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Victoria Custer Elaine Stroup
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canoe racing June 13

Eight clubs will compete in the Kamehameha Day canoe regatta next Sunday off Kailua Beach Park, starting at 10 a.m.

Fifteen events will be staged, with the senior men and women, the blue ribbon races.

THE CLUBS entered are Hui Nalu, Healani, Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club, Kai Oni, Lanikai, Leeward Kai Waikiki Surf and Outrigger.

COACHES are Richard Bell, Healani; Sam Steamboat Mokuahi, Hui Nalu; Clifford Ornellas, Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club; Joseph "Stew" Kalama Sr., Kai Oni; Henry Van Gieson, Leeward Kai; Mike Holmes, Outrigger; Randy Chun, Waikiki Surf Club.

Lloyd Wong is chairman of the race committee.

CHARLES E. Kauhane is president of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association which is sponsoring the regatta. Sol Kalama is vice president, Edith Van Gieson secretary; Shirley Kalama treasurer and John Kapua executive secretary.

Directors are Doug Akina, Chris Faria and Ed Kaopui-ki.

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MAUI NEWS

JUN 8 1971

'Sunbonnet Lady' Christens 'Kopaa'

By Jeanne B. Johnson

Saturday was a very important day in the history of Matson Navigation Company . . . and in the life of Mrs. Kinsho (Yoneko) Higa, of Puunene, and formerly of Pulehu.

Matson's newest ship, the 30,000-ton "SS Kopaa", was christened in Honolulu Harbor, and wielding the huge bottle of champagne was Mrs. Higa.

The Kopaa is a highly specialized ship, and that's why, when it came to the question of who would christen her, Matson wanted a very special person.

"The name, 'Kopaa' means 'sugar' in Hawaiian," explained Matson's Hawaii vice president, Dudley Burchard, who said: "We wanted someone who truly represented the plantation to christen her. So, we called Doug Thomson at HC&S and asked him to make the selection. He chose Mrs. Higa, who is still an HC&S employee, and whose husband is a plantation retiree."

Mrs. Higa, who was born in Paia in 1934, started out with the plantation in 1941 as a "Sunbonnet Lady" working in the fields. She's now custodian in the main office at Puunene, a job to which she was named in 1969.

She and her husband, Kinsho (Ken) Higa, were flown on Friday, to Honolulu, where they lunched with David and Wayne, two of their five sons; a granddaughter, Kathy; Burchard, Dan Rayacich, Matson's area manager, Mrs. Jean Watamoto, of Matson, and the writer, at the Outrigger Canoe Club.

"My dad started working for the plantation when he was about 12 years old," David said. (The elder Higa said that he had worked in the stables as a water boy). "After that, he started to work on the plantation railroad, and then in the cane field," David continued. "Before he retired, he was a

tool room attendant in the Paia Mill."

Higa was born in Tomari, Okinawa, Japan, and "he'll be 70 on November 22," David said proudly.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Higa are accomplished Okinawan dance instructors.

The couple has five sons, David, Mamoru, Wayne, Robert and Roy. Mamoru, who is with North American Aviation, and Robert are on the Mainland.

"Robert," said David, "is in rocketry, and he helped erect Mariner IX which made the first soft landing on the moon."

That's somewhat of a coincidence, because the Kopaa is the former USNS Mercury, which served as a missile tracking and communication station for the Apollo program for putting American astronauts on the moon and returning them safely to earth, and in the capsule recovery operations.

David is employed with the Federal Aviation Administration, in the field of electronics; Wayne is with Universal Motors, and Roy is employed by Japan Air Lines.

Although the Higas were obviously surprised by the suddenness of the whole thing—they didn't know about it until late Wednesday—they pitched right in to the spirit of the affair, and, for the actual christening, Mrs. Higa donned her old field working clothes—complete with sunbonnet.

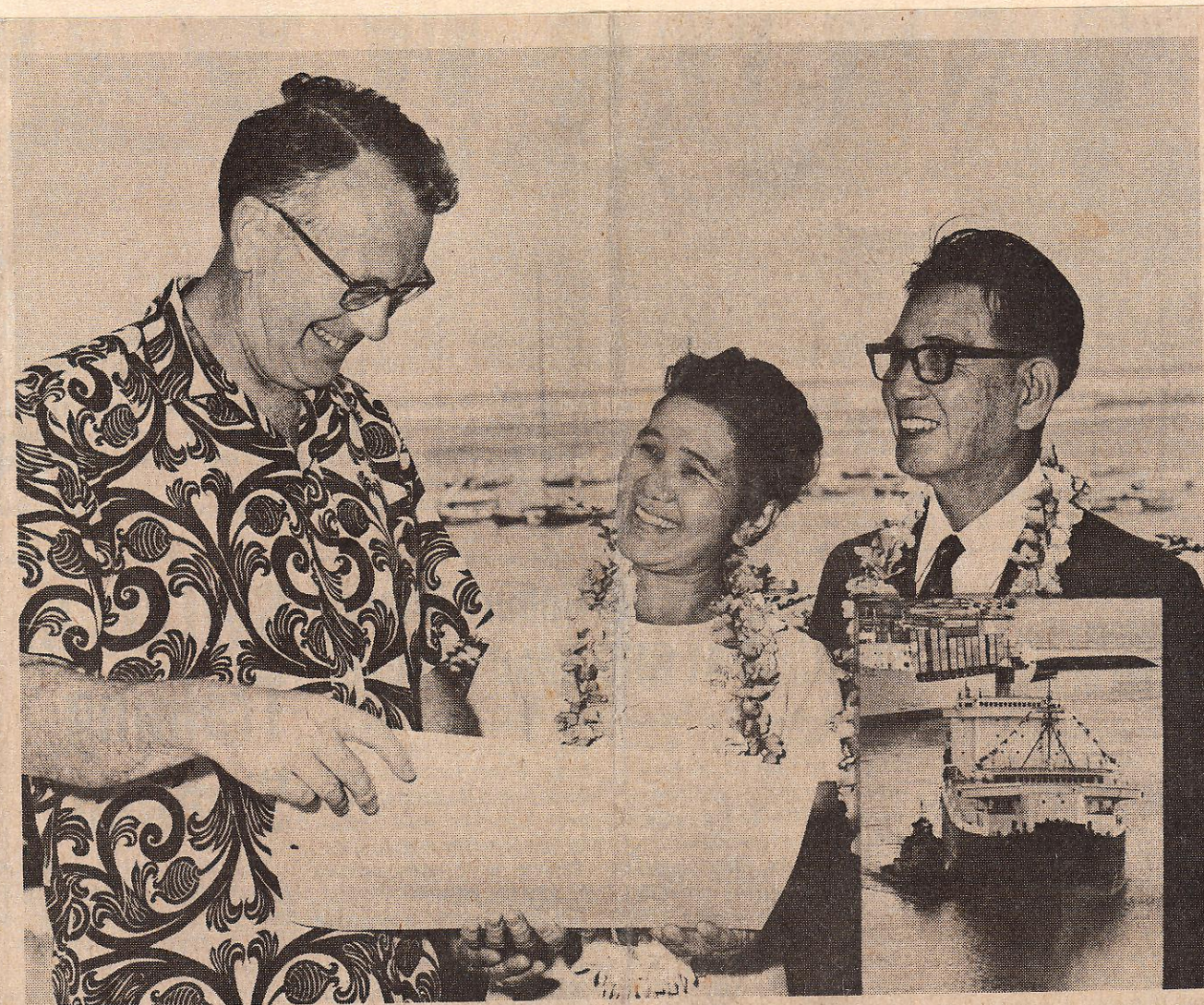
She had some pertinent pointers in champagne-bottle-wielding from Mrs. Watamoto, now secretary to Dick Rosehill, former Matson Maui manager, who was transferred to Honolulu. It was Mrs. Watamoto who christened the Hawaiian Queen.

The bottle—or what's left of it—will be suitably encased and will be formally presented to Mrs. Higa at a ceremony here on Maui, Burchard said.

The Kopaa "is really a sweet ship," according to Burchard. She won't carry containers, and will be used strictly in sugar shipments from the Islands to the Mainland.

Statistically, the Kopaa is 595 feet in length with a beam of 75 feet. She has a capacity of 24,230 short tons of sugar and a speed of 16 knots.

Captain William A. Fowler is the ship's master. Luther Fisher is chief engineer.



Matson photo

CHRISTENED "SWEET SHIP" — Mrs. Yoneko Higa, of Puunene (center), is pictured with her husband, Kinsho (right), and Matson Navigation Company's Hawaii vice-president Dudley Burchard at Honolulu's Outrigger Canoe Club on Friday. They're looking at a large, mounted photograph of Matson's new all-sugar ship the "SS Kopaa" (inset), taken as she arrived

in Honolulu Harbor earlier last week.

On Saturday, Mrs. Higa, employee of Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company, where she was a former "Sunbonnet Lady" in the fields, christened the Kopaa, which means "sugar" in Hawaiian.