



EDWIN N. MCCLELLAN

FDR'S WAIKIKI "WHITE HOUSE" - 1934

by EDWIN NORTH MCCLELLAN

First American President to visit Waikiki Beach where he lived "at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel . . . the White House for two days," reported the New York Times—From the Pink Palace he viewed the Outrigger Canoe Club, the Coral Beach and the B. Pacific, with their many aquatic activities—He would liked to have paddled an outrigger canoe, rode the surfboard as did his sons Franklin and John, but Fate said: —And in his mind were pictures of his ancestors as they sailed on ships past Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach into Honolulu Harbor, just as he had.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, with his sons Franklin and John, arrived Honolulu aboard the cruiser *Houston* escorted by the *New Orleans*, from Hilo, on July 26, 1934. As the two cruisers steamed around Diamond Head an Aloha Flig of Army and Navy planes, greeted the Commander-in-Chief. Off Waikiki Beach fleet of fifteen outrigger canoes mostly from the Outrigger Canoe Club, and hundred sampans, surrounded the *Houston* and *New Orleans* and escorted the President to Pier Two.

DUKE KAHANAMOKU HEADS ALOHA FLEET

Aboard a large double outrigger canoe arranged to appear as a royal canoe of the First King, was Duke Paoa Kahana-moku, World Champion Swimmer, in whose bronzed body probably flows the blood of the King he represented. He was clad in the part of ancient Hawaiian royalty symbolic of Kamehameha the Great. His paddlers were *aliis* costumed in accordance with ancient custom, wearing *malos* and feather capes.

AN UNPARALLELED "ALOHA"

At Pier Two over sixty thousand enthusiastic Islanders of many races, greeted President Roosevelt. A Marine Guard of Honor was there. So was the Royal Hawaiian Band, *hula* maidens, singers and high officials. The Band played *Hawaii Pono*, *Aloha Oe* and *Na Lei o Hawaii*. High civil and military officials boarded the *Houston* with official *aloha* greetings.

FDR LANDS IN PARADISE

About 9:15 a.m. the President disembarked. He wore a *lei*. After official honors were rendered FDR started a "Round the Island" tour. Stopped at the Nuuanu Pali, watched a *hukilau*, visited the Mormon Temple, Kemoo Pineapple Plantation, Kahuku Sugar Plantation, lunched at Schofield Barracks where he reviewed troops and watched the Army planes spell out "F.R." in the blue heavens.

WAIKIKI "WHITE HOUSE"

Finally, the Presidential Cavalcade moved out to the Beach at Waikiki where the President relaxed in his Royal Suite of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel which, the *New York Times* explained, would be "the 'White House' for two days" and where President Roosevelt would, in the lovely Garden of the Hotel, "discover another Fairyland of Greenery, with acres of ground expertly landscaped to utilize the indigenous botanical specimens of the Islands.

HOOKUPU, LUAU, PAGEANT

On the night of his arrival, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was royally honored and splendidly entertained by Governor Joseph B. Poindexter and people of Hawaiian ancestry, at Washington Place, official residence of the Governor, a former home of Queen Liliuokalani who had been with her ancestors for seventy years.

At the *luau* or native feast, FDR sampled strange foods, like chopped octopus, suckling pig, chicken in coconut milk which had been cooked in the *imu*. A *poi*, breadfruit, *limu* or seaweed, *kukui* nut kernels, pineapples, pieces of sugarcane to chew, and more.

An Hawaiian entertainment was staged on the lawn under a full moon. There was a *hookupu* or gift-giving ceremony at which FDR received many presents. A beautiful feather cape was placed on the President's shoulders by Colonel Currey.

Hehu Iaukea who sat beside FDR and explained what was going on. "President Roosevelt is our *Aliiainmoku*, he is our Great Leader!" chorused the many Hawaiians present.

President Roosevelt left Washington Place about midnight and soon was sleeping in his Waikiki *White House*.

DUKE TEACHES PRESIDENT'S SONS TO SURF

At seven o'clock on the morning of July 27, 1934, the President left his hotel to inspect Pearl Harbor. However, Franklin Jr. and John Roosevelt remained at Waikiki to have a fling at surfing. "The president's sons . . . took time off this morning from the Pearl Harbor visit . . . to sample Hawaii's most famous sport, surfing, in company with Duke Kahanamoku, the world-renowned Island swimmer," wrote the *New York Times* man. However, they were expected at Pearl Harbor in time for luncheon at the quarters of Rear-Admiral Harry E. Yarnell. Franklin Jr. and John donned their bathing-suits and, with the Duke steering, rode Waikiki Surf in an outrigger canoe. After half a dozen rides they returned to the beach where the Bronze Duke of Waikiki gave them surfboard in-

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structions. Then, the three paddled their boards out to the combers. Ending the surfboard adventure the Roosevelt boys dressed hurriedly and rushed out to Pearl Harbor where they arrived in time for the Admiral's luncheon.

DR AT PEARL HARBOR

Admiral Yarnell not only provided an excellent luncheon but also Hawaiian entertainment for his guests. Pretty Hawaiian maids danced the *hula* and sang songs of Hawaii to the strains of Island music.

After luncheon the inspection of Pearl Harbor, which had started in the morning, was resumed. The President visited the shops, Submarine base, drydocks, Ford Island on which was located the Fleet Air Base and Army's Luke Field. There was no Air Force or Hickam Air Base at this time.

This inspection, which satisfied the Commander-in-Chief, was ninety months before that "Day of Infamy," December 7, 1941.

From Pearl Harbor to dedication of the Roosevelt Memorial Portal at Ala Moana Park, and next, Fort De Russy. Some time during his visit the President called at the Shriners Hospital. He also planted a **Kukui** Tree on Iolani Palace grounds.

HONORED AT LA PIETRA BY THE DILLINGHAMS

At three o'clock this afternoon, FDR was honored by Mr. and Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham at their home **La Pietra** on the slope of Diamond Head, site of the ancient Hawaiian **heiau** (temple) **Papa-**

enaena. FDR enjoyed reminiscences with his Harvard mates, Walter and Harold Dillingham.

President Roosevelt returned to his Waikiki *White House* for a private dinner. It may have been in this interval that FDR was massaged by a Japanese masseur with the Japanese method of elbow, strong grip, and walking on the body. This masseur told me several times that he had performed such a service for FDR.

President Roosevelt left the hotel at nine o'clock for Iolani Palace where he witnessed a lantern parade by Chinese, Korean and Japanese residents.

"RESTORE THE THRONE ROOM"

On his last day, July 28, 1934, FDR visited the Throne Room in Iolani Palace. He declared that "the Throne Room should be restored to its original condition at the time of the Monarchy."

"ALOHA! FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!"

On the day of his departure, President Roosevelt stood on the upper *lanai* of Iolani Palace and made an Aloha Address to the thousands assembled and listening on the radio.

At the conclusion of his address, the President "whirled for the last time through the still gayly decorated streets to the Pier where the cruiser awaited him," reported the *New York Times*. A tremendous crowd cheered FDR as he stood on the *Houston's* gangway receiving honors, and later on the bridge.

As the warship passed Waikiki Beach beyond the Reef, FDR, Franklin, Jr. and John tossed their *leis* into Pacific waters as a promise of early return to Paradise.

F. D. Roosevelt came back in 1944 and lived in a Waikiki War *White House*.