

April 2014

OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB

ORAL HISTORY

MARIAN B. ARNOTT

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Interview by Barbara del Piano

April 1st, 2014

MARIAN B. ARNOTT

BDP: This is April 1, 2014. I'm Barbara Del Piano a member of the Historical Committee of the Outrigger Canoe Club, a committee that has been conducting oral histories of many longtime members. Today it is my pleasure to interview Marian Arnott. We are at Kailua at Marian's lovely home, in the den where there's a wonderful variety of photos that are displayed on the wall.

Good afternoon Marian it's truly a pleasure to meet with you today here in your lovely home.

MBA: Thank you.

BDP: Before we get into this let me ask you a few questions about your background. Where were you born and how did you happen to come to Hawaii?

MBA: Oh my goodness! Do you have time for volumes and volumes. I was born in Seattle, Washington and came to Hawaii in 1945. The reason being I was a high school teacher, and everyone was gone during wartime time of course. Not many boys at home. Two of my friends from Walla Walla, Washington, where I had taught previously, had come to Hawaii: one to Lapahoehoe, which of course was washed out April 1, 1946 tidal wave. The other girl worked for Kamehameha Schools and I had already signed a contract to teach on Lanai. So I got in -- came into Pearl Harbor on an APA attack ship which was later blown up at the Bikini Atoll as part of the atomic bomb test. And then started looking for my friends and stayed with them a few days and went to the Niualu hotel for a month till school started on Lanai. And every time I'd see people they would ask where you going to teach. I'd say "on Lanai, and they'd say "Lanai where's that?" Local people, too! But anyway I got on the bus. First I had to get on the plane. Herbie Clark. Remember Herbie Clark. Herbie Clark was a member of the Outrigger and he flew the first flight after the war from Honolulu to Wailuku. And it was so much fun to have him as pilot. I don't know where she (Ginny) was. If that even was her name. But anyway the ultimate point of this whole thing that goes on forever is that I got to Wailuku, got to the Grand Hotel where the superintendent of schools decided maybe he'd better call me. I'd never talk to him so he called me at the Grand Hotel, this was a Sunday. Where are you? I'm at the Grand Hotel as you instructed. Okay, go down to the corner of the block get on a bus that says Lahaina. Well Lahaina what's Lahaina. Lahaina is where you end up to take the boat to Lanai. Well anyway, I got to Lanai and the principal and his wife, met me. Murray Hemminger was his name. He was a big game fishermen from Kona. And I cleaned the cabin that I picked up for the six of us.. There were a total of 11 gals from the mainland, all over the mainland. And anyway I started teaching school. I loved it, best place in the world! The Caldwells were there too. Henry and Auntie Kat. And Casey and Jeannie Caldwell and Sam. Sam was back at Yale and it was wonderful to have them there. But it was a three-hour passage from Mala dock in Lahaina to Kamalapau Harbor (waving arm motions representing the swells). And I had my white gloves, with a pearl. Remember the pearl. And a hat, which I'd just gotten in San Francisco. And of course heels. And that's the way I went. The rest were, you know, regular laborers. So that was my introduction to Lanai. And I loved every bit of it. So it can go on a long way, I don't mean to take so much time.

BDP: How did you happen to come back to Honolulu? Why?

MBA: At the end of the school year, we could get off the island by PT boat as long as it

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wasn't a Tuesday or a Thursday. So we had to get up at some ungodly hour to get on the PT boat to go back to Lahaina. Then I had already written in the Advertiser: "Four high school teachers looking for a home in anyplace." We didn't care because we didn't know. We had no idea what was here. And a principal at Kam school rented to us. He put the house key in an envelope that said "ladies have fun this summer". There were six of us instead of four. But I didn't think anybody would rent to six. And we moved in down there for the summer (pointing right). And we all got summer jobs. I worked at Hawaiian Airlines, which was a misery. But hard! I shouldn't have done that! Some went to work at Liberty House, some worked at different places, Lewers and Cooke, places like that. Then the school year started and I went to work at Hawaiian Electric, which was another wonderful job. I was in the home service department where we developed recipes, wrote cookbooks, tested recipes, had cooking classes, and gave school tours. I did most anything that had anything to do with using Reddy Kilowatt. I was pushing the product. I'd sit in the showcase down on River Street, teaching people how to use an ironer, an electric ironer. It was Hot! Hot Hot! But it was a wonderful place to work. I work there three years. And that's where I met Tommy Arnott.

BDP: And that's where you met Tommy -- ohhhh. And Tommy introduced you to the club?

MBA: His brother introduced us first-- in the elevator. And then he asked for a date, which was Election Day, that's always November. He said "would you like to go to the Outrigger Canoe Club?" I said "well, that would be fun!" So we did. That was our first date.

BDP: That was your first date!

MBA: It was about a month and a half after I started at Hawaiian Electric.

BDP: And you kept on dating, of course?

MBA: Yes, for a year and a half. But our first date consisted of a ride in Dick Peacock's Indian canoe, the Tenone. And of course we huli'd. And I ended up banging my head on the bottom of the canoe. I couldn't get out so I jumped out underneath. Anyway. We started out on the water and we ended up in the water. A wonderful courtship though I mean we were with the Ekstrand's and the O'Brian's and the Ifversens, and the Parkers, and we kept close for 50 years.

BDP: Were they married before you?

MBA: No, no! Reece and Bill Parker were married but the rest.... Tommy and ML, and then we, and then Thad and Pat.

BDP: What were some of the fun things you did when you were young?

MBA: Young, younger! Well I think the prized one is probably ... at that time in our history the 50s 60s and 70s were hard partying hard drinking years. Lots of beddings, lots of weddings at that age. Lot's of big cocktail parties. So what we would do -- Tommy would get six of us

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together and say : “we’ll meet you at the club and will go for a ride – canoe ride. This was pitch dark about the middle of the night. So we go down to the club, “Sunshine” would be across the street in that little parking lot, remember, and then we would be over in the Moana’s. So we’d climb the fence, in our finery. Which was high! And then go upstairs and get changed or downstairs, and we’d go out. “Joe” was blowing the police whistle the whole time. “Little Joe” was the night watchman. And he’d blow blow blow. Tommy would be in the water at the waterside (beachside) and we’d all troop down and get in our seats and go out into the dark not having a clue. Couldn’t see! We could hear the music from the Royal. And we’d go out and he’d say: “OK, start paddling, get ready!” And we’d start, and we’d paaaddle , and we’d pull off a wonderful wonderful ride! And we did that several times.

Lots of fun things like that. We lashed two canoes together, six mans, and put a platform between -- Bob Bush did this, and then we had Anzai’s bonsais in the big containers and then we’d sip and dance to the music at the Royal. We did that many times. There were always the six of us and then the rest of the club would come.

BDP: Oh my goodness! Do you want to tell anymore?

MBA: Well let’s see. Yes I do, I probably do. The two canoes, climbing the fence -- those are the main ones.

BDP: What are your memories of the old Club?

MBA: Very dear. Very precious. When I think of the Outrigger Canoe Club, I think of the old club. In 1967, Tommy was President then, we moved to a totally different venue that we had to get used to. It wasn’t a playful beckoning, I guess is the word, place that the old Club was. You know the girls would sit here on the grass (at the old Club) and watch everybody going back and forth, and then the boys would be playing volleyball. And then get out to the beach. It was wonderful. And I loved that little guy that ended up being maître d’ across the street (Maxie). Anzai was of course behind the bar. I don’t remember who the other guy was, but the employees stayed their lifetime, many of them which was a real token of togetherness with us the members.

BDP: Do you have any special employees in mind?

MBA: Well I did and I... That’s 94 ½ years showing, I can’t remember that quickly.

BDP: Auntie Eva? How about Auntie Eva? Auntie Eva at the front desk.

MBA: Oh yes, Auntie Eva, and Minnie, and Malia, Melanie and I mentioned Anzai, of course and then Sunshine across the street --- those were my favorites. Maxie. He was a dear little guy. BDP: “Can’t forget Richard” MBA: I did have Richard written down. Everybody remembers Richard. Clara (at the Snack Shop).

BDP: Well this is such a wonderful room Marian with all these great photos. Can you tell us something about them?

MBA: Yes, I’d like to show some of the ones that will bring up memories. This is an S-boat

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and it was Henry Dillingham's. Duke took care of it. He was sort of the caretaker ----- of the S-boat. Well this is another wonderful story. Duke hated women on his sailboat. He didn't want women. Tommy kept saying: "yeah, but Marian a sailor, had sailed 6 m and all that". Duke replied: "OK fine" (reluctantly). So the three of us went out. We went down to the Natatorium, and got hooked up on the inter-Pacific transpacific cable. Duke did it, I didn't. So they dove overboard and got it all huli'd up and got it off the cable. So for punishment, just being there, I had to put my feet on the gunwale and reach out and hold the boom. All the way back to the yacht club. Because I was on board, and that's why it happened. So okay, Dix that, but I did get to go again.

MBA: (Pointing to picture on wall) this is a terrible picture, but Bill Mullahey, who at that time was the Pan Am honcho, ... This is in 1948, the day we got back home from our honeymoon. And we came home early because there was a Fourth of July canoe race. So the pathetic face in the middle of the living room at the Maui Grand said: "do you think we could go home a little early?" Well of course we did. But anyway, Bill Mullahey wanted a picture for an office's poster and asked us to pose. We were wearing Janzen bathing suits at that time --- real bright bright bright orange and pink. Tommy was pink and I was orange. And so there was a picture picture. This is very, of course, faded. But friends of ours who had been transferred to Singapore, the Baskers, Mimi and Clint Basker, they were transferred there by the company he worked for, had gone into Pan Am to get tickets and there we were on the wall! So that was kind of fun. And that's right in front of the old beach services. Let's see. Duke's birthday. The 75th, which are all these pictures here (pointing to family album). The senior six, and the wives and so forth. This was at Bob Bush's.

And the funeral. The funeral was so dramatic it was the first huge celebrity one I had ever gone to. Tommy was a pall bearer, so we had to go to St. Andrews first. Tommy wore a suit and shoes and all that stuff. So driving down to the beach with my mother in the back seat visiting, he changed his clothes. Took his outer clothes off and had his trunks on underneath. I said: "Move over I'll drive while you get dressed or undressed --- whatever you're doing." Got to the Royal, which took a while. Walked in with all his clothes, gave them to the concierge, and said "I'll be back for them".. But anyway, then we went on with the beautiful funeral. Which rained, remember it rained. That was, it was a humble a humble service to me. In the humility of the fact that everybody didn't care if it rained, poured or snowed. They were there for Duke's funeral. It was neat! BDP: "That was a wonderful occasion." MBA: It was!

BDP: I don't like to bring up the sad stuff, when did Tommy pass away?

MBA: (Back to the pictures on the wall). Sargeant and Tommy won the club volleyball tournament. And then the Transpac came. And we had the Club (old Club) had this huge party. Do you remember that? Just a wonderful party. And they've sponsored the Kamolii for the next three years. By sponsoring you have a party for them and you greet them when they come in and all that. (Referring to the family album). The boys, the senior six, went out every year August 25 (Duke's birthday) to go out and remember Duke. They'd jump overboard and then when they got so old they couldn't get back in, they stayed in the boat. And then one year porpoises came up as they were throwing leis. Remember they were cutting the string in those days. And the porpoise would come right up through the lei. And then the next year, an Iwa bird. Ron Mizutani (on the news) filmed the whole thing. So I have it on tape. The Iva bird came diving through the

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lei. It was wonderful! And then we go in and have brunch and reminisce and it was a fun time for the old folks who all aged differently, as we all do. Some did not come back into the group much. And Pflueger was that much younger. See he was only 18 and that picture and the rest were in their early 20s. But all these activities included the six or four or eight of us plus the rest of the Club. I mean the rest of the Club was always there but we were in our own kuleana, so to speak. I always call the Club a place where we grew up. And I can never say that about the new club. We all changed. If we were their (younger members) age we would say the same thing (about the New Club) but you know, you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

BDP: I don't like to bring up the sad stuff but when did Tommy pass away?

MBA: Tommy passed away January 8, 2000. The first is when he started going down hill. The year 2000, New Year's. Well, it was New Year's Day. Almost, the week after New Year's.

BDP: And how many years were you married?

MBA: At that time it was 52. Now it 61 or some 60 something.

BDP: So you were together for 52 years?

MBA: Yeah, to the year 2000. You know it's been a long time and yet it doesn't seem like like it so much but that's the way it is. I envy wives who are dependent upon their husbands and go closely to the same time. Not like Gerri (Pedesky) who is a tough lady like me.

BDP: Do you have any other memories that you'd like to share?

MBA: Well there's lots of old stories that we all especially the 8 of us or 10 of us. Of that group ... See the Ekstrand's are gone, the O'Briens are gone Tommy's gone, the Rivas' are gone, Beaumont's are gone, Fernie is gone (Jimmy Fernie), Betty's gone. Bob and Jean Bush moved to the West Coast to try living on the West Coast and then come back home perhaps. Well he had a heart attack and passed away. But Jeannie just died about two months ago. Had a small service here.

BDP: So you and ML are the last two?

MBA: Yeah, of our group. As Neil's (Ivferson) gone. Oh, Ruby Ivferson is still alive. She's doing very well living happily with Tommy and his wife in Oregon. She keeps in touch.

BDP: Well, do you think that kind of wraps it up?

MBA: I think it wraps it up and I hope that every member gets as much from the club (wherever it is) as we all did. We loved the club so much at that time. And now you say you love the club. Okay, green flash or whatever, the meats to tough or whatever, the food is good, the view is incredible, but we are at a different age and our needs are different. What we like and don't like is different. It has a place for everybody. That's what I'm trying to say. I really think that.

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BDP: Well thank you so very much Marian for your time this afternoon. It's been a pleasure and I know the Historical Committee will be very very pleased with this interview.

MBA: I don't know (laughing) ... It's just. You know you talk about something like that it's difficult because it's not a living thing except that it does have a life of its own, you know.

BDP: Did you play volleyball?

MBA: I played volleyball, not competitively. The boys wouldn't let us play with them on Sunday. And then Wednesday night was volleyball night for the boys, and then the surfing (Tommy did that). One comment I always chuckle at, when I go there which was only in those days twice a month (Tommy was very good about not even suggesting anything because he wanted to abide by the rules). So one day I went in and he was out surfing which I knew. They didn't have cell phones in those days or anything. And this lady whom we all knew, I don't know if we loved are not, but we all knew her she said: "which date are you? Breakfast lunch or dinner?" That's my crowning comment! She did, I thought, anyway that was my... Funny thing to say to a brand-new person. I've teased her about that forever.

Pat would come in through the dinky window on the side of the house and sleep more nights than we realized. But it was fun. And Tommy's bachelor party was at the club of course. They all took half their close off and ran up and down the beach. They took his clothes. They all ended up at our house. In those days it was shocking! We weren't married yet and he came home to my house. Well, you know. We were married in 1948, the good year. A good year! It certainly added a lot to my life. I of course came from the Northwest where you skied all winter and sailed all summer on the 6 m. And my sister and I would skipper the Pacific international yachting races a lot between Canada and the U.S. And then Tommy crewed on a Star boat (up on top of picture wall) and they got their Lipton trophy the same year as my brother-in-law on the 6 m, which was kind of fun. It was a big big trophy time. Yeah, it's amazing how words do pop out. No, really.