

# Winners Practiced Only A Week for Interisle Race

By HARDY HUTCHINSON

Six burly stout hearted Molokai oarsmen paddled their way through 36 miles of choppy seas and stiff gales to score an unexpected but heartwarming victory in the first Molokai-Oahu canoe race ever to be held.

The hazardous journey took the winning Friendly Isle crew 8 hours and 55 minutes. They left Ilio Point, Molokai, at 6:35 Saturday morning and hit Waikiki Beach directly in front of Moana Hotel at 3:30 that afternoon.

58

10/20/52

The winners entered the race fortified with only a week's practice together on a borrowed canoe—a heavy outrigger owned by Doris Duke and loaned to them by Johnny Gomez, Miss Duke's local manager.

### FAVORITE FINISHES 2ND

The favorite Waikiki Surf Club, paddling a shallow racing canoe, Malia, swept in 15 minutes later after being swamped in an attempt to ride the crest of a wave about 100 yards from the finish.

Hawaiian Surf Club followed three minutes later.

The finish of the gruelling channel chase was drama packed as a throng of 2,000 persons, many of whom were disbelieving tourists, crowded the Moana Banyan court to greet and cheer the dog tired Molokai paddlers.

About 100 Molokai residents, who flew in earlier, embraced the six oarsmen and carried them to tables for hot coffee as the winning canoe was beached.

Silence then prevailed as anxious and proud wives whispered questions of health into the ears of their triumphant husbands who slumped wearily into their chairs.

### CREW 'POOPED'

"How do you feel," they were asked. "Pooped," was the unanimous reply.

"We could have picked up five hours if we hadn't lost sight of Koko Head," was the remark of William Wainui, a 40 year old painter and the shortest crew member.

"How was the weather?" shot a reporter. "Rough all the way," grunted 35 year old Willy Ahye, the crew's spunky captain.

"We bailed water the entire distance," added Charles Titcomb 38 year old steersman credited with having done a brilliant job.

"When did you know you were leading in the race?" asked another.

### RACE IN THE BAG

"Just off Koko Head we were told it was in the bag and to keep going," answered 38 year old Abe Bowman, a huge electricity line-man from Kaunakakai.

All six related, in brief exchanges, their experiences.



**VICTORIOUS CREW**—Here's Molokai's iron men crew which took the Oahu canoe race Saturday. The victors made their dining room right after the finish to ask for—guess who: William Wainui, William Foster, Abe Bowman, crew Puaa and Charles Titcomb.—Star-Bulletin Photo.

They told of how they sang the Hukilau song, Kaimaha Hila and Molokai A Ina, when morale sagged.

And they cheered Wainui as being the inspirational force which drove them onward when the going got rough.

Bill Foster, 30 year old stroke and 23 year old Ulysses Puaa were the two youngest members of the crew.

Steersman Titcomb, whose strategy was questioned earlier on taking a northerly course when his two rivals chose a southerly direction, explained that he had been told the currents were better on that course.

Asked if he had been given some advice which led to his masterful performance he replied, "a little."

### LOOKED FRESHER

The second place Waikiki Surf Club crew led by 32 year old Wally Forsythe looked much fresher at the finish probably because of their youth. Four were in their early twenties, two in their early thirties.

WSC led most of the way but was continually hampered by a faulty runner which required constant repair and which slowed their canoe considerably.

The Molokai crew earned \$500 for winning which was awarded them at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel Royal Ball Saturday night.

The Waikiki Surf Club picked up \$300, while the third place Hawaiian Surf Club, a relatively new one locally, won \$100.

The race was sponsored jointly by the Hawaiian Racing and Surfing Association and the Aloha Week Inc., both of whom hope to stage such a run annually during Aloha Week.