

Big White Fleet Visits Waikiki - 1908

(Continued from January Issue)

We slept a few solid hours, until about five o'clock, on the same Saturday morning of July 18th, when a very sleepy Leatherneck Lieutenant was watching his Gyrenes coal-ship. Luncheon on the *Wisconsin*, after which several of us from the Steerage (Junior Officers) Mess rode out to Waikiki where we made the open-house Outrigger Canoe Club our headquarters. At this Club we saw some of its young members—maybe a dozen of them—working under the Club *lanai* of the grass houses—cutting planks into surfboards. Sam Wight was putting the finishing touches on a fourteen-foot surfboard built-for-two. Others also were at work on their boards. It was predicted that there would be at least a quartet of long double-surfboards ready for a Special Class in the coming Surfboard Carnival.

Early that evening of the 18th we took a quick look at the Hawaiian *luau* on the Schmidt premises on Beretania Street and returned to the ship for dinner. In evening uniform again, with about two hundred junior officers, I attended an elaborate dance party at the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Swanzy. Next morning I read in the newspaper that an impromptu Press Club of Honolulu had been hosts at the Commercial Club to visiting newsmen.

HAWAIIAN HOOKUPU

That traditional Hawaiian ceremony—the *hookupu*—came to us on Sunday, July 19. A large decorated barge, heaped with fresh fruits—bananas, mangoes, pineapples, alligator-pears, *papa'ias* and others—and sugarcane and coconuts, visited the ships and distributed its *aloha*-cargo. The *Hookupu* Committee was formed of Walter F. Dillingham (chairman), G. J. Waller, George Rodiek, Fred Macfarlane and H. P. Roth.

However, enjoyment of this ceremony was cut short to keep an engagement with my skipper (Captain Frank E. Beatty),



Edwin North McClellan, who has written this article, has a background of unusual experience. He circled the globe with the big white fleet in 1908 and visited Hawaii many times and is now a resident. Retired Lt. Colonel of the Marine Corps, and historian, editor, writer and traveller, he is presently Dean of radio commentators in Hawaii.

Commander H. C. Mustin, and our civilian hosts, to visit by automobile the scenic Nuuanu Pali. The ride up the valley and the view of Windward Oahu was magnificently impressive. I had luncheon somewhere and then, with some friends, went out to Waikiki Beach to enjoy the spectacular program of outrigger-canoe and surfboard races.

The Committee in Charge of these Waikiki Water Sports were Sam. A. Walker, O. L. Sorenson, Geo. H. Walker and A. H. Ford—with many sub-committees. Of course, the Outrigger Canoe Club was the heart of the whole affair. The exclusive motto of the Club seemed—Sea-Sports. Special seats were provided, for the Fleet visitors, in the Outrigger Canoe Club canoesheds after the outriggers had been launched.

On the beach were about fifty canoes. Crowds jammed the beach from Prince Kuhio's residence *ewa-ward* to Brown's Place (approximately present Gray's Beach). Henri Berger's Hawaiian Band filled the Waikiki air with melodious music from the Moana Bandstand while Kaai's orchestra held forth on the Seaside Hotel grounds. The judges were stationed on the end of the Moana pier.

Native Hawaiians were out in force to encourage their representatives in the contests. Many of them—men, women and children—on invitation of the Out-

rigger Canoe Club, were camped about the grass houses on the Club grounds. There were races of all kinds, including both paddle and sail outrigger canoes, and surfboards.

The first canoe race was the four-paddle 'boys' contest. Arthur Gilman was down with the mumps so Harold Hustace took his place in Walter F. Dillingham's *Malolo*. But, it was "Major," a little Hawaiian with a crew of full-blood Hawaiians, who finished first in the *Lei Ilima*, followed by the *Malolo* of the Outrigger Canoe Club. Other entries were the *Liloa*, *Hoopla* and *Kamehameha IV*.

BLUE RIBBON EVENT

Next came the race-of-the-day — to Brown's and back — in which about a dozen six-paddle canoes competed. The Outrigger Canoe Club's *Keomoku* (Gilman) held the lead until fouled. The winner was Prince Kuhio's (Cupid's) "*A*," entered by the Kamehameha Aquatic Club of Hawaiians. In second place was the *Alabama* with the *Keomoku* in third place. The victory of the white-rimmed *A* brought loud shouts of rejoicing from "hundreds" of Hawaiian men and women encamped about the grass houses on the Outrigger Canoe Club Grounds," reported the *Advertiser*.

The third race created unusual interest among the Fleet visitors. A dozen sturdily handsome Hawaiian women manned three dainty little canoes—Red, White and Blue. The little cockleshell canoes bobbed over the waves and battled the surf to get out to the starting point. The gun sounded from the end of Moana pier. The girls paddled furiously. The Blue took the lead and held it; the White almost swamped; while an enthusiastic bather seized the outrigger of the Red canoe and almost capsized it. There were other feminine races.

After this exciting *wahine* race, the Outrigger Canoe Club paddlers, in Walter F. Dillingham's *Malolo*, won the four-paddle race from Dr. Wall's *Halekulani* and the Kamehameha Aquatic Club's *Keawamalie*. The winning crew was Atherton Gilman, Lane Webster, Kenny Brown and Zen Genoves.

There were several other closely-contested paddle-canoe races, including one or two between battleship crews; but it was the Big Canoe Competition that attracted most interest. The winner was Dr. Wall's polished koa canoe *Halekulani*, with Prince Kuhio's "*A*" second, and Brown's long black *Alabama* third.

SAIL RACES TOO

The old-style koa-wood canoe sailing-race from Waikiki Beach to Castle's Point and back, was won by Harry Harris' *Lanakila* from a field of twelve including *Hoopla*, *Liloa*, "*A*," *Keawamalie*, *Hanakeoki*, *Halekulani*, *Kamehameha IV*, *Leipikaki* and *Lei Ilima*. The Modern Hawaiian Canoe Sailing contest was won by the *Kiokalina*, followed by the *Kamehameha*.

Surfboard battles were highlights of the afternoon. At a signal from the judges on the end of the Moana pier, about twenty *haole* and Hawaiian surfers launched their surfboards in the breakers. A long paddle out to the great blue billows saw surfers hurled backward over the waves with boards spinning high in the air. The survivors poised and at the gun started toward the goal. Lucky ones caught the wave and came rushing in, now lost in foam, now leaping to their feet, with two red-costumed lads of the Outrigger Canoe Club always in front. They were Sam Wight and Kenneth Winters (first Captain of the Club), and they rode the longest and thickest boards known at that time to Waikiki. Harold Hustace, the Champion Surfer of the preceding year, did well on his short surfboard; but the great big boards of Winters and Wight kept the waves long after the shorter boards lost them. Harold Hustace called them canoes; but it was obvious that the fashion in surfboards at Waikiki had turned from short boards to something long, thick and narrow. The "long type of surfboard" had "come to stay." Among the entries in the surfboard contests were Kenneth Winter, Sam Wight, Curtis Hustace, Harold Hustace, Arthur Gilman, Atherton Gilman, Arthur Myhre, Lane Webster, Harry Steiner, David Center, T. J. Carter, Ted Carter, William Dole, Manoha, Major Keaweamahi, Herman Mahl, Duke Paoa

Kahanamoku, J. Barracks, Columbus Simms, Geoffrey Podmore and Jimmy Kolanui.

The Boys' Surfboarding race was won by Lane Webster with Harry Steiner a close second. All the Outrigger Canoe Club winning members decided to take cups rather than cash prizes.

Officials for this splendid Waikiki Aquatic Sports program were: *Judges:* A. A. Wilder, S. M. Kanakanui and Robert Atkinson; *Clerks-of-Course:* A. S. Robertson and Eli Crawford; *Starters:* from Moana pier, A. L. C. Atkinson; from Flag opposite Brown's residence, Harry Rycroft; *Timekeepers:* Frank Kruger, Merle M. Johnson, and Richard E. Wright; *Judges-of-Surfriding:* A. A. Wilder, S. M. Kanakanui and Robert Atkinson.

CLUB SPORTS CENTER

I cannot say too often that the Outrigger Canoe Club was the active center of these sports and too much credit cannot be given to Club members including E. A. Mott-Smith, A. L. C. Atkinson, Walter F. Dillingham, J. F. Morgan, R. H. Trent, H. P. Wood, Charles R. Frazier, Henry P. O'Sullivan, L. H. Herbert, A. H. Ford, the Hustaces, Kenneth Winter (first Captain), J. P. Cooke, J. R. Galt and Harry Macfarlane.

We stayed for a while at Waikiki after the water sports had ended and I recall swimming out some distance that afternoon—seemed as if I was abreast of Diamond Head but of course I wasn't. At any rate some people in a canoe warned me of sharks and I broke my own record in getting back to the coral beach. After stopping for a short visit on Captain William Garland Fay, Commanding the Marines at their Camp Very, I returned to the *Wisconsin*.

(To Be Concluded)