



OCC THANKSGIVING-DAY SWIMS-

Another fine historical article by Edwin North McClellan, writer, historian, radio commentator, world traveler, retired Marine officer and good friend. We thank him for his many contributions to the Forecast and hope for many more.

By Edwin North McClellan



The Outrigger Canoe Club's Thanksgiving-Day Swimming Meets at Waikiki Beach, 1917-1933, featured by the *Castles-to-Club* event, formed a powerful asset to the OCC and to Hawaii. During that period the Club was a leader in swimming without sacrificing surfboarding and outrigger-canoeing. A large number of Club-members, in addition to the contestants, were responsible for the Thanksgiving-Day aquatic successes, as coaching and administration were very necessary. Leading them was "Dad" Center while a few of the others were: Warren Dease, Duke Paoa Kahamoku, D. Mooney, C. C. James, Albert E. Minvielle and his son "Toots," Edric Cook, Gay Harris, Joseph Rider Farrington, A. H. Ford, Lorrin Potter Thurston, Sam Fuller, Edwin Peterson, Sam Starratt, F. L. Turner, Percy D. H. Deverill, Roy Banks, Karl C. Leebrick, Dr. Paul Withington, Tommie Singlehurst, William B. McLean, Walter N. Haglund, Cecil D. Benny, Bill Barnhart (Senior), Ronald Q. Smith, Ernest Warren Stenberg, Leslie Asa Hicks, Randy Crossley, Captain E. W. Timberlake (Army), C. Dudley Pratt, and many others.

TIMES MEANT LITTLE, CONDITIONS VARIED

These open-water swims off Waikiki involved a study of currents, wind, waves and body-surfing by those who aspired to victory. With but a very few exceptions all contestants were OCC members. Times in the swims mean little as conditions for each race over the years varied. "Toots" Minvielle won the *Castle-Swim* at least four times and Mariechen Wehs-lau was the victress at least five times in the Senior Women Swim. A renewal in 1952 by the OCC of the Thanksgiving Day Swims will develop new interest in the sport. The Turkey Day program should be limited to swimming and contestants to OCC members.

KRUGER WINS FIRST "CASTLE-SWIM" 1917

The Thanksgiving-Period of 1917 was commemorated by the Outrigger Canoe Club with Surfing Events, Swims and an Outrigger Fishing-Party off Diamond Head to secure fish for the Monster Chowder-and-Dance that concluded the Aquatic Festival (really it had covered about a month) on Saturday, December 1, 1917. "With the waves rolling-in high and the sun high in the sky, the Outrigger Club," on Thanksgiving afternoon, November 29, 1917, "pulled-off their surfboard-riding with unusual success," reported the *Star-Bulletin*. "Out-

side of the *Pualeilani* the waves were rolling-in to the best of advantage, but a strong breeze interfered a little." Some of the surfboard and canoe races were held that day but the swims were not staged until Saturday, December 1, 1917. On that day Harold "Stubby" Kruger (Healani) carried off the honors in the Castle-Longdistance Swim. Carbis A. Walker (OCC) was second, Duke Kahamoku (Hui Nalu and OCC) was third, and Ah Kim Yee (Healani), "champion Chinese swimmer of the world" (*Advertiser*) was fourth. Ludy Langer (un-attached) of Southern California, was expected to swim but did not appear. This "*Castle's Swim*, one and one-half mile more or less from Castle's Point to the Outrigger Diving Stand," was a thriller, continued the *Star-Bulletin* Man. "Duke and Stubby started off at a fairly fast clip . . . and Walker and Ah Kim Yee followed. At the 440 Duke was leading Kruger by two yards . . . Walker was back about 25 yards with Ah Kim Yee trailing.

"About a half-mile from the start Kruger began to move up and passed Duke and continued on to the flag [at the Outrigger Diving Stand] with a good lead. . . . Walker, piloted by a coach on a surfboard, gained at the last quarter-

mile and came in to finish ahead of Duke by inches." Ah Kim Yee was last.

"Duke gives all the credit to Kruger for his great race and refused to claim any alibi," continued the *Star-Bulletin*, though he had "just participated in paddling races. . . . You have got to hand it to Duke on one point. The Long-Swim isn't his race, but he always is willing to go-in to help the sport, and this point is much appreciated by the members of the Outrigger Canoe Club." The other swim-races:

Josephine Hopkins won the 100-yard *Ladies' Swim* and F. Richardson won the 200-yard *Men's Breaststroke*. Several canoe and surfboard races were very interesting.

A SILENT GAP, 1918-1921 INCLUSIVE

There may have been Thanksgiving-Day Swims of the OCC staged in the years 1918-1921 inclusive, but my casual research into the sources did not disclose them. So, I will leave these years to future, younger, energetic and efficient researching Club-members. Realize—"The Story of the OCC Within Its Setting of Waikiki," published as a book, would make the Club invincible.

SIMS AND MARIECHEN WEHSLAU WIN 1922

The "Outrigger Club's Annual Long-Distance Swims" on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1922, "off the Beach at Waikiki," were viewed by a large crowd, explained the *Advertiser*. "On the horizon of the Hawaiian swimming-world there appeared . . . a new star when Chester Sims, fair-haired and blue-eyed, won the OCC's Second Renewal Castle-to-Club Outdoor Swimming Race," reported Mike Jay in the *Star-Bulletin*. "W. 'Mouse' Smith got the men away on a perfect start." Sims took the lead, followed closely by Phillips Brooks and Bill Harris. Then came "Scowey" Hartman and "Toots" Minvielle. Sam Alapai Kahanamoku of the Hui Nalu (unofficial entrant) "could not keep the pace set by Sims and dropped back." Currents favored the swimmers as it swept from Queens Surf . . . towards Popular Surf. Some of the swimmers body-surfed. Sims "did the distance in 22 minutes twenty seconds," explained the *Advertiser*, while the *Star-Bulletin* reported a time of 22

CASTLE SWIM TO BE REVIVED

On other pages in this issue is a splendid article by our fine contributor, Edwin North McClellan. It gives the history and the details of the Classic Castle Swim, sponsored by the Outrigger Canoe Club for Club members. Unfortunately the event was taken away from us and then died. The Swimming Committee headed by Gay Harris proposes to revive the meet and make it an annual classic again. Below is a list of events:

1. Castle Swim (open to members)
2. Public Baths Swim (women and juniors)
3. Cunha Swim (girls and boys under 17 years)
4. 50 yds. Swim (boys and girls under 14 years)
5. Cunha Swim (men over 40 years)

The committee reports that the annual Club swim will be held on Sunday, November 30, at 9:00 a.m.

As Thanksgiving Day is a big day for the football games it was decided to hold it the first Sunday after Thanksgiving.

Prizes for all the events will be selected later. Now is the time for all the members, young and old, to get out your old racing togs and make use of the largest and finest swimming pool in the world—the old Pacific at Waikiki.

minutes 16.2 seconds. This is the fastest time for any *Castle-Swim* published by newspapers. Bill Harris finished second (24-10); "Toots" Minvielle, third (25-30); "Scowey" Hartman, fourth, and Phillips Brooks, fifth. [All times recorded in this article are unofficial.]

Mariechen Wehslau won the *Women's Race* of about half-a-mile with Connie Davis as swimmer-up; Lillie Bowmer was third and Dorothy Waters, fourth. A. R. Tullock won the medal in the *Men-Over-Thirty* Contest from Castles-Point to the Club. H. Makinney was victor in the *Boys' Race* from Cunha's Surf to the Diving-Stand.

SIMS AND WEHSLAU REPEAT IN 1923

Thousands of spectators viewed the Outrigger Canoe Club's "Annual Long-Distance Swims," on the morning of Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1923, stated the *Advertiser*. "In the *Open-Event for Men* over the Elks-Club-to-Outrigger-Canoe-Club course of a mile-and-

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a-half, Chester Sims was the winner . . . over . . . Albert E. Minvielle, Jr." Gay Harris was third. Sim's time was 24 minutes 55.4 seconds. "Mariechen Wehslau took first honors for *Women-Swimmers* over the half-mile course"; Helen Moses, 2d; Janice Lovett, 3d.

"The Elks-Outrigger course for the race of *Men-Over-Thirty* was abandoned, and the swimmers competed over the half-mile course. Bob Askew won." Bouldin Burbank won the *Boys-Under-18 Half-Mile Race*, while Pauline Laird was victor in the *Girls' Novice* quarter-mile swim.

MINVIELLE WINS IN 1924—WEHSELAU AGAIN

Albert E. Minvielle, Jr., and Gay Harris . . . made a gallant finish in the open-event of the Annual Outrigger Canoe Club "Castle-Surf to Outrigger Club" Swim Classic on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1924. At the Public Baths, Harris was in the lead with "Toots" a close-second; Fred Reeder, third, and H. Hill, fourth. Opposite Cunha's, Harris was still holding his lead; but opposite Waikiki-Inn, Minvielle . . . passed Gay Harris. From there on "Toots" clung to the lead until the finish. Time: 31 minutes, 52 seconds. Mariechen Wehslau won the *Women's Swim* from Public Baths-to-Club; Pauline Laird, second.

K. Makinney won the *Boys-under-18* race from Public Baths to Club; Benton Wood won the Cunha's Swim for *Boys-under-16*; Robert Askew was victor in the *Men-Over-30* contest; Leilehua Judd won the *Girls' Novice* "Cunha's Swim."

GAY WINS IN 1925—MARIECHEN, VICTOR

"The aquatic dope-bucket was tipped considerably at the Outrigger Canoe Club's Annual Distance Swim Meet at Waikiki Beach, when Gay Harris defeated Albert E. Minvielle, Jr., for first place in the *Harold Castle Cup* event," reported the *Star-Bulletin*, November 27, 1925. I remember that race very well for I had arrived in Hawaii aboard the old *Matsonia* on July 14, 1925. Gay's time was 28 minutes, 31.4 seconds. H. Wood was third. Mariechen Wehslau won the *Women's Open Event* from Public Baths to Stakes in front of the Club. Janice

Lovett was second and Leilehua Judd, third.

Hans Bahr won the *Boys-under-16* race from Public Baths to Stakes; Benton Wood won the *Boys-under-18* race, Cunha's to Stakes. Robert Askew was victor in *Men-over-30* race, while Beatrice Newport won the *Girls' Novice* from Cunha's to Stakes.

CRABBE AND JANICE LOVETT WIN IN 1926

"Records were shattered" on November 25, 1926, in the Outrigger Canoe Club's "picturesque Annual Thanksgiving Swim Races at Waikiki," reported the *Star-Bulletin*. "A favorable wind and current coupled with better swimming through the surf" helped the swimmers establish new standards. I was in Hawaii at this time and it was a great day for the OCC. "The trophy for this Swim [Castles to Club] is donated by Harold Castle," added the *Star-Bulletin*. "The Swim has been staged each year starting with 1917." The "stellar event, the [Men's] race from a point off the Elks Club (formerly the old James Castle residence) was won by Clarence Crabbe in 31 minutes 9 seconds while Tommy Ellis surprised . . . by beating Gay Harris out of second place. Janice Lovett won the *Girls' Open* Public Baths Race, Beatrice Newport finishing second and Helen Moses, third. Benton Wood won the *Boys-under-18* race; Billie Newport won the *Boys-under-16* race; Cliff Gessler won the *Men-over-30* race; Alice Mitchell won the *Girls' (Cunha's) Novice*. I was one of the many thousands thrilled by these races.

CRABBE 1927—WEHSELAU, FIFTH WIN

"Buster Crabbe simply busted the day-lights out of the old Outrigger Club record for the mile-and-a-quarter swim . . . off Waikiki Beach . . . finish in 24 minutes and one-fifth second," reported the *Advertiser*, November 25, 1927, of the "Tenth Annual OCC's Thanksgiving Day Swims," on the day before [but see time in 1922]. There were only four starters including Walter Laufer (member American Olympic Team). "Crabbe started out in front . . . shot out on a bee-line and then cut-in for the shore . . . swam possibly 300 yards before striking a direct course to the finish boat." Ed Crabbe beat-out Laufer for second-place.



Marty Anderson, Bob Mathias, Olympic Decathlon Champion, John Bustard, Chris Cusack (all Stanford men), "Dad" Center prepare for an outrigger ride.

Mariechen Wehslau won the *Girls' Open* (Public Baths to Moana Pier); Beatrice Newport, 2d; Jennie Woodd, 3d. Benton Wood won the race for *Boys-under-18*; Bob Askew won the race for *Men-over-30*; Kenneth Wood won the race for *Boys-under-16*; Mildred Slaght won the *Girls' Novice*. I missed these races for I had sailed aboard the USAT *St. Mihiel* from Honolulu on November 15, 1927.

BUSTER; LILLIE BOWMER MAY, 1928

Buster Crabbe won the "Castle Swim" on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1928, off Waikiki. Buddy Crabbe was second and Thomas E. Ellis, third. Lillie Bowmer May won the Senior Women's Public Baths Race; Janice Lovett Makinney, 2d; Mildred Slaght, 3d. Bill Newport won the *Boys-under-18* race; Wilbur Craw won the *Cunha's Swim*; Robert Askew won the *Men-over-30* contest; Lorena Hines won the *Girls' Novice Cunha Swim*.

MINVIELLE AND LORENA HINES WIN IN 1929

In the Castle-Swim, Buddy Crabbe took the lead at the start. "Toots" set out after Buddy. Then, the race became a duel between "Toots" and Sam Alapai Kahanamoku, an unofficial entrant. Sam won unofficially in 29 minutes 41 seconds but, as explained by the *Star-Bulletin*, Sam "not being a member of the [Outrigger Canoe] Club was not entitled to

the first prize which goes to Minvielle who finished in 30 minutes 28 seconds." Buddy Crabbe was 3d, and "M. Dease, the well-known tennis star," 4th. Lorena Hines won the *Girls Public Baths Swim*; Mildred Slaght, 2d; Ruth Becker, 3d. Cliff Gessler won the *Men-over-30*; Kenneth Wood the *Boys-under-18*; Wilbur Craw the *Boys-under-16*; and Olga Clarke the *Girls' Novice*.

KENNETH WOOD AND MILDRED SLAGHT 1930

Kenneth Wood finished first in the *Castle Swim* on November 27, 1930; "Toots" Minvielle, 2d, and Ken Pratt, 3d. Time: 37 minutes 55 seconds. Mildred Slaght won the "*Women's Public Baths Swim*" with Olga Clarke, second. Cliff Gessler won the *Men-over-30*; Wilbur Craw, the *Boys-under-18*; David Harvey won *Boys-under-16*; and Dot Hammond, the *Girls' Novice*.

JACK MAY AND OLGA CLARKE WIN IN 1931

"Gliding through the gentle waves of Waikiki . . . Jackie May . . . outdistanced his rivals . . . to win the Castle Swim," on November 26, 1931, "in the Annual Outrigger Club Thanksgiving Day Swimming Meet," wrote the *Advertiser*. Being a member of the Hui Makani as well as the OCC, May was ineligible to represent OCC in outside competitions but was eligible for this Turkey-Day Meet. Howard Kisner was second and Wilbur

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Craw, third; time: 32 minutes, 24 seconds. Olga Clarke won the "*Women's Public Baths Swim*" with Dorothy Hammond second, and Thelma Pope, third. Gay Harris won the *Men-over-30*; Jimmie Hurd won the *Boys-under-18*; Bob McWayne won the *Boys-under-16*; and Gladys Slaght the *Girls' Novice*.

TOOTS MINVIELLE; GLADYS SLAGHT IN 1932

"Splashing his way over the finish-line easily seventy-five yards ahead of Wilbur Craw, . . . A. E. Minvielle, Jr., winner in 1924 and 1929," captured "the Blue-Ribbon event, the *Castle Swim*, in the Annual Outrigger Canoe Club's Open-Water Aquatic Program," on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1932, reported the *Star-Bulletin*. "The sea was rough and choppy." Time: 31 minutes, 40.6 seconds. Wilbur Craw finished second and Jimmie Hurd, third. Gladys Slaght won the *Blue Ribbon Event for Women the Public Baths*, with Jennie Woodd Harris second, and Dorothy Hammond, third. Gay Harris finished first in the *Men-over-30 Public Baths*; Harold Sexton won the *Public Baths Race for Boys-under-18*; Hollinger won the *Cunha's Surf for Boys-under-16*; Georgina Cooper won the *Girls' Novice*. This was the last Thanksgiving Day when the Outrigger Canoe Club was sole sponsor of these Turkey-Day Swimming Races.

"TOOTS" FOURTH WIN—OLGA CLARKE, 1933

On Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1933, the Outrigger Canoe Club and the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii (ASUH) sponsored a Combined Swim Meet off Waikiki. Albert E. Minvielle, Jr. (OCC) won the *Castle Open Mile (plus) Swim*; Jimmie Hurd (UH), 2d; Wilbur Craw (UH), 3d; Weight (UH), 4th. Time: 30 minutes 38 seconds. This was "Toots" Minvielle's fourth "Castle - Swim" victory. Olga Clarke (OCC) won the *Half-Mile* with M. S. Cooper, 2d, and Gladys Slaght (OCC), 3d. Cliff Gessler won the *Men-over-30* race; D. Pope (OCC) won the *Women's Senior Quarter-Mile* with Stevenson 2d and Ridley 3d. OCC had no entries in the *Boys-under-18*.

UNIVERSITY (ASUH) TAKES OVER IN 1934

"Nators from the Outrigger Canoe Club and the 40-and-8 Club swam off

with two silver cups donated by the Royal Hawaiian Hotel as major trophies for the Thanksgiving Day Swimming Meet sponsored," November 29, 1934, "at Waikiki under AAU rules by the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii," reported the *Star-Bulletin*.

H. Sakamoto (40-8 Club) won the *Men's Open*, starting from Castle's Surf; "Toots" Minvielle (OCC) was 2d; M. Hirata (Central Y), 3d; J. Rodrigues (Central Y), 4th. Time: 36 minutes, 43 seconds. Olga Clarke (OCC) won the "*featured Women's (Public Baths) Race* and the *Star-Bulletin Trophy*." Mildred Hooper (OCC) was second, . . . (?) was third and Gladys Slaght (OCC) fourth. Betty Stevenson (OCC) won the *Women's Junior Race* starting at Cunha's Surf. F. Matson (OCC) won the *Women's Novice* starting at Canoe Surf. The OCC men scored only nine points, finishing as a team in fifth place; but OCC women won the *Women's Meet* with many points over the University's five.

ASUH SPONSORS 1935 MEET

In the "Castle Swim" on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1935, E. Nakamura (40-and-8 Club) finished first; "Toots" Minvielle (OCC), 2d; H. Sakamoto (40-8), who won the event in 1934, was 3d; K. Kuramoto (UH), 4th; W. Haynes (OCC), 5th. Time: 31 minutes, 26.4 seconds. Olga Clarke (OCC) won the *Canoe Surf Race for Girls*. Miss Clarke was the only OCC winner and apparently the only other OCC-ers in the Meet were "Toots", W. Haynes and Miss G. Holden who finished 9th in the race won by Olga Clarke.

SWIMS OF 1936 IN ALA MOANA CHANNEL

The Thanksgiving Day Swims, by 1936, had not only passed from the jurisdiction of the Outrigger Canoe Club to the ASUH but were shifted from Waikiki to the Ala Moana Channel. I saw these 1936 races for I had returned to Hawaii aboard the *President Wilson* on July 24, 1936.

The wonderful OCC Thanksgiving Day Swims at Waikiki Beach were now gone. All we have left is their history which I have just outlined. I hear they will be renewed in 1952. I hope so for they are both interesting and valuable.