

West Maui

Lahaina is not just a magnificent tourist destination; it is a part of ancient Hawaiian history. I have lived in West Maui for all of the nineteen years of my existence, and it will always be part of my history as well. Living in this diverse paradise has had a significant effect on my life: It taught me how to appreciate life in all its forms and have a sense of pride for my home.

That is why I worry about the fast growth and population of West Maui. West Maui has always been a calm, quiet community; one where you know everyone as “aunt” or “uncle,” and families go back four or five generations. However, if we get away from our roots and the ancestry that makes our lands special, the following generations will not have the opportunity to share the same pride and love for the island like we do.

The loss of history and culture also threatens native sites, remains, plants, and animals. Invasive plants and animals have already pushed many native species to the brink of extinction. Additionally, the prospect of making money has, in recent years, hindered us from preserving our history. For example, look at all the times that Native Hawaiian remains have been unearthed from new construction sites and were not given the respect they deserve. Also, consider the numerous ancient housing sites in Honokowai Valley that were once hidden away for years by thick coverings of weeds; they are now split through by colossal machinery to make roads for Maui Land and Pineapple Company trucks. If things keep up this way, Maui will only have a very small number of historic artifacts remaining to help us remember the past.

That is why I advocate for Maui to become a self-sufficient island. Preserving our rich native Hawaiian history can greatly benefit our futures, but to do this we must continue to teach and practice the old methods of farming. Maui's land once provided a wide variety of fish, taro and other such things, and the Hawaiian people fully utilized all that was available to them. So if what once grew in their fields is extinct now, how can we ever learn from them? To take from our past and apply it to our present would be extremely enriching and beneficial to us because of all that we could accomplish, and all the knowledge we could gain. That is why we need to preserve more than just remains; our native animals, plants, and land are equally important to our history.

To have seen in my life all that has already disappeared, I don't know how I could handle losing all the history and uniqueness of my hometown. Parents need to get involved now. If we want our kids grow with respect, a good way to teach them is by first respecting the history and land that is their home. Maui is such a unique place because of its people, current and passed, and if we lose what makes us special, we will forever lose our history.