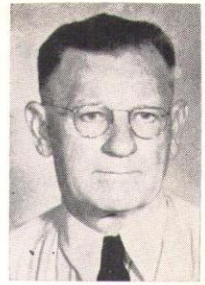


# FIRST XMAS AND NEW YEAR'S IN HAWAII

Another fine historical article by Edwin North McClellan, writer, historian, radio commentator, world traveler, retired Marine Officer and good friend.

by Edwin North McClellan



Neptune Rex, roaming his Pacific Domain, paused on the exact spot where thousands of years later at Waikiki the Outrigger Canoe Club would serve the public. Fathoms of salt-water covered the spot. The time was that merry-and-happy-period before Christ was born which today we call the Holiday-Season.

## GODDESS PELE BUILDS ISLANDS

"It looks as if some day I will have to surrender this area," sadly murmured Neptune to his Secretary, "for I observe that Pele, Goddess of the Volcanoes, is forcing her lava to the surface.

On a New Year's a long-time later, a series of live volcanic mountain peaks appeared above the Pacific waters. They were the islands which, after the passage of centuries, were named Hawaiian. More centuries passed and Madame Pele, one Merrie Christmas, quenched the volcanoes now known as Puowaina (Punchbowl) and Leahi (Diamond Head) and proceeded to her home in Halemaumau Firepit on the biggest island.

## WAIKIKI BEACH FORMED BUT YET NO MAN

Lava was the foundation, coral polyps added the reef while coral, seashells and other things gradually made the beautiful Beach of Waikiki. "We've done a most perfect job in this Land of Spurting Water," said one Coral Polyp to its friend. "We have created a glorious beach in a magnificent setting and made the grandest natural swimming-pool in the whole world, between the reef and the Beach." Christ had not yet been born! Man was still absent from Waikiki!

Soil formed, vegetation dotted Oahu-the-Glorious. Some animals established themselves. Numerous Xmas and New Year's passed at Waikiki before humans appeared to eat the food that Nature provided.

## CHRIST IS BORN—HAWAII DISCOVERED

On a first Christmas, that saw the

beginning of Christian civilization, Jesus Christ was born of Virgin Mary far from Waikiki. Some time after that world-stirring event the Polynesian navigators discovered Hawaii. It was not long before there were men, women and children with canoes and surfboards at Waikiki.

"What are those strange little two-finned creatures on the coral-beach and playing in the surf?" asked Blonde-Haired Queen-Shark Kaahupahau, late on a moon-lit New Year's Eve, of her Consort, as they inspected her Waikiki dominion. "They are little humans called *menehunes* or Polynesians," replied Mr. Consort.

## QUEEN SHARK TABUS MAN-EATERS

"I like those miniature humans," declared the Queen-Shark, "and hereby decree that sharks shall never interfere with their safety between the Reef and Beach! That area is *tabu* forever to man-eating sharks!"

Bigger and more intelligent Polynesians, bringing more abundant and varied food, more animals and plants, followed the *menehunes* to Waikiki.

One Christmas about this time, a pure-hearted shark, named Kaehu, complying with the edict of Queen-Shark Kaahupahau, saved the lives of some surf-boarding Hawaiians at Waikiki from the man-eater Pehu who was executed.

## LEGENDARY XMAS AND NEW YEAR'S

Legendary heroes, heroines and villains, enjoyed Waikiki during this period. There was Kauhi a Shark-God who, in this human-form, brought tragic

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## FIRST XMAS

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death to his sweetheart Kahalaopuna the beautiful Princess of Manoa, after two ugly and vile Waikiki surfers had made lying-evil boasts about the Princess. Then, there was lovely Kelea the Perfect Surferess who, when urged to marry, replied: "The Surfboard is my Husband!"

Countless Xmas and New Year's passed down the ages as Kings and Queens of Oahu enjoyed surfing and outriggering in the Royal Surf Kahuaweke off Waikiki and bathing in the freshwater stream Apuakehau, during the *makahiki* period and other times. One royal aquator was King Kakuhihewa who lived at Helumoa at Waikiki. Later, there was King Kaihikapu whose thatched palace stood near the stream Aquakehau. He it was who killed his disloyal brother Hao by means of a Trojan Shark from Waikiki. And there was the fabulous Kawelo. Another famous King of Oahu, palaced at Waikiki, was Kualii whose dead bones were saved by his *Kahu* from being used as arrow-tips. This faithful servant ground Kualii's bones to powder, mixed the

powder with *poi* which the Chiefs swallowed—burying the bones of Kualii in a "Hundred Living Tombs."

### SPANISH XMAS IN HAWAII?

Two Spaniards "Paa and Pili, as their names were rendered into Hawaiian," wrote Bishop Stephen P. Alencastre, in September, 1937, "introduced the Catholic religion," in Hawaii "before 1600." If so, the ancient Hawaiians commemorated Xmas at an early date.

### CAPTAIN COOK'S XMAS OF 1778

It was during the reign of King Peleioholani of Oahu, on January 18, 1778, that Captain James Cook, and several Americans including John Ledyard, aboard the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, saw Oahu bearing northeast-by-east. Maybe they were looking right at the site of the Outrigger Canoe Club on Waikiki Beach. From these British and Americans the Hawaiians first heard of Xmas and New Year's. Cook had named Christmas Island on December 25, 1777. And news of the Christian faith drifted to the Waikikians from the Big Island where the first Christian burial service had been observed over

one of Cook's men buried on a *heiau*.

Two days before Xmas of 1778 Hawaiians in their canoes carried hogs, fowl, fruit, roots and one duck, to Cook's ships. Captain Cook had prepared beer from Hawaiian sugarcane—Hawaiian Grog—which he wrote was palatable but his men disagreed with that adjective. So, afloat on Hawaiian waters the Great-Navigator enjoyed an Hawaiian Xmas without much aid of sea-stores and probably toasted in Hawaiian Beer.

King Peleioholani was succeeded by King Kumahana and he by Kahahana of Maui who landed his invading army at Waikiki, Kahahana lived in the shade of the *kou* and coconut trees at Ulukou in Waikiki. Xmas and New Year's came and went until at last King Kahekili of Maui invaded Oahu about 1783. His canoes covered the Sands of Waikiki. Within a few days King Kahahana, and his friend Alapai, were dead and Kahekili had added Oahu to his Inter-Island Kingdom, with Waikiki as capital. Kahekili lived at Ulukou near the Beach.

#### **HAOLE DISCOVER WAIKIKI—FIRST XMAS ASHORE**

Kahekili was King of Oahu living at Waikiki when in 1786, officers of the *King George* (Nathaniel Portlock) and *Queen Charlotte* (George Dixon) discovered Waikiki. The two ships never anchored in Waikiki Bay, but moved over to Kauai where the Hawaiians and their *haole* visitors celebrated the first Xmas season ashore with exchange of gifts and dinners. The first Xmas ashore at Waikiki has not yet been isolated from the dust.

#### **FIRST HAOLE SHIP IN WAIKIKI BAY**

The *Imperial Eagle* (William Barkley), on May 25, 1787, became the first foreign ship to anchor in Waikiki Bay.

Christmas of 1788 was commemorated by the personnel of the *Iphigenia* (William Douglas) in Hawaiian waters between Maui and Oahu. She anchored in Waikiki Bay on New Year's 1789. Captain Douglas sent belated Xmas presents to King Kahekili at Waikiki who visited the *Iphigenia* under a salute of four guns. On New Year's the *haole* skipper was entertained ashore by Kahekili with a *luau* and *hulas*.