



By Ron Haworth



The Wichman clock can be seen in its original location on Fort Street in downtown Honolulu.



The clock was moved to OCC in 1916.



The clock faced the ocean and was visible to surfers and swimmers.

A Ticking Time Capsule

Outrigger Canoe Club members have grown from keiki and in some case, to great-grandparents in time cadence with the clock now over the outdoor showers and tunnel leading to the Logo Shop and locker rooms.

It has been known to run on Hawaiian Time, a tick or two slow, as have we all, but it has been running for over a century and can be excused if its hands occasionally lag the digital Johnny-Come-Lately Smartphone; and not unlike the marathon runner in need of a knee replacement, it sometimes disappears for minor surgery.

It was previously displayed on the wall between the Beach Attendant's Office and the Snack Shop where a plaque now reads:

"Beneath this clock rests a time capsule dedicated on Club Day May 6, 1989"

Ironically, the clock is in itself a 99 year Outrigger Canoe Club Time Capsule, but it doesn't share the date its hands first moved.

It has been a feature at Outrigger since 1916 when it was gifted by H. F. Wichman & Company, Ltd. It was to usher the Roaring Twenties to Waikiki atop an approximately nine foot high wooden pedestal by the old pavilion; in 1941 it moved to our (then) new Clubhouse and took root on the beach just adjacent to the Royal Hawaiian.

In its prior life it was a Fort Street landmark above Wichman Jewelers (est. 1887) and pedestrians could read the dial from a block away; a Honolulu era when people moved at a less hectic pace and black Model T Fords lined parking-meter-free curbs and nattily attired policemen in pith-helmet, blue jacket and white trousers, rhythmically conducted Henry's traffic with white gloved hands.

World War I's trench war was raging but America had not

yet entered "the war to end all wars". Twenty-five years later it greeted the innocent sunrise December 7, 1941 and a "Day of Infamy" and then stood guard over the barbed wire consequence.

It has looked down and ticked over world dignitaries, renowned writers, and Hollywood stars too numerous to mention; perhaps, none more revered than Shirley Temple.

A Gift More Valuable Than Diamonds

An article in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin of April 1916 didn't explain Wichman's generosity, but Club June Board minutes expressed gratitude and credited Outrigger member Mr. Merle M. Johnson instrumentality in its acquisition. Wichman's generosity, however, wasn't extinguished. They also installed the clock on a concert base furnished by Outrigger and agreed to service it.

The newspaper story went on to point out members surfing 100 yards off the beach would be able to read the time. The article claimed so large was its face ship's passengers with field glasses would also be able to see the time from the promenade deck.

Therefore, one can boast Outrigger's clock greeted returning kama'aina and malihini 10 years before the Aloha Tower clocks were installed in May 1926

Even more poignant, both our clock and the four-faced Aloha Tower clocks were manufactured by premier Boston clockmaker Howard Clock Company (est. 1813) to H. F. Wichman & Co. specifications. Weighing seven tons, Aloha Tower's clock's accuracy was guaranteed to 30 seconds per month.

Hawaiian Time, indeed.

In November 1927 it offered passengers on Matson's SS Malolo San Francisco to Honolulu maiden voyage their first look at Hawaiian Time. Our clock stood sentinel as the Royal Hawaiian Hotel was constructed and heralded the grand opening February 1, 1927 as 1,200 black tie and ballroom gowned guests partied. On a more sober and somber note it



A close up of the clock.



Dad Center and his crew paddled out with the clock in the background.



When the Club was rebuilt the clock was still prominent.



The clock moved to the new Club at Diamond Head in 1964 but this is all that is left of the once grand clock. It's now mounted over the beach stairs to the locker rooms.

chronicled the 1930 demolition of the Moana Hotel Pier.

In July 1935 Outrigger's time capsule's hands paused... fleetingly... the minute and hour Hawaii's lyrics aired over shortwave radio and Webley Edwards' words and microphone mesmerized "Hawaii Calls" listeners from the Moana Banyan Court... "The sound of waves on the beach at Waikiki"... a piper who seduced and beckoned millions of visitors to our islands until the concluding broadcast 40 years later.

Oh... the nostalgia... and our clock watched over it all.

Once Upon A Time

First evidence of a permanent clock on Island soil appears in a list of goods received by King Kamehameha I at Lahaina in 1812 in exchange for a shipload of sandalwood. Buried in the manifest of everyday common items of that period was... "1 large clock for house."

Tower clocks have long been symbols of prestige and power. The huge clock over Anne Boleyn's Gate at Hampton Court, England, was commissioned by Henry VIII in 1540, (four years after poor Anne was beheaded), and Big Ben in London, the largest four-faced clock in the world, has ruled supreme counting the hours over River Thames since 1858.

But only Outrigger's siblings brought a tear to the eye with ALOHA on Boat Day.

Father Time Disrobes

The Wichman clock's cross town relocation from Fort Street to Outrigger had seen it shed most embellishments which had made it so eye catching when suspended over the Fort Street sidewalk where it perched on the back of a friendly faced animal with stubby wings; and was crowned with what could be envisioned as an Aladdin lamp.

Not by any means your everyday street timepiece.

But when it arrived on the sands of Waikiki those garish decorations had vanished and it was down to beach boy basics

with only a skull cap of the bronze crown remaining. And even that was to be replaced with a wooden bonnet reading Outrigger Canoe Club in bold letters.

Today, with its present 'diet' profile it has nothing more to lose but Hawaiian time.

When you next rinse Outrigger century glass sands from the feet...pause...admire our clock. It is truly family and one of our oldest possession, keeping Hawaiian Time for members and visitors through growing times, doubtful times, moving times, war times, Dad and Duke times, and... faithfully... 99 years of good times.

If it could only "talk story as well as "tell" time.

This is the sixth in a series of The Koa Log. The Historical Committee sincerely hopes readers are enjoying the content, as well as any memories they might evoke. Member comments are encouraged and ideas for future columns are welcome and should be emailed to: occkoaolog@gmail.com

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