

JOHN L. SULLIVAN AT WAIKIKI

By EDWIN NORTH McCLELLAN

*Historian, Editor, Lawyer, Traveller, Columnist, Radio Commentator
and former member of OCC*

"I guess there are few people alive today who remember the two visits of John L. Sullivan to Waikiki in 1891 when Liliuokalani was Queen," I remarked over a Honolulu radio station over seven years ago.

LOCAL BOXERS BETTER LAY LOW

"Local boxers had better lie low," editorially suggested the *Daily Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, July 2, 1891, and explained that "we haven't heard of any willing to meet John L." The famous pugilist was on his way to Australia aboard the *Mariposa*. Plans were made by Honolulu promoters for John L. to box six rounds with "the celebrated heavyweight Jack Ashton" in the Royal Hawaiian Opera House with the Royal Hawaiian Band present.

"The famous referee Jack Barnitt, master of ceremonies," was to preside over the proposed affair. Tickets, to be secured at L. Levey's, were priced at five dollars for Stage seats; one dollar and a half for seats in the Dress Circle, Parquet and Front Row Balcony; and one dollar general admission.

MARIPOSA LATE AND NO FIGHT

However, the *Mariposa* arrived too late on the third of July, 1891, for the sparring exhibition between Sullivan and Ashton. The *Advertiser* reported that "by far the largest crowd ever assembled at the Wharf was down to welcome the *Mariposa*," and the "formidable Bostonian," the "famous pugilist."

JOHN L. VISITS WAIKIKI

Transportation from Honolulu to Waikiki was pretty slow in 1891 but John L. managed to make a quick trip out to the Coral Crescent. No visitor to Honolulu considered his visit complete without a sight of the famous beach. What he saw pleased the Brawny Bostonian. He sailed for Australia at midnight, July third.

SULLIVAN—A COMEBACKER

John L. Sullivan passed through Honolulu, homeward-bound, in October of the same year of 1891, and expressed praise of the "Paradise of the Pacific," as

he called Hawaii. Said John L. Sullivan, after a second view of Waikiki Beach—

HE PRAISES HAWAII

"Those that know, say that I am rather blunt in my way. So, if I say anything off-color . . . why, just cross it out, for . . . I wish as square as they make . . . The People in your City of Honolulu are worth a million of the fellows in Australia. You don't have to watch every man in Honolulu.

"Your climate is grand and it must be good for health. My lungs are good and, although your city is warm, yet the air is so good to breathe that I never noticed the heat."

So, my friends, pro-boxing is an old sport in Hawaii, and Honoluluans and Waikikians saw the only John L. even if he wasn't "Champion of the World," as reported by the *Daily Bulletin* on July 3, 1891.

John L. Sullivan saw the site of the Outrigger Canoe Club about six and a half years before the OCC was born on May 1, 1908.



Patrick, Michael, Dennis Day, Jr. and Dennis Day, Sr. enjoy the OCC on their recent visit. The sweet singing tenor star will be back, he says.

Pic by "Scoop" Suzuki