



EDWIN N. MCCLELLAN

O.C.C. SWIM-INSTRUCTOR TAIT

By EDWIN NORTH MCCLELLAN

H. St. Clair Tait at Portland, Oregon, in 1914 held two 3-meter spring board dive titles of Northwest AAU and Pacific Coast AAU; arrived in Honolulu aboard Ventura, 1915, joined OCC; member Hui Nalu and Kamaaina Hui; coached swimmers at YMCA, Honolulu Military Academy Navy; OCC swim-instructor under Head Coach Dad Center; enlisted in Naval Reserve at Pearl Harbor; accompanied Duke Kahanamoku, Stubby Kruger, Clarence Lane, Owen Merrick on Mainland Red Cross Tour 1918

A *malihini* from Oregon dove several times into Waikiki Bay from the diving stand in front of the Outrigger Canoe Club. Alert Beach Boys of the Hui Nalu and some OCC-ers, liked what they saw. It was not many days before H. St. Clair Tait with browner skin and less shark-bait appearance, was cordially accepted by them. He became part of Waikiki Beach.

Y.M.C.A. COACH AND S-B WRITER

Clair Tait became swim-coach at the Honolulu YMCA on January 5, 1916. He had clinched the job with fancy spring-board dives and a spectacular high-dive into the pool from the third-floor window of the Gym.

He wrote a series of articles on diving for the *Star-Bulletin* featuring Dive Champion Bob Fuller, Jack Hjorth, Lorin P. Thurston, Karl Krebs (German sailor on interned *Geir*) and Fred Carter, Jr.

THAT CHAMP RELAY TEAM

The YMCA gathered together a relay-team to swim against time in its twenty-yard pool. Clair Tait was the starter who sent John Kelii on his way, followed by Harold "Stubby" Kruger, Clarence Lane, George "Porgie" Cunha and Duke Paoa Kahanamoku. American records at 400 and 500 yards relay and Duke's last lap of 100 yards, were smashed in that race.

Clair Tait resigned as YMCA Swim-Coach, to take effect October 1, 1916. He became an employe of the City-County.

HEAD-COACH CENTER'S O.C.C. SWIM-TEAM

"What a potential crop of swimmers were at hand, most of them youngsters at the OCC," said Mr. Tait. "Dad Center, OCC Captain and, thus, in charge of swimming, of course, saw this potential and was anxious to develop it. He had a bucketful of excellent swim-ideas for the OCC and Hawaii. He suggested that I help him in the actual coaching. I agreed on a volunteer status. In the late afternoons I would get the swimmers out for practice. This was usually right in front of the Club. As a meet approached I'd

take the team to Fort DeRussy where there was smooth water, a starting-platform and a measured course. I believe that the OCC offered more to a prospective swimmer, willing to work, than any Club in Hawaii. Silk racing-suits were provided for each member. A training table was established for the swimmers."

O.C.C. SWIMMERS

According to Mr. Tait the OCC Swim Squad included: Bouldin Burbank, Francis "Slats" Bowers, Fred Carter (Jr.), Madeline Chapin, Preston Chapin, Edrie Cook, Ernest Cook, Gay Harris, Harold Harvey, Ronald Higgins, Herman von Holt, Josephine Hopkins, Charles Lambert (Jr.), Helen Martin, Albert Edward, "Toots" Minvielle (Jr.), James O'Dowda, Edwin Paris, Franklin Richardson, Chester Sims, C. W. "Mouse" Smith, Ronald Watt, and others. Duke Kahanamoku had not yet come over to the OCC.

WHAT HAWAII OWES DAD CENTER

"My end of the job, which included giving rubdowns, got to be very demanding upon my free time," said Mr. Tait. "Dad suggested that I be taken off the membership-list and put on a monthly retainer, plus so much for each rubdown given."

"Every swimmer in the Islands should be grateful to Dad Center," continued Clair Tait. "He has worked unselfishly in all aquatic sports for the OCC and Hawaii. He always had the swimmers' welfare in his heart. I, as trainer and instructor for the OCC swimmers, got along with Dad like two fingers in a

glove. We saw eye-to-eye. So, I, too, am grateful for the privilege of working with him and having his friendship over the years."

GIFTS TO CENTER AND TAIT

"The Club gave the Swimming Team a very nice dinner party after one of the meets," said Instructor Tait. "Dad Center was loudly applauded when he received a splendid gift. I was given a very lovely guitar-case enclosing a wonderful guitar, with the wording: 'Presented to Clair Tait by the OCC Swimming-Team, August 14, 1917.' I put that guitar to very good use and still have and cherish it."

U.S.A. ENTERS WORLD WAR I

The United States entered the First World War on April 6, 1917 and Clair Tait "Joined the Navy" on October 30, 1917. He was stationed at Pearl Harbor but was authorized to reside in Honolulu. He thus was able to continue coaching at the OCC. He also coached naval swimmers on Ford Island. During this period he was helped by Knute Cottrell to learn the fundamentals of *lomi lomi* as a method of keeping swimming muscles in competitive condition.

THE COLOR AT THE BEACH

Clair Tait appreciated to the fullest the color and un conventions at the Coral Arc of Waikiki. He enjoyed watching George (Tough Bill) Keaweamahi do his famous Gopher Dance, or, see him lift himself out of the water almost to his hips using only his legs and, in time with the Band, do a *hula* in the water.

MAKING O.C.C. BEACH MUSIC

He liked the music of the Hui Nalu boys some of whom played in Dude Miller's Moana Hotel Orchestra. "They would sing—sing for their own pleasure and right from the soul," said Clair. "We, of course, had music, too, at the Outrigger, usually on Saturdays and Sundays. A little bunch of us would get down between the outriggers and play music after luncheon. While Dad Center and Edric Cook hacked out a surfboard with The Duke nearby, 'Slats' Bowers, Charlie Lambert, Lorrin Thurston, Harold Harvey, Gay Harris and others would make music. Then, went in swimming."

RED CROSS TOUR OF MAINLAND

"During the early months of 1918 Owen Merrick, Sports-Editor of the *Star-Bulletin*, talked up a Mainland Tour of Swimmers for benefit of the Red Cross," explained Clair Tait. "Clarence Lane and Stubby Kruger were attending St. Mary's College in California. Duke was in Honolulu employed by the Territorial Government." Clair Tait secured authority from the Navy to make the tour as coach-trainer. Lane and Kruger would join them on the Mainland.

CLAM-CHOWDER AT O.C.C.

The Red Cross Party was given a combined OCC-Pan-Pacific Chowder at the OCC on the evening of May 27, 1918. Dad Center presided. Duke, Clair and Owen sailed on the *Sonoma* next morning for San Francisco.