

Note: I have found several drafts of this short history, each with slightly different details. Written by in 2002 by John Lind, then age 88.

Michael Tongg  
Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association

Dear Mike,

The night of the awards banquet for the Waikiki Surf Club paddlers you asked that I give you a report covering the early period of the Molokai Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race. Following is my report:

This event was founded and started by the Junior Chamber of Commerce Oldtimers as part of the Aloha Week program developed by that organization. The J.C. Oldtimers was made up of those active in the J.C.C. who had passed their 35th year age as membership is limited to those between the ages of 21 to 35. Harry Nordmark was the first president of the organization with Harry Palmer, Drury Malone, R. Allen Watkins and a lot of other active guys including myself. I was a board member of the new group. For an event such as the proposed Aloha Week program a list of events were suggested to make up the overall program and committees were appointed and each committee selected other members to assist on their project and to make reports to the overall group concerning their progress. An office staff headed up by Elsie Ross Lane handled all the office routine as it was a big project consisting of the Aloha Week Parade, Street Dances in the Waikiki Area, Luau's, various contests and programs in the parks and encouragement of musical groups to perform in the down town area during the Aloha Week period. As my interest was largely aquatic related at the time I was appointed to head up the aquatic committee. Several members of the oldtimers served as members of that committee and came up with various events for consideration. For years Mr. E.A. Minville the father of "Toots" had been the source for celebrative flags used in decorating the beach area, and dance pavillions, luau sites during the late 30's and 40's as we had many projects such as the Aquacade at the Natatorium featuring surfboard paddlers headed up by O.B. Patterson. The Hawaii Surfing Championships featuring the Miss Waikiki Beach Girl Contest. Diamond Head Surfboard Paddle, Makapuu Body Surfing Championships, Surfboard Paddling Championships in the Ala Wai canal and numerous other activities such as night time searchlight surfing.

Mr. Minville was very proud of his flag collection and carefully examined them following return after each event. In 1947 when the Waikiki Surf Club was organized and even before, Mr. Minville's son "Toots" often spoke of his association with tugs in the Kaiwi channel between Molokai and Oahu and the severe currents and storms in the channel he often discussed the possibility of a race using outrigger canoes. Prior to the organization of the Waikiki Surf Club most of the competitive aquatic sports between 1939 and 1947 was under the sponsorship of the Hawaii <sup>surfing</sup> Association an organization that had been started with the help of Arthur Powlison director of the City and County Parks and Recreation Dept. Mike, I am attaching with this letter a list of organizations that I have been affiliated with in my short lifetime to give you an idea of the interest I had in aquatic activity prior to my coming to Hawaii. It was also the result of my seeking employment here with <sup>the</sup> organization I worked for in California as <sup>they</sup> had a branch store in Honolulu that required a trained company worker. I WAS SELECTED. I was an enthused individual and of the opinion aquatic sports was a big thing here by comparison to that in California.

Upon arrival in Hawaii I found that there was little competitive activity but a lot of interest for it.

Here I was an unknown mainland haole who knew he had to tread lightly especially in the sport that Hawaii was famous for. Using the established Junior Chamber of Commerce as a base it was possible to build activity that I had expected to find in Honolulu especially Waikiki.

I learned long ago that it takes a lot of people to accomplish most projects. Without the Waikiki Surf Club there would never have been a Molokai race in 1952. In my book Wally Froiseth should be jointly recognized for making the Molokai race a reality. I would like my grandchildren and great grandchildren know the correct history of the event.

In addition to full time employment with the Dohrmann Hotel Supply Co. from 1933 till 1959 when they sold out plus the organization of the Honolulu Restaurant Supply Co. Inc. in 1959 until my retirement in 1999 I found time to take part in the following organizations.

Junior Chamber of Commerce	past member and director
Central Branch YMCA	past member of board
Hawaii Surfing Association	past President
Waikiki Surf Club	Founder and life member
Merging of the Hawaii Surfing Association with the new Hawaiian Canoe Racing and Surfing Association in late 1949	
Outrigger Canoe Club	past member 1939-1948
Mercury Business Club	past president
Honolulu Commercial Club	past president
Waialae Country Club	past member 1946-1947
International Geneva Assn.	past president
Business Mens Training Corp.	member
Honolulu Police Reserves	past member 1942 thru 1950
Traffic Safty Commission	representing Junior Chamber
Hawaii Hotel Association	past member representing co.
Hawaii Restaurant Association	past member
Keys and Whistles	past president
Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club	member

In 1999 I turned the Honolulu Restaurant Supply Co., Inc. over to a trusted employee winding up my career of sixty-six years in the hotel and restaurant supply business.

My only club affiliation at this time is the life time memberships with the Long Beach Surf Club and the Waikiki Surf Club plus the Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club

Dear Michael,

At the awards banquet of the Waikiki Surf Club, ~~you asked me about my part in the Aloha Week activities.~~ You indicated you were rounding up material for the 50th running of the Molokai -Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race. and wanted my input. Here is my account of the formation of ~~teh~~ project and the part I played.

I will go back to the formation of the Waikiki Surf Club the organization that made the event possible, at that time. In my opinion the event would never have happened without the input from surf club members. As you know I was at that time manager of the Hawaii Branch of the Dohrmann Hotel Supply Co and following a request from your Dad, Ruddy Tongg, who we had been doing business with he wanted to see me about a cocktail lounge he was planning for the building next to the Waikiki Tavern. During the inspection of the area and taking measurements for the preparation of plans I made the comment that IT WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT AREA FOR A BEACH CLUB SIMILAR TO THE Outrigger club that was limited to haoles. I had arrived in the islands in 1949 and was surprised to find the limited aquatic activities for island residents. I had two boards that I ~~had~~ brought over with me on the top of my 1939 Dodge Club Coupe that ~~I had brought with me~~ on the Iurline and had no place to put them. I didn't know any ~~one~~ here so waited until my car and its contents were unloaded at the dock and drove off not knowing the location of Dohrmann offices here. I ultimately found the store at 925 Bethel St. I ~~was met~~ by Sam Wong the local manager who had been at the dock with leis but not knowing me or me him we didn't make contact. After meeting the crew at the shop I was told I could probably get a place to stay at Beach Walk Inn operated by one of the customers I ended up there and learned the only place for storage of boards was at the Outrigger Canoe Club so I headed down there and learned the lockers were for members only. Membership was \$10.00 so I applied for membership and was assigned lockers for my two boards. ~~One~~ was a solid board that I had shaped by Hoppy Swarts who was building boards at ~~teh~~ time in Venice Calif. The other was a 17" paddleboard that had been built for me by Mr. Brejcha the Tax Collector of the city of Long Beach who had a hobby of building things. His son Myron was one of the members of the Long Beach Surf Club that I had organized and given a life membership. When I took the board into the ~~club~~ <sup>club</sup> area a little dark skinned hawaiian boy greeted me with Hey Haole where you goin with the "pineapple barge" This little <sup>guy</sup> was Blue Makua my first introduction to Waikiki

Blue must have been around 12 years old at the time (maybe younger)

~~There was very limited activity indicating there was room for~~  
*appeared to be the aquatic competition*

and what there was was limited to entries. I joined the Honolulu Jr. Chamber of Commerce as I had been active in the Long Beach Jr. Chamber and a year before being assigned to ~~the~~ Hawaii had with the help of the Long Beach Surf *C, 4, 5* and hundreds of other people successfully engineered the ~~running of the~~ first International Surfing Championship during the running of the "SALUTE TO THE STATES" program of the city of Long Beach sponsored by the J.C.C. I served as general chairman of the ~~surfing~~ surfing portion of the event. It took a lot of people and it was there that I learned that one cannot do things alone but one can guide many.

A few weeks following my arrival to the islands I met Arthur Pollison who was serving as director of the parks and recreation department. He had a weekly Saturday program on ~~the~~ KGU that was located in the advertiser bldg. I appeared on his program a few times resulting in the start of the Hawaii Surfing Assn. We followed the pattern as in Long Beach tying in the strength of ~~the~~ Jr. Chamber of Commerce in the promotion of water sports events. It wasn't difficult encouraging the many guys on the beach to get involved in competition and many projects were sponsored by the combined groups in 1939 thru the war period till 1947. The Surfing Association in 1943 had put on one of the biggest *crowd* pleasers at Waikiki with the Hawaii Surfing Championships and the Miss Waikiki Beauty Contest co sponsored by the JCC,s

Your Dad, Ruddy had called me a few days following our initial meeting and said he liked the idea of a club and gave me permission to use the area above Waikiki Tavern for a meeting room and the locker room facilities already in place suitable for men and women's sections. Permission was obtained to move surfboard lockers from the diamond head side of the building ~~next~~ to Kuhio beach to the space adjoining the locker rooms. This happened a few weeks following the early meeting and development of membership. In 1943 the Waikiki Surf Club was officially registered with the State of Hawaii. One of our original members *+ Dick Ford* Herbert Choy prepared all the paper work thru his organization *FONMG, MIHO AND CHOY*. Within a very short time over five hundred members had been signed up.

Gene Smith noted surf board paddler served as our first beach attendant and maintained the beach that was fitted with yellow and red umbrellas and beach chairs. One of our new members Elmer Lee made his personal six man *KOA* surfing canoe available for canoe surfing for the membership. The surfing and canoeing was handled by ~~that~~ *the* committee headed by Wally Froiseth assisted by George Downing. ~~There~~ many committees of the new organization had their assignments and the chairman was responsible for controlling the activity of its committee. It wasn't long following organization that the new organization was the leading competitor in beach activity and sports of surfing and canoeing.

We used to have a lot of support from Lorrin Thurston, Jullian Yates, Andy Anderson Pam Anderson's father who was ~~president~~ *president* of Von Ham Young Co and the Al;

*TON ADVERTISER + RILEY ALLEN OF THE BIAL SUGGESTION*  
*HEALING ISLAND HAWAII*

IMPORTANT NOTICE IN THE POCKET OF THE ENVELOPE

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May 6, 2002  
John M. Lind

I was requested recently to prepare a report of my knowledge of the development originally of the Molokai -Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race held in 1952. Following is my report.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce old timers was organized in the early 1950's consisting of Junior Chamber members who had passed their age limits for membership ( 21 to 35 years of age ) Harry Nordmark was the chosen leader of the group that consisted of interested active members of the JCC in that category. I was one of the group or original members and served on its board of directors. One of the major projects was a community project the brain child of Harry Nordmark " ALOHA WEEK " The membership came up with a number of events consisting of street dancing, parades, group singing and hawaiian dancing, lei making and encouragement of lei making and wearing of leis. Beach activity of which I had been active in since my arrival in the islands in 1939 became a large part of the planned program. The Waikiki Surf Club and its active membership of which I was president spearheaded that part of the program. This was the opportunity for the event that Toots had been talking about for a number of years The Molokai to Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race. It was accepted and encouraged by the JC Oldtimers as part of the aquatic program. Toots was called in and he went to work in an effort to get organized clubs with outrigger canoes to participate. Outrigger and Hui Nalu were the only organized clubs at the time other than the newly organized Waikiki Surf Club. Wally Froiseth the head of the canoe committee of the Surf Club relished the idea of the event and was the first to volunteer an entry. Henrietta Newman Newman a resident of Molokai whom Toots was acquainted with was contacted . She had a group on Molokai also interested in competing but did not have a canoe to paddle - Toots went to work and obtained the use of a outrigger owned by Doris Duke Cromwell that was loaned for the event. The only other interested group was an unknown named Hawaiian Canoe Club Dad Center the proud owner of a beautiful outrigger canoe named "malia" was loaned to the surf club for the event. I remember the day that Wally and George Downing asked me to go with them to see the canoe that was stored along Dads house on the Diamond Head side of Waikiki. A beautiful 40' Koa Outrigger Racing Canoe. Dad was a staunch member of the Outrigger Canoe Club whose organization had turned down the opportunity to allow any of the clubs equipment to be used for the event.

John D Kaupiko the head of the Hui Nalu group was interested in entering but his equipment was in the inventory of the Outrigger Canoe club resulting in his clubs inability to participate. The three teams were the only entries for this first Aloha Week event in 1952.

Today this event as dangerous as it might be now has an entry list of over one hundred outrigger canoes participating in the mens as well as the womens event. Thanks to safty precautions in every years race there have been no casualitys even tho treasured outrigger canoes have been broken apart by the heavy seas during heavy weather crossings.

As a personal note I feel as close to this event as any one could be as in 1952 I was serving as President of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Associion, President of the Waikiki Surf Club, Chairman of the aquatics committee of the Junior Chamber of Commerce Oldtimers the sponsoring group and in addition to the outrigger activity was busy organizing the first International Surfing Championships at Makaha in conjunction with the Waianai Lions Club and all at the same time as serving as manager of a mainland hotel and restaurant supply co with that required at at least ten hour days usually seven days a week.

The 1953 event

As this was the first long distance paddle in many years koa canoe owners were reluctant to allow their boats in the event as in preceeding events many beautiful Koa racing canoes were damaged and some totally broken up

The men of the Waikiki Surf Club canoe committee went to the Bishop museum to study how ancient Hawaiians rigged their canoes for rough water journeys and learned they used lahala coverings to keep the seas from swamping their canoes. Coverings were used following the first race and were custom fitted to each canoe with zippered openings at each paddlers seat . Gromets were used to secure the canvas to the gunnels of the canoes. <sup>early</sup> many novel ideas for fastening the canvas coverings have since been developed Paddlers wore swimming trunks and shirts with long sleeves and hats of every discription as the sun over a six to seven hour period was fierce Many seasoned paddlers wore only swimming trunks during their time in the canoe but it has been common to see long sleeved shirts and hats of many discriptions

# how's it whats up

Outline for story covering the early Molokai to Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race

## INTRODUCTION

Use article to Mike Tongg present president of the Hawaii Canoe Racing Association. Mike requested this information as this year is the 50th running of the event and he wanted the history of it from someone of authority. I was the president of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing and Surfing Association in 1952 the first year of the running of the event. As indicated I was the President of the Waikiki Surf Club at that time and a director of the sponsoring Junior Chamber of Commerce Old Timers organization who started the Aloha Week Celebration. I had been appointed chairman of the AQUATIC EVENTS COMMITTEE. The Molokai to Oahu was one of the aquatic events of that committee

Main people active in the development of the first race consisted of the following. Harry Nordmark President of JC Oldtimers and Harry Palmer of that organization., Wallace Froiseth who was in charge of the Waikiki Surf Club canoe committee and enthused about the idea of the Kaiwi channel race. Pepi cooke of Molokai ranch, co. Henrieta Newman of Molokai and the Molokai County officials met with JC Oldtimers on Molokai to coordinate the planning of the start of the first event. Subjects of importance were transportation of paddlers and outrigger canoes from oahu and hauling of the canoes to the starting point at Ilio Point on Molokai, feeding of the crews and officials, entertainment, permission to get thru the many gates at the time to get to the starting point. as The Molokai county officials were very cooperative and no hurdle was a major problem but official clearance was necessary. The meetings were held in the county offices in Kanakakai.

The selection of Arthur "Toots" Minvilleto serve as chairman of the original Molokai to Oahu Canoe Race met with the approval of the Aloha Week aquatic committee of the Junior Chamber of Commerce oldtimers and its board of directors, sponsors of the event largely because of his interest and efforts on many occasions to make such an event a reality. Francis II Brown had posted a \$500.00 award for the first canoe to cross the channel but even with the cash award entry's were hard to find. The only organized canoe clubs active at the time were the Outrigger Canoe Club whose president was Samuel Fuller, The Hui Nalu led by John D Kaupiko Sr. and the Waikiki Surf Club that I was heading. The Outrigger Canoe Club ruled against putting a team in the first race however John D. was anxious but his available canoes were controlled by the O.C.C. The Waikiki Surf Club was anxious and willing to participate as competition was one of its purposes particularly Outrigger Canoe racing and surfing. The club's canoe committee headed by Wallace Froiseth and his large selection of paddlers were anxious. The "Malia" an outrigger owned by Dad Center and ultimately sold to the surf club membership was made available for the first race and used by the Waikiki Surf Club in the first MO race.

Henreeta Newman of Molokai and Charles Titcomb had a group of Molokai residents interested in competing but they did not have a boat. It was arranged to get the use of a boat owned by Doris Duke for the Molokai crew. It was sent to Molokai by barge and was used for a weeks training before the day of the race. A third crew was finally lined up identified as the Hawaiian canoe Club. The first race was started at Ilio Point on the west northern end of Molokai.

Molokai's team consisted of the following men William Foster age 30 a fisherman, William Nainui age 40 a painter, Abe Bowman a lineman age 38, William Anyee age 30 a lineman, Ulysses Puaa age 30 Libby McNeil worker and Charles Titcomb age 38 a county worker They were all healthy and determined

The Waikiki Surf Club crew consisted of George Downing, Dutchy Kino, Moki Perkins, George Cabral, Roy Folk and Wallace Froiseth all top well trained canoe paddlers. How the Molokai crew could have won that event over a far superior well trained crew using the finest outrigger canoe in the islands for the purpose is one of fate but the real story is one of disappointment for the W.S.C. A fitting had been attached to the bottom of the ama kept coming loose causing the canoe to veer off course regardless of the steersmans efforts to hold the course. The enclosed picture shows George Downing and Dutchy Kino working in the water during the race trying to correct the problem

The event the first ever had three entrys however only the Molokai and Waikiki Surf Club boats were seen or reported during the race after it was started.

The great victory by the men from Molokai is not to be discounted as they were a determined group who gave it their all and were victorious in spite of the odds and a tremendous accomplishment.