

Pine Tree Jim

NO STORY OF HAWAII, certainly no story of Scouting in the islands, would be complete without relating the contribution of the late James A. Wilder — “Kimo” as he was known in Honolulu where he was born in 1868. Old-time skippers of Sea Explorer ships will recall that he was one of the founders of Sea Scouting, or water Scouting, as it was known in the early days of the movement.

His was a storybook life. Neighbor of Hawaiian royalty, world traveler, raconteur, and friend of internationally famous figures, Wilder was known in many parts of the world.

His intense interest in native food—cooked as the natives cooked them, usually without utensils—led him to write *Jack-Knife Cookery* that has gone through numerous printings. Many methods used in modern trail cookery are based on techniques he introduced.

Jim Wilder was started in Scoutcraft by such teachers as General Julian Byng and Lieutenant General Robert S. S. Baden-Powell. He first served as a Scoutmaster in 1911 in his home city of Honolulu. In 1918 he published *The Pine Tree Patrol*, a system of camping. It involved using a standardized outfit, equipment, and patrol of eight—together with games, drills, and stunts for a record against time. It was designed primarily for the older boy in Scouting. (There was no Exploring program at the time.) The popularity of the Pine Tree Patrol system for many years was evidence of his knowledge of boy nature.

Even in his recipes for outdoor cookery, recipes gleaned from the many exotic lands he had visited, Wilder exhibited this understanding of youth by his choice of words. Here are his directions for making kabobs: “Cut your meat into pieces as big as thirty cents. (Smaller than fifty cents and bigger than a quarter.)”

Most of the measurements in his recipes were not those of the modern cook, but were those understandable



Pine Tree Jim Wilder demonstrates how to make Australian damper bread at 1926 National Scout Executive's Conference, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

to a boy. Here is “Pine Tree Jim’s” recipe for twister—bread on a stick:

- 1 heaping fistful of flour
- 1 five-finger pinch of baking powder
- 1 four-finger pinch of sugar
- 1 three-finger pinch of salt
- 1 two-finger gob of grease
- 1 or 2 fistfuls of water

Born of pioneer American stock, Wilder’s mother was the first American girl born in Honolulu. His maternal grandparents, Rev. and Mrs. Gerrit Judd, had come to Honolulu in 1828 as medical missionaries.

His father, a successful ship operator and political figure, often entertained distinguished visitors to the islands.

Late in his life Wilder could recall details of Mark Twain’s three-week visit—spent mostly in practicing cracking a bullwhip—in his mother’s parlor. Edwin Booth was another celebrity who was an overnight visitor in the Wilder home.

In 1918 Wilder joined the National staff of the Boy Scouts of America as director of the Department of Sea

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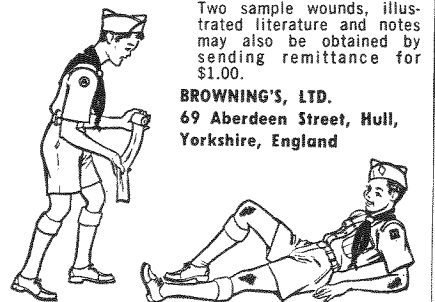
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Scouting. His salary and extensive travel expenses were paid from his personal income.

The March 1, 1918, issue of SCOUTING magazine, referring to his appointment, points out that "He has had as broad an experience as any man in this country in all phases of Scouting." He was well known to scores of students who had received Scoutcraft instruction from him at Boston University, Columbia University, New York University, and at various Scout conferences.

In his position as Chief Sea Scout, Wilder visited many of the young Scout councils throughout the nation, explaining the values inherent in the program he loved so well. His ideas related to camp cooking and organization and especially those pertaining to the older boy in Scouting are incorporated in much of our present-day program.

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