facilities for Cub picnics. During the year 12 Packs with 308 Cubs and parents held picnics in the camp area.

During the year (1944) two cooking shelters were constructed. One on the north rim and one on the south rim. The year also saw the excavation work done for two toilet buildings, one on the south and one on the north rim. Water lines were extended up to the toilet sites.

The Western Division held its camporee at Herms.

The Spring Training Conference was held at camp again.

4,407 scouts and leaders used the camp in 1944.

The year 1945 saw the inauguration of a Spring and Fall Scout Leaders' Training Conference at camp. 270 men attended these courses.

Rex Ingersoll was appointed program director for camp and an intensive activity program was inaugurated. Mr. Ingersoll organized an excellent volunteer staff of junior and senior leaders to assist with the program.

The Western Division held its camporee at Herms in 1945 and the council conducted the council-wide Cub picnic at the camp. 1,513 Cubs, Cubbers, and parents participated.

The camp attendance for the year 1945 increased over 100%--11,270 Scouts, Cubs, and Scouters used the camp.

Harold Esser was employed as program director of Herms for the year 1946. He developed a very fine staff of twelve volunteers to assist him and promoted a varied program of activities.

The parents and leaders of Pack 8 in Kensington spent several days using heavy equipment in leveling the south portion of the play field down on the flat. They marked off a baseball diamond and put in a backstop. Several Cub packs held their Inter-den baseball games at the camp.

In February of 1946 the Wolfeboro Pioneers held their annual dinner and meeting at Herms.

Over 600 adult Scouters attended the Spring (April 27-28) and Fall (September 21-22) Training Conference.

The attendance at camp increased to 15,622 Cubs, Scouts and leaders for the year 1946.

Following the war, temporary repairs had been made in the camp, but in 1947, under the leadership of Edwin S. Pillsbury, a capital campaign for building repair was successfully consummated. As a result of this campaign a new concrete base toilet and shower building was constructed inside the quarry on the same site as the former building, all sleeping cabins were repaired, the dining hall was lined with knotty pine, window casements were constructed inside the building, the entire dining lodge was rewired and new soft lights with chandeliers installed, the kitchen was refurbished and new equipment installed and camp was given a general overhauling. All buildings were painted and a new porch built the entire length of the dining lodge.

215 men and women attended the 1947 Spring Scout Leaders Training Conference.

Under the direction of Captain Fred Mills, National Director of Health and Safety for the Boy Scouts of America, a National Camp Leaders Training School was held at camp (1947).

The use of the camp jumped to 28,814 Cubs, Scouts, leaders and parents in 1947. The camp program was under the direction of Joseph Esser and Irving Waterbury together with a volunteer staff of 14 older Scouts and adults.

In 1948 a new stage was constructed at camp and the toilet buildings on the north and south rims completed. Work parties cleared the camp of brush and young Eucalyptus, which had grown up and become a fire hazard.

Harry Fonden continued his service of working in camp a couple of days a week. He worked on Baden-Powell grove and watered all the new trees and shrubs regularly.

The largest crowd ever to attend the Spring Training Conference participated this year (1948). 307 attended the evening banquet and 387 attended the various sessions. Victor Lindblad was the principal speaker.

Gordon Tucker was employed by the Scout Executive to serve as program director with Irving Waterbury.

A new policy for use of the lodge was passed by the board in 1948. A charge of \$2.50 to a Scouting group wishing to use the lodge and kitchen -- i.e. if under 100 total attendance. If over 100, the charge to be \$3.50. For outside groups the charge to be \$10. The Executive and office staff held their annual Xmas party at camp in December.

29,203 Scouts, Cubs, parents, Cubbers and Scouters used the camp in 1948.

In 1949 the Scout Executive employed Les Simonsen Jr. as program director on a year around basis. He was to give full time during the summer and half time i.e. weekends during the school months. Les built up a very efficient and dedicated group of young men as staff and carefully trained them. The program variety was increased and intensified. Nature trails were carefully laid out and plants and trees labeled.

During 1949 a new warehouse was constructed and work was started on adding an additional room to the staff shack.

408 men and women attended the Spring Training Conference. The principal speaker was Geoffrey Morgan.

The camp attendance reached an all time high of 41,000 Cubs, Scouts, Senior Scouts, parents, and leaders. Les Simonsen's dynamic drive and leadership was largely responsible for the heavy increase in the camp's use.

Several of the sleeping cabins were lined.

During the year 1950, a commodious training room 30 ft X 30 ft was built on the north end of the lodge. The room was lined with comb plywood, and a large fireplace was constructed in the north end of the room. The large fireplace in the dining hall was completely rebuilt in order to eliminate down drafts. The staff building was completed.

Under the leadership of program director Les Simonsen, Jr., a staff of 33 adults and 49 junior leaders was recruited. These leaders were on call throughout the year. The program emphasis was training in the second and first class tests. Registered counselors were available to give instruction in 18 different merit badge subjects in camp. During the year 292 merit badges were earned and 2,225 tests given in second and first class requirements.

The Jamboree Troops set up a three day camp at Herms in 1950 in training for the National Jamboree.

The Spring Training Conference was well attended.

42,103 Scouts, Cubs and leaders used the camp in 1950.

In 1951 a special training course set up by Les Simonsen, Jr. modeled after the National Wood Badge course was conducted at camp for the first time. The men spent a week in camp doing their own cooking and studying on a patrol basis.

Under the personal direction of the National Camping Director, Wes Klusman, and assisted by two other National Leaders, Guy Miller and William Laurence, the National Camping School was conducted at Camp Herms. (1951)

At the 1951 Spring Scout Leaders Training Conference at Herms, Bud Bennett, National Director of Exploring and George Bullock of Philmont, delivered the principal addresses. 387 men and women attended. [Editor's note: Philmont Ranch is a national Boy Scout camp in northern New Mexico.]

The Jamboree reunion of Scouts and parents was held at camp.

During 1951-1953, 386 Cubs, Scouts, parents, and leaders used Camp Herms.

Early in 1952 the Santa Fe Railroad gave the council a building which was moved to Camp Herms. Mr. Alberts, owner of the Richmond Clothing Store bearing his name, gave the council \$1,700 with which to construct the "Alberts

Nature Museum". With the Santa Fe building serving as the base, the Alberts Nature Museum was built. It was lined with knotty pine and the floor was covered with inlaid linoleum.

The Richmond Rotary Club was induced to give 100 steel folding chairs to the camp. (1952).

Ron Murray was appointed chairman of a special committee to promote work parties and activities at Herms.

The Spring Training Conference in 1952 had grown to the point where it was difficult to properly house those attending, so the group was divided; part of the group stayed at Herms.

Mort Kerwin served as program director for the camp in 1952.

Camp Herms was one of the first camps in the State of California to be certified by the State Department of Social Welfare as an accredited state approved camp, satisfying all the standards set up for a youth camp. (1952)

A new cement foundation was poured for the craft building and the building then moved on to the foundation. (1952)

During 1952 all the sleeping cabins were covered on the outside with asbestos shingles as was the warehouse. All the buildings were painted. Also during the year the Executive was able to get the P.G.& E. to pipe natural gas into the camp, for use in our kitchen and in the director's dwelling.

During 1952 the camp was used by 38,803 Scouts, Cubs, parents, and leaders.

Due to the hills close up to the swimming pool on the north and south side, a heavy suction was created which caused almost constant wind blowing eastward over the pool. In order to rectify this problem and cut down the hills to the east of the property and provide more activity area, the Scout Executive arranged with Louis Navellier and a group of men to install a rock crusher in the quarry to proceed with the removal of the hills, the council to be to paid ten cents a yard for the rock and dirt removed. The work to start the latter part of the year 1953.

Due to weathering, it was necessary to replace all the windows and windowsills on the west side of the dining lodge in 1953. During the same year, Les Simonsen, Jr. erected a redwood log entrance to camp on the north side and cut down all the Eucalyptus trees endangering the lodge.

During the year 1953 the kitchen was enlarged and a storage room constructed. The Alberts Nature Museum was dedicated in April of 1953, Justice Bray and Scout Executive Victor Lindblad being the speakers.

An event of importance during 1953 was the testimonial dinner given at camp for Mr. and Mrs. Irving Waterbury. The Scout Executive gave the testimonial speech. Mr. Waterbury's record of service in camp could not be excelled.

As customary, part of the Spring Training Conference was held at camp.

Another interesting phase of the 1953 program was the number of Troops using the camp for long-term camping. 19 Troops camped for a week or more in the camp with 181 Scouts and 27 leaders. The total use of the camp for the year 1953 was 41,427 Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, parents, and leaders.

John Bell was appointed as program director for Camp Herms for the year 1954.

An event of historical importance was the inauguration of the "Eatin Meetin" of the Camp Herms district at the camp in 1954.

The work of cutting down the hills continued throughout the year.

1954 was the high point in attendance at camp Herms -- 58,961 Scouts, Cubs, parents, leaders used the camp's facilities during the year. This unprecedented use was a result of a number of years of promotion and intensive program at camp. Les Simonsen, Jr. continued to promote the camp's use even though serving in a professional capacity in another district besides being related to another camp program. Many dedicated lay Scouters worked unceasingly for the enrichment of the program in camp.

During 1955 a new heating plant was installed in the lodge, new stainless steel equipment and an additional gas cooking range was installed in the kitchen. All the buildings were painted and work was started to fill the swamp and raise the level of the playground area. The plan called for two acres of play field. 100 Eucalyptus trees were cut down in order to allow for growth of conifers which had been planted. A 250 ft sewer line was laid replacing much of the line, which had become obsolete.

The work continued on cutting down the hills. This work interfered considerably with some of the camp activities, and the attendance during 1955 dropped to 36,359.

A year-round Den Mothers Training Program was set up and centered at Camp Herms. Mrs. Ethel Lopez of Concord spent every Thursday at camp instructing in the techniques of Den Mother service.

Due to the untimely and unfortunate death of Les Simonsen, Jr. and several Scouts who were going on a vacation trip, the Executive Board of the Council took action to name the play field now in process of development, the Leslie Simonsen Recreational Field. A suitable monument to be erected and the names of Les and the boys to be inscribed on a suitable plaque to be placed on the stone monument. [Editor's Note: In August of 1956 Les Simonsen, Jr. and four others were killed in an automobile accident while on their way to Alaska.]

Leslie Simonsen Senior was appointed chairman of the Camp Herms Committee.

During April 1956, President Edwin S. Pillsbury officially dedicated a plaque and the swimming pool to Harold Piatt, a plaque to W. H. Gibson, and a plaque to Harry Fonden, for their service to the camp over the years.

During 1956 the south entrance to the camp was paved, the council bearing the expense.

During 1956 the Baden-Powell course was repeated, a section of the Spring Training Scout leaders course and a Junior Leaders course was held at Camp Herms.

Most of the leveling of the Simonsen Recreational Field was completed and the land so sloped as to drain toward the east hill. Here the water was picked up in a deep trench equipped with two levels of drain tile and covered with rock and depth of several feet and carried south and west around the field to the storm sewers. It was necessary to raise the north swamp area some fourteen feet.

The Harris Construction Company and the Smith Construction Company furnished the heavy equipment and the operators for the leveling. Much of the fill came from the quarry. Les Simonsen Senior worked untiringly in getting the drain ditch excavated the drain tile in, and the tile covered with stone.

As in the case of everything done in camp, volunteer workers did the work, generous friends contributed money, interested leaders of industry contributed materials, and gracious contractors loaned their equipment and paid for the operators. The Scout Executive gave leadership to the promotion of the above opportunities of men to serve Scouting.

The camp attendance dropped to 32,867 in 1956.

During 1957, under the direction of Ralph Rawson, the monument was erected on the Simonsen field and the plaque listing the names of Les Simonsen, Jr., and the Scouts killed was mounted on the monument. The dedicatory services were held during the year. A circle of Redwoods was planted to the east of the field, the trees being contributed by Dr. Binkley, the father of one of the Scouts who was killed.

The drainage ditch was completed during the year.

25,728 Scouts, Cubs, Explorers, parents and leaders used the camp in 1957. The work of removing the quarry hills and leveling the hills to the north to an angle of repose was completed and work was begun to remove the rock crusher and other equipment and level off the play area in the quarry.

During 1958, the interior of the director's home was painted, the flag ceremony area was graded; roads were repaired, and additional camp area was added through fill to the north of the flag ceremony area. The hills to the East of the camp had been lowered some 20-ft during the period of excavation.

The camp was again ready for an intensive program of activities.

The camp attendance for 1958 fell off considerably -- 15,552 Scouts, Cubs, parents, and leaders used the facilities during the year. The heavy trucks going in and out of camp caused much of the drop in attendance.

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