

MOLOKAI-OAHU RACE HI-LITES

By A. E. "TOOTS" MINVILLE

The third and most successful Molokai-Oahu Hawaiian Outrigger canoe race was again promoted by Aloha Week, Hawaii, on Saturday, October 23, 1954. Although regarded as a race, it must be recognized as symbolic of the old method of inter-island travel and communication. Moreover, it is true that the people of Molokai are eager to send their Aloha and greetings to the King, his court and the people of Oahu, and their crews are more eager to be the first crew to arrive at the finish.

Most races and peoples worshipped deity as a supreme-being in some form. The Hawaiians were very religious and before undertaking any long journey to the South Seas performed ceremonies invoking the blessing and guidance of their almighty gods. It is significant that this event started in a similar manner.

After trucking the canoes to the beach at northwest corner of Molokai and enjoying the hospitality, friendliness, fine food, the music, the paddlers and a group of several hundred people gathered for a spiritual ceremony and short talks by representative Molokai friends. An impressive prayer was offered by the Rev. Alice Kakauloa of Molokai and those present will never forget the solemnity of the occasion.

The crews then busily engaged in tying up their canoes and readying them for the start before 10:00 p.m. bedtime on the beach. At pre-dawn, 4:45, "chow" call was sounded. It was a fine breakfast enjoyed by a happy, healthy group in fine spirits. At 5:15 a brief prayer was offered before the canoes were slid into the water to take helpers and alternates to the convoy motor cruisers and sampans. At 6:08 everything was in readiness and the starter's gun barked to start eight canoes and forty-eight eager men out over the perilous crossing of open ocean, the Molokai channel.

Several canoes started on a sort of "crow's flight," that is, a direct course to Diamond Head. Others took a course north for a while with the idea that they would turn left at a certain time and

have the northern trade winds and swell to stern. They found, however, that the current was not in their favor. All canoes thought covered the route King Kamehameha I, Napoleon of the Pacific, covered in his conquest of Oahu in 1795.

The shortest distance any canoe was paddled was at least 40 miles to Waikiki Beach and the time of the winner, Hui Nalu crew, of 6 hours and 5 minutes shows an average of 6½ miles per hour.

An immense crowd greeted the paddlers at Waikiki. Well wishers, friends, wives and sweethearts met the weak paddlers with kisses, leis, tears and cheers. All crew members were rewarded for their brave and strenuous undertaking with medals and other awards.

The fact that the winning crew was composed of Hawaiian boys of a club Hawaiian name, Hui Nalu, seems appropriate and fitting. Some "eager beaver" coast haoles were anxious to give it a

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and paddled for the Outrigger Canoe Club team.

Thinking back on this great experience, those who participated in the event know what pulled them through; they will never take prayer to God lightly. In all undertakings, we should all be worthy of receiving and invoking the care and blessing of the Almighty.

Race results: Hui Nalu, first; Waikiki Surf, second; Hui Kalia, third; Beach Services, fourth; Outrigger Canoe Club, fifth; Kukui o' Lanikaula o' Molokai, sixth; Hale Auau, seventh, and Koolau-poko Kailua, eighth.



TOP: On beach is the Pohopoho (Patches) canoe of Hale Auau. The Waikiki Surf Club's Mali is taking off. CENTER: Part of the ceremonies surrounding the annual Molokai-Oahu outrigger Canoe Races are prayers offered for the safety of the paddlers making the crossing of the channel in the outrigger canoes. BOTTOM: Kukui o'Lanikaula Club checks the Palamim before starting.

Pics by Lee's Studio, Molokai