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The morning of my seventh birthday I knew I was in for an exciting day, yet no one could have prepared me for the epic adventure I would encounter. As soon as all my guests arrived, my parents revealed our mission for that day: we were to go on a treasure hunt through Lahaina town!

Adorned with bandanas and eye patches we set out on our journey. I led the way with my battered map of drawings and arrows, my mind focused on reaching the glorified red "X" over our much anticipated treasure. The arrows took us down Canal Street, passing the colossal Banyan Tree and our very own King Kamehameha III School. At the old coral Fort we took a right and trekked forward. To our right, sat the Lahaina Courthouse, and to our left was the classic Lahaina Harbor. At last we reached the Pioneer Inn; at this point my mates and I leaped with excitement, for our final destination was in sight—a magnificent pirate ship that we were to commandeer.

We ran aboard the ship with fierce and excited energy; our anxious eyes searched every nook and cranny for the wonderful chest. The jubilation that I felt when I finally found the beautiful treasure aboard the Carthaginian is beyond describable. I jumped for joy with my fellow pirate-mates for we had done it, we had found the treasure!

It was a sad day for me when the 19th century Carthaginian Whaling ship was taken from Lahaina. With it gone, every time I road my bike through the Lahaina harbor I couldn't help but to feel like a special part of history was missing. But as the years passed, my eyes became adjusted to the empty spot where the Carthaginian used to rest and I became accustomed to its absence. This is a scary prospect because it means with the removal of something important there

is always the gradual forgetting of it. Even though one may fight to remember the way it used to be, it is inevitable for it to be lost within the ages.

The culture of Lahaina is what gives it a unique character matched by none. Without the cultural and historical indicators of Lahaina, it would cease to radiate such a passionate and distinctive spirit. This is a spirit that everyone, young and old, shares and identifies with. It is apart of each person, tree, fish, bird, and gecko. It is within the pristine ocean and the mystical mountains; and it is behind the blazing sun and gusting winds.

The spirit of Lahaina is passed on by each generation through stories, songs, and culture. To eradicate the historical buildings and artifacts of Maui is to steal the voices from the people and erase the stories from the books. The true treasure I found on my seventh birthday was the historical and cultural integrity of Lahaina. It is imperative for Maui to hold this treasure safe, for it is what keeps the spirit alive. Today I look back on the beautiful days of my childhood in Lahaina, and I cannot help but to feel extremely lucky to have grown up amongst such rich culture and history. I can only trust that the beautiful Lahaina culture is indelible through the vicissitudes of time.