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Waikiki in the "Easy Eighties"

BY EDWIN NORTH MCCLELLAN

(Second of Three Parts)

Waikiki Beach, in the Lazy Latitudes, was a relaxation spot for Honolulu in the Easy Eighties. The Coral Curve was sufficiently distant from the metropolis to be free from rabble, racket, and riot. There were plenty of outrigger canoes and surfboards with men and women who could use them. The waves rolled indolently upon the coral beach, the trade-breeze tempered the sun, and the people, many of them Hawaiians, knew how to enjoy life without civilization's strain. A beachcomber might even be spotted lolling on the Beach of Luxury. There was no night-life in the Eighties-Decade on that Sandy Sea Simitar, that is, none but moonlight picnicking, bathing, fishing, sailing, and singing by beach boys. There was no Moana with its pier, no Royal Hawaiian on the Beach, no SurfRider Hotel, no Kaiulani, no Biltmore, and no Outrigger Canoe Club.

AND, WHAT BATHING SUITS!

In that Gaslight Era there were no paved streets in Waikiki, no automobiles, no electric trolley cars, no big stores; but there were bicycles, busses and wagonettes.

No Desha Bathingsuit Law was necessary on Coral Arc and vicinity during that Prudish Era. *Kanes* wore two-piece suits that kept hirsute chests and bulging tummies secluded. *Wahines* hid themselves behind yards of cloth. Curvaceous feminine figures were hidden from the naked-inquiring eye of males, by beachgoing blouses with sleeves to elbows or wrists, bloomers, skirts reaching below knees, stockings held up by elastic, circular garters. (See picture of Ethel Roosevelt at Waikiki Beach in 1907 published in her *Crowded Hours*.) Not an inch (or any) female flesh could be seen from ear to toe. Hidden from masculine sight the plump *femmes* wore whalebone corsets to make their bulging figures more shapely. And My Lady did her best to keep Old Sol's rays from browning her lovely epidermis.

AINAHAU, "LAND OF THE COOL BREEZE"

"Ainahau, 'Land of the Cool Breeze,' was so named by Princess Likelike," wrote Guy H. Tuttle (OCC's President, 1913-1916), in *Mid-Pacific*, February, 1911. "The ten acres at Waikiki were laid out in gardens, winding walks, artificial lakes, and groves of coconut palms. The Moana Stream flowed and still [in 1911] flows through Ainahau, and empties into the Sea a few hundred yards away, after passing through the Outrigger Canoe Club grounds. (See *Forecast*, January, 1951 and January, 1952 for filling in of Lagoon and Stream in 1925.) Down this stream, (Princess) Kaiulani could paddle her outrigger canoe and out to the Surf, for she was an expert in the waves, both in the outrigger canoe and on the surfboard."

Two famous women of Hawaii passed to their ancestors this decade—Queen-Dowager Emma on April 25, 1885 and Princess Likelike on February 2, 1887.

BATHE FOR HOURS WITHOUT CHILL

Mary B. Wetmore wrote that, on February 23, 1888, she "took the 9:30 stage for Waikiki, a beautiful beach, the noted bathing-resort, where one can bathe for hours without chill, or watch the natives, apparently in their native element, swimming, diving, or floating on the undulating long, lazy swell of the ocean. Here, I took my first ocean bath. After bathing I spent the afternoon watching the *kanakas* in the water, and walking about the little town . . . returned home in the evening stage; found the Band playing

near the Hotel Grounds. (*Sounds From Home*, 44-45.)

The *Paradise of the Pacific* of March, 1889, carried an article on "Our Long Branch," explaining: "The Bus, which is a comfortable and roomy coach, leaves the City three times a day and gives the intending bather ample time." The writer described the "drive on the macadamized road to ever beautiful Waikiki with its race-course, its steadily improving [Kapiolani] Park, studded over with comfortable and fashion-built residences and villas of our wealthy and influential residents . . . four-in-hand to a single buggy."

AT LAST A FIRST-CLASS HOTEL

"Beautiful Waikiki has, at last, a first-class hotel on the Beach," the Park Beach Hotel, reported the *Paradise of the Pacific*, July, 1888. "Mr. Charles N. Arnold has leased the Macfarlane Residence and fitted it up for a family hotel and resort. It is a most beautiful place, situated right at the foot of Diamond Head, and Charlie will prove to be the most genial *Boniface* ever known." An advertisement in the *Advertiser*, October 24, 1888, described the Park Beach Hotel as being "opposite Kapiolani Park, Waikiki," and as the "finest Bathing Place on the Islands" with excellent billiards and bowling alley.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD AT WAIKIKI

Charles Warren Stoddard, American writer and man of mystery, was a poetic and retiring personality. He was very sympathetic towards natives of the Pacific including those of Hawaii. He was very responsive to the life of the Islands. While he thought the Hawaiian *ukulele* player was a genius I have found no mention of *hula wahines* in his many books.

"It is a delicious life we lead at Waikiki," wrote Mr. Stoddard, in 1885, in his *Idylls of the South Seas*. (*See Forecast*, January, 1955 for remainder of quote.)

"One may plunge for hours in the reef-girdled Lagoon at Waikiki without fear of taking a chill," wrote Charles Warren Stoddard in the *Paradise of the Pacific*, October, 1888. "There are bathing suits there, and canoes, and a long easy swell on which to undulate . . . It is a delicious life we lead at Waikiki . . .

Naked fishermen bearing aloft huge torches that gild their bronze-brown bodies, and the bathers under the stars."

The disappearance of Charles Warren Stoddard, while in his late middle age, to a German monastery, seemed to be the final touch of mystery that shrouded his life. (*See Advertiser*, June 5, 1951 quoting *Pacific Islands Monthly*).

The Coral Crescent of Waikiki was never more desirable or alluring than in those ten years of the Easy Eighties. This is the end of Part Two and the tale will conclude next month with Part Three.

APPLICANT TO MEMBERSHIP

Below is listed an applicant who desires membership in your Club. We can not reiterate often enough the importance of scanning these names carefully. If you object to any applicant for any reason, it is your duty to contact Dr. Irving Blom, Admissions Committee chairman, stating your reasons for objection. Such information will be carefully considered and treated as confidential.

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