



Advertiser photo by Carl Viti

Libby Peck Parish, friend of Queen Liliuokalani, is celebrating her 100th birthday.

Centenarian retells charmed life amid turtles and queen

One of Libby Peck Parish's earliest memories is of a turtle that came up beneath her as she was swimming alone at age three on a little beach on the ocean side of Mokoli'i, Chinaman's Hat Island.

Her granduncle left her on the island to play when he went fishing in his canoe.

The turtle, as Libby remembers it, gave her a ride around Chinaman's Hat, then brought her back to the little beach. Later, Libby went to



OUR HONOLULU

By Bob Krauss

school in Our Honolulu. The turtle was waiting for her when she came home on vacations, she said.

But the turtle would not let anybody else ride it.

As you can see, growing up in Our Honolulu was different when Libby was a girl. That's because she was born 100 years ago last Wednesday. The family is celebrating with a big luau at Kualoa Ranch today.

She lives at Ewa Beach with her daughter, Thelma Parish, a Sister of the Sacred Hearts. Talking to Libby about her girlhood is to turn back the clock almost a century and to suspend disbelief.

Try to understand. Her father was a British merchant. Her mother didn't like him well enough to marry him. Sister Thelma explained, "When it came to having a child in those days, the formal act of marriage wasn't all that important."

So Libby was *hanai*-ed by her granduncle and grandaunt who wanted a hapa haole baby. They lived at Waikane on the shore. Libby's granduncle was Kaukukala, *kahuna nui* from Waikane to Kualoa, and expert in fishing and healing.

He doted on Libby, took her with him wherever he went. He held her on the saddle in front of him and dropped her off on the tiny beach at Chinaman's Hat when he went fishing.

Kaukukala never said much. One day the child asked her gruff granduncle to take her along in the canoe. He said, "Whatever you see, don't be afraid."

She sat in front of the canoe proudly paddling, first on one side, then the other. On the outrigger side, her paddle hit something. She looked down and saw a shark bigger than the canoe swimming under the outrigger.

Libby squirmed so far to

the opposite side of the canoe that it upset. Her granduncle was very annoyed. He grabbed her hair and set her on the shark, she said.

The next thing she remembers, she was on the beach where the shark must have deposited her because her granduncle was off shore fishing. Libby had to walk all the way home.

Her mother married Solomon Peck, who had a draying business called Houstace & Peck, later to become Hono-

lulu Constructing & Draying (HC&D). Hattie Peck, Libby's mother, worked at Washington Place for de-throned Queen Liliuokalani.

Her duties included sewing Hawaiian quilts and cleaning kahilis. Little Libby went to live with her mother and step-father.

The Queen put a wooden soda water box on the lanai under the window so Libby could step up and peek in to talk story while the Queen was supposed to be taking her nap.

If the ladies-in-waiting got suspicious and opened the door, the Queen shoved Libby's head under the window.

Libby entered Punahou School in the seventh grade and made her first big splash at age 16 in the 1906 Floral Parade. Up to that time, she said, pa'u riders had been elderly women, ladies-in-waiting to the Queen.

That year, younger women were urged to ride and Libby jumped at the chance. She borrowed a beautiful black horse owned by Fire Chief Paul Thurston.

Libby trained the horse not to be frightened of a pa'u by wearing a sheet when she practiced riding him in the swampy wilderness that is now Ala Moana Center. On the way home, a street car went by and the conductor rang the bell.

The fire horse mistook the bell for an alarm and galloped to the fire station.

Floral Parades ended before the reviewing stand at Cooke Field on the Punahou campus, where a band was playing. Libby's horse had once worked in a circus. When the band struck up, he danced and pranced, to Libby's intense mortification, all the way past the reviewing stand.

Such were the adventures of a girl, born 100 years ago, as she grew up in Our Honolulu.