

# Oahu's Eight Outrigger Wars With Kona

By EDWIN NORTH McCLELLAN



The Kona-Oahu Outrigger tradition began many years ago. We pick up the story in 1906 which was about two years before the Outrigger Canoe Club was created on May 1, 1908. It's a libel on truth to assert that Surf-Sports were dying out on Oahu in 1906. Men of Oahu who, in 1906 and 1907, fought the Men of Kona for the Outrigger Championship of the Territory, helped to organize the Outrigger Canoe Club at Waikiki in 1908.

## AT HONOLULU ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1906

"The paddling-canoe race is attracting great attention on account of a crew from Kona Bay due to arrive on Friday [14 September 1935]," reported the *Advertiser*. "They will have as their most dangerous opponent, Arthur M. Brown's *Alabama*, which has won this race for the past six years. . . . At present the Kona crew is a favorite at odds of 20 to 15." The Hawaiian Outrigger Championship was at stake.

Regatta Day, September 15, 1906, saw three outrigger canoes poised in Honolulu Harbor for the starter's gun. There was the *Alabama* from Waikiki with black hull and yellow band at gunwale manned by six Hawaiians wearing red sweaters—entered by Arthur M. Brown. The second canoe was Dr. Alford C. Wall's beautiful koa craft looking like polished mahogany — the *Hanakeoki* crewed by *haoles*. The third was Prince Cupid's (Kuhio's) canoe *A* (later called the *Aa*) from Waikiki, not much for looks but swift, with paddlers from Kona.

At the pistol, the three canoes made quick starts from near the Railroad Wharf. The turn was made off the Lighthouse where a Flag-Boat was anchored. The *A* and her stout Men of Kona finished off the Railroad Wharf by about half-a-length over the *Hanakeoki* and her *haole* paddlers. Third was the Hawaiian-paddled *Alabama*.

## AT HONOLULU, SEPTEMBER 21, 1907

Regatta Day of September 21, 1907, staged in Honolulu Harbor, was a continuation of the Outrigger-War between

Prince Cupid's Kona Crew of Hawaiians and the *Haoles* of Oahu for the Territorial Championship.

"Prince Cupid will arrive this morning from Kona on the *Mauna Loa*," reported the *Advertiser* of September 17, 1907. "Will you enter my canoe *A* for both paddle and sail race!" he had written to the officials. The Prince named his crew as Manuia Manupau (Captain, Stroke, and Keeper of Kuhio's famous canoes), Kawika, Makanani, Pailaka, Kaihe and Peter.

Over ten thousand spectators saw the Kona Crew, paddling Prince Cupid's *A*, defeat the *haoles* in Arthur M. Brown's old-reliable *Alabama* from Waikiki, by about six lengths. Far behind was the canoe manned by Hawaiians of the Kamehameha Aquatic Club which had its headquarters on Kakakanalani Island in Kalihi Harbor.

The Outrigger Canoe Club of Waikiki was created on May 1, 1908.

## AT HONOLULU, SEPTEMBER 17, 1910

Regatta Day, September 17, 1910 found the Champion Kona crew of Prince Kuhio present to defend its laurels. "The Outrigger Race is going to be a corker," declared Kenneth "Rusty" Brown (Captain of the OCC). "They may beat us but they'll have to go some." The newspapers called it the "*Haole* versus Hawaiians" or Kona against Oahu, Race. The Kona Crew in Prince Kuhio's *A* was Una (stroke), John Kaluahiwa, David Makuaole, Kula, Palakiko Mahiko and Manuia Manupau (Captain). The *haole* OCC crew in Dr. Alford C. Wall's *Hana-*

keoke was Kenneth "Rusty" Brown (stroke), Knute Cottrell, Monk Dodge, Pete Young, Ran H. Hitchcock and Ted "Poop" Melanphy.

"The Kona outrigger crew of Hawaiians paddled themselves to victory over the *haoles* and so did another of the native crews, leaving Brown's white men, number three," reported the *Advertiser*. "There were four crews entered in the six-paddle race, all Hawaiian crews except the Outrigger Club sextet." John Lii captured second place with canoe *E. Maukeola*. The Outrigger Club's *Hanakeoke* was third and the *Lei Ilima* (entered by Leialoha) came in last.

Rusty Brown reportedly expressed publicly an idea that the Men of Kona had won because of their superior canoe. Kona graciously agreed to a second race with swapped canoes. On September 23, 1910 Kona won for the second time in 1910. "The *haoles* had no howl coming yesterday," explained the *Advertiser*. "After it was all over they had to admit that the Hawaiians were too strong for them." After the race, Prince Cupid kidded the Outriggerites, telling them "that they could take his canoe *A* down to Hawaii and race flying-fish until they worked up some speed."

#### AT KEALAKEKUA BAY ON JULY 22, 1933

Palm-fringed Kealakekua Bay, against a background of steep *palis*, rich in lore and tradition, rarely, if ever, presented a scene as variegated as it did on July 22, 1933. The famous *A* canoe was in the Bishop Museum and the trustees refused permission for it to be taken out and used in the Kona Races. But there were other historic canoes present, among them the *Lio Keokeo*, *Hanakeoki*, and *Kakina*.

The Outrigger Canoe Club won the meet with a score of twenty points. Milolii scored 18; Hui Nalu A, 8; Queen's Surfers, 4; Honaunau, 1; while unplaced were Hui Nalu B, Hookena, Hilo and Kailua. The OCC won the Senior-Six-Paddle; Hui Nalu A, 2d; Honaunau, 3d. Time, 15:41.2. The "Outriggers finished strongly, paddling with the same rhythm which has made the Dad Center stroke famous wherever there is an outrigger canoe," reported the *Advertiser*. In addition

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President Godbold presents award to Clyde French for outstanding contribution to canoe paddling at buffet dinner honoring OCC canoe paddlers. Left to right, Bill Prange, Mavis French, Clyde and President Godbold.

### CLUB CAPTAIN RESIGNS

Clyde French, Club Captain, submitted his resignation as Captain to the Directors in late July. His reason was that he is being transferred to Kauai. The Directors regretfully accepted. William Prange has been appointed Club Captain for the unexpired term.

Due to his outstanding contribution to canoe paddling during 1952 Clyde was unanimously selected to receive the annual award, a canoe paddle suitably inscribed. A dinner was held in his honor and the award was made.

### "TOOTS" TO HCRSA

"Toots" Minvielle, who did such a fine coaching job and otherwise helped in making our racing season a success, has been appointed to represent the Club at the Hawaiian Canoe Racing and Surfing Association. The association has done a splendid work in increasing interest in canoeing and the entries of so many clubs in the races is greatly due to the get-together of representatives, the writing of new rules and the taking part in the programs of so many.

## OCC-KONA WARS

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tion the OCC won the Senior-Four-Paddle and the Junior-Six-Paddle; was second in the *wahine* race and third in the Senior-Two-Paddle and Junior-Four-Paddle.

### AT KEALAKEKUA BAY ON AUGUST 4, 1934

August 4, 1934. Kealakekua Bay found 20,000 startled spectators viewing the Kailua outrigger-paddlers decisively defeat all comers, including the Outrigger Canoe Club, for the Hawaiian Championship. "Ernie Cook, erstwhile Outrigger [Canoe Club] paddler, and now coach and stroke for Kailua, gave his former pals a handsome drubbing," reported the *Advertiser*. The Kailuas crewed their seventy-year-old racing canoe. Kailua scored 27 points; OCC, 14; Honaunau, 7; Milolii, 4; Hui Nalu, 1; Queen's Surfers, Molokai, Napoopoo and Japanese, no points.

Kailua (J. Williams, Johnny Wise, L. Kaolelo, J. Kamaka, S. Ahia, Ernest W. Cook) won the Senior Six-Paddle Race, with Honaunau second and OCC, third. The Outrigger Canoe Club (G. Schlieff, M. S. Hooper, Olga Clarke, B. Kellogg, A. Delaney, and G. Forrest) won the Women's Race with Kailua second, Milolii third, and Honaunau, 4th. The OCC tied for victory with Kailua in the Junior-Six. The OCC crew was L. Chiswick, R. Dolan, H. Van Orden, George Perry, A. Wagner and Tom Ellis. The OCC crews finished second in the Junior-Four and third in the Senior-Four.

### AT KAILUA ON AUGUST 24, 1935

"The third renewal of the Annual Hawaiian Canoe Paddling Championship will be held in Kona waters" on August 24, 1935, published the *Advertiser*. The Outrigger Canoe Club, Hui Nalu and Queen's Surfers did not relish the decisive defeat handed them the preceding summer by Kailua. "Julian Yate's hardworking and persistent coaching of Honaunau's great collection of canoe crews" flowered in 1935. Honaunau's victory was sensational. They won six out of eight races, including the "consolation race." The team scores were: Honaunau, 26; Outrigger Canoe Club, 15; Hui Nalu,

11; Kailua, 7; Milolii, 2; Japanese, 1; Queen's Surfers, 1.

Honaunau, in their brand-new canoe *Okay Kilohana* won the Senior-Six; OCC, 2d; Milolii, 3d. Time, 19 minutes 45 seconds. Three of Honaunau's crew were University of Hawaii graduates--Tony Morse, William Ahuna and Francis Apoliona. Honaunau won the Senior-Four with Hui Nalu, 2d; OCC, 3d. Outrigger Canoe Club won the Two-Paddle; Hui Nalu, 2d; and Honaunau, 3d. The Senior-Four was won by Honaunau; Hui Nalu, 2d; OCC, 3d. The *Wahine* Race was won by Honaunau; Kailua, 2d; and a "fine little Japan crew," 3d. Junior-Six went to Honaunau; OCC, 2d; Kailua, 3d. In this race the Hui Nalu and Queen's Surfers crashed at the turn and Hui Nalu's famous canoe *White Horse* was seriously damaged. Honaunau won the Junior-Four with Kailua second and Milolii third. Hui Nalu won the Kid's Race; OCC, 2d; Queen's Surfers, 3d.

The day ended with festivities at the Kona Inn. George Dad Center furnished the crowd with one of the best entertainments of the occasion when he danced the *hula* to the accompaniment of music by Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku and Charlie Amalu. Dad was ably assisted by Otto Klum and Jimmy Whittle.

### AT HONOLULU ON JUNE 11, 1936

"The Hawaiian Jubilee, greatest celebration of Kamehameha Day in the Islands' History, reached its colorful climax in a brilliant and unique Water Pageant on the Ala Wai," wrote the *Advertiser* reporter. Outrigger canoe races in the Harbor were enjoyed by thousands. The starter's gun started nine crews off in the Senior-Six-Paddle event. The canoes drove down toward the *mauka* turn off Pier Nine closely grouped. Honaunau led at the *makai* turn far out where the first line of curling breakers are visible. Passing Pier Two on the return straight-away, Hui Nalu was closing in on Honaunau with Milolii and Kailua racing abreast close behind. Honaunau won; Hui Nalu, 2d; Milolii, 3d; Kailua, 4th; University of Hawaii, 5th; OCC, 6th; Healani, 7th; Queen's Surfers, 8th; Kauai, 9th. The Outriggerites did not win a race. The team scores were: Honaunau, 30 points; Milolii, 10; Hui Nalu,

9. OCC. 8. Queen's Surt. 7. Kailua. 5. University of Hawaii. 3. Healanii and Kaula did not score.

All nine crews participated in the Consolation race. They were made-up of winners or those who had not participated in an official race. "It's a relief!" yelled the crowd as they noticed a bushy head of feminine hair amidst five bare-chested boys in the Honaunau canoe. The small figure was in green trunks and other feminine attire. Julian Yates admitted that it was a relief—sixteen-year-old Aelaine Lanui. She was in on the final Honaunau victory. Kailua, 2d; U. of H., 5d; OCC, 4th; Queen's Surters, 5th; Hui Nalu, 6th; Healanii, 7th.

#### AT KAILUA ON AUGUST 9, 1952

"Outrigger splashes to Easy Win in canoe Championship," at Kailua, Kona, on August 9, 1952, reported the Star-Bulletin. "A favored Outrigger Canoe Club left six opponents in its wake ... as it stroked to a team-title in the Julian R. Yates Canoe Championships of the serene shores of Kailua, Kona, Island of Hawaii." The Outrigger Canoe Club won the Senior-Men-Four, Senior-Women-Six, Junior-Men-Six, Junior-Men-

Four, Junior-Women-Six, and finished second in the Senior-Men which was won by the Waikiki Surt Club, in 25:46.8. The OCC time was 25:58.6.

Team-scores were: Outrigger Canoe Club, 28; Kai Opua, 10; Waikiki Surt Club, 10; Hui Nalu, 8; Honaunau, 7.

Detailed information on these races will be found on other pages of the *Enterprise*.

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## PIKAKES TO "DAD"

To David "Dad" Center goes a great share of the credit for our crews having had such a successful season. It Julian Yates is Grandfather of Canoe Racing—then "Dad" is Dad's Coaching. Unfortunately, just before the Kona Races, "Dad's" doctor advised him to take it easy and "Eats" was appointed head coach. However, "Dad's" conditioning and training paid off with a victory this season.

PIKAKES TO "DAD"

**TRY LUNCHEON  
AT O.C.C.**