

# Befuddled by a Muumuu

By CHARLES E. HOGUE

When fair, young Queen Kaahumanu slipped quietly into the sea at Kailua, Island of Hawaii, and swam some seventeen miles to the Honaunau City of Refuge to see whether King Kamehameha I had a date with a rival there, her jealousy may have caused some comment but there would have been none about her aquatic skill. That swim was hardly a breather and she was ready to make the return journey without fatigue. Prowess in the water had been a characteristic of Hawaii's women from the earliest days of Island history, just as it has been during the century and a half since Kaahumanu's time.

So when Esther Williams, aquatic star who recently filmed a movie here, was reported in Hollywood as saying she found few good swimmers among the Islands' girls she started something. Leaves of the record books fluttered frantically and an avalanche of refutation was dumped on the hapless Esther's decorative head.



HOGUE

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The comment excited special attention with preparations under way for Hawaii's Women's AAU Outdoor Swimming Championship meeting at the Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium on July 5-8. Proceeds of this meeting will defray the expense of Hawaii's women swimmers who compete in the AAU Women's National Championships at Seattle in August.

And among the Island girls entered there will be **four swimmers who last year captured six national swimming championships!** These are Thelma Kalama, holder of the national title in the 100-yard and 440-yard freestyle; Catherine Kleinschmidt, national champion in the 880-yard freestyle; Evelyn Kawamoto, holder of the national championships in the 330-yard indoor medley and 220-yard breaststroke; and Julia Murakami, who with these three formed the Hawaii Swim Club relay team that won the national 800-yard championship.

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Women of Hawaiian blood swim swiftly and gracefully from infancy and their sisters here of other ancestries have followed their example quickly. Lorrin Andrews recognized their talent and in 1914 persuaded the AAU national convention to admit women to membership. Ruth Stacker, daughter of an editor and later herself an Advertiser reporter, became the first registered woman swimmer in the United States. She was a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Outrigger Canoe Club, later to become the Ulu Niu Club. Mrs. E. Fullard-Leo helped to bring Mainland swimmers here to compete against her.

The late Alexander Hume Ford, founder of the Outrigger Club, had interested Mrs. Fullard-Leo, in women's swimming activities. That was some thirty years ago and, as she said yesterday, she has been trying to retire for the past twenty years. But she is still the chairman of the Records and Membership committees of Hawaii AAU, the only woman to have served on the Executive Committee of the American Olympics Association, and among the few holders of honorary memberships in the National AAU.

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Mrs. Fullard-Leo accompanied Mariechen Wehselau, now Mrs. Chester Jackson of Honolulu, to the Paris Olympiad in 1924 where she broke the world's record for the 100-meter freestyle in the trials but finished second when the finals were finished in slower time. She also accompanied the local girl to Australia and New Zealand on a tour that left a trail of broken records.

Miss Wehselau's Paris record of 1:03 stood for twenty-seven years until it was broken here in February of this year by another Island girl, Thelma Kalama, who set the mark at 1:01:6.

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So Miss Williams is disappointed in Hawaii's swimmers. We might refer her to Miss C. Miyamoto; to the members of the Puna-hou, the Hawaii Swim Club, University of Hawaii and Outrigger Canoe Club relay teams; to Estelle Cassidy; to Lily Bowmer; to Loena Hinds; to Helen Moses; to Cecily Cunha; to Mildred Slight; to F. Katsutani; to M. Higuchi, or to Olga Clark, all winners of women's national swimming championships, along with the other young ladies mentioned heretofore in this piece. But we won't.

We think the reporter who talked to Miss Williams got so interested in her description of some gals she saw over here swimming in muumuus that he got all befuddled about what she really said.