

Would I feel whole if I didn't know anything about my ethnicities? Would I feel whole if I didn't know who I was and where my cultures originated from, or even the history of it? I know that I wouldn't! Since I am part-Hawaiian I take a great interest in the history of Hawaii, as many other part-Hawaiians in the community do. I feel it is important to know the culture and the history of Hawaii because if it is not passed on and told we could become like thousands of nations out there who have lost their heritage.

Hawaii is one of the main tourist attractions around the world. Tourism brings so many different nationalities here making our islands a very diverse state. West Maui is one of the main tourist destinations. On this side of the island I've seen so many varieties of cultures. I've seen Tongan, Caucasian, Filipino, Mexican, Samoan, Hawaiian, and I'm sure there are much more. Many people have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, but what about their own? What about our own history and culture. It is important to have some knowledge about our culture too because what if in the next generations we lose it?

In 1802 King Kamehameha declared Lahaina as the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom, but in 1845 King Kamehameha III made Honolulu the capital for easier importing of goods. Many cultures have had a great influence on our culture. I see around the island that drugs, alcohol, weapons, and gangs have affected the communities of Maui and other islands of Hawaii. I have been going school here at Lahainaluna for two years and I see that kids as young as seventh grade have been involved with drugs and alcohol. Was that part of our ancient history centuries ago? No it wasn't. I've also seen graffiti from gangs in Lahaina on our school property saying "Bloodz for life". This is Hawaii, how could we ever have gangs? How could these people of the Lahaina community think they can destroy our, their, community that is so

beautiful and has so much history? Maybe if they knew about what happened in these places years ago they would not dare to disrespect it.

Our culture represented respect for each other and especially for the land and sea. Hawaiians knew that everything they had was connected with each other and that if they took great care of the land, the land in turn would take great care of them. As people of the Lahaina community, we should make learning our culture and history as a main priority and incorporate it into our actions. By learning the concepts of our culture, I feel that not only can we become better as Hawaiian people, but become a better community of Lahaina.