

"Pop" Ford's Reminiscences

By **ALEXANDER HUME FORD**

(Note: This is one of a series of articles by Mr. Ford, founder and for many years director of the Pan-Pacific Union, founder of the Outrigger club, and of other organizations. Mr. Ford recently returned from Maui, where he has lived for the past three years.)

II. **GEORGE D. CENTER**

(The founder of my fame)

When I came to Hawaii in 1908 and formed the Outrigger club with the last dozen haole boys who could ride the surfboard, George D. Center was in his prime—the backbone and trainer of the Myrtle boat club.

He scorned the surf. It took me two years to persuade Dad to even come to Waikiki to take a look-see. I was then "Pop" to all the small boys who sometimes ran me up an ice cream cone bill amounting to \$30 per month — the wisest money I ever spent.

When I did get Center interested I was soon



Mr. Center

eclipsed—Dad could train the swimming teams, show the boys how to steer a canoe, ride a surfboard or train for a swimming contest.

From the first arrival of G. D. Center he was called "Dad" as I was called "Pop," and so we are still called by young and old.

Now Dad and I are working together harder than we ever did, training the young to love the surf and the sport it provides. For 30 years we have worked together and are still at it.

It was Dad who taught the last generation to make paddles and surfboards and he and Edric Cook are at it again in preparation for real surfing contests at Waikiki.

In 1908 I got a 20 years lease on what is now the Outrigger Canoe club grounds for \$5 a year provided the dues for boys under 16 would not be over \$5 a year. I wish it were so now.

Such dues made it possible for every kid with guts to live at least half the day fighting the surf.

Again Dad and I are placing our own canoes at the disposal of boys to go out and fight the surf. They may bust the canoes, that is part of the game when they come in must mend the canoes and try again.

Now at 76 I am as enthusiastic for surfing for others as I was in my prime, half a century ago. Dad and I are building brain and brawn for 50 years hence. I wish everyone's kokua.

(Other articles by Mr. Ford will follow.)