

Lahaina Restoration Scholarship

To tell you the truth, I haven't really thought about the history or the rich culture of Lahaina for the last few years. When we were young my parents would take us to visit some of the historical sites of Lahaina, like the Baldwin House and the Wo Hing Temple. But our favorite places to go were the Carthaginian and the old Fort. These little outings were normal for us but now that you are asking me to revisit these places, new doors are opening.

Although I don't take Lahaina and its natural beauty for granted there are parts of it that I need to pay more attention to. I rode my bike around and checked out some of the historical sites right in my own neighborhood, to help me remember some of the facts. Just when you think you know a lot, with a little research and work you realize that you don't really know much at all. I want to say here that I've had my moments that when things are quiet you get this overwhelming sense of history and spirituality about this place we call Lahaina.

Sometimes when I am at school at Lahainaluna I look down at the vast ocean and all its beauty I can imagine what it must have been like before the 1st white man came. From the valley to the ocean, the ahuapua'a, where the people had everything they needed. You can feel the history. The water that flows naturally thru the lava tubes that made Lahaina such a lush land, perfect for growing Taro and other food is amazing. To think that at Mokuhinia there was an island where royalty lived and were buried is spectacular. The old Prison, Court House, Viola Church and its cemetery hold so much history that you could study it forever. And here it is at my doorstep.

Every year we get to celebrate Bon Dancing and the remembrance of the dead with the floating lanterns at Jodo Mission. Every February we get to celebrate Chinese New Year with Lion Dancing and firecrackers. What cultural experiences and richness to grow up with!

Lahaina is more than a beautiful beach town, it is filled with historical facts, stories, and is a living museum. I feel strongly that it is important to preserve and perpetuate Lahaina's history because it is part of who we are. Also, for the Native Hawaiians who have gained much thru modernization but also have lost much because of it, preserving the culture and history is very important. It is only right that we walk lightly on the land and not pilfer it for greed. We must show respect and give more than we take from our community. Lahaina must maintain its rich cultural inheritance to pay honor to its ancestors and for future generations. We are all blessed to live and belong to a community that is committed to the history and preservation of our majestic town, Lahaina.