

'It's surprising how much memory is built around things unnoticed at the time.'

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How much a part of all our lives are the memories of places gone, "some forever, not for better," as the Beatles lamented in the '60s ?

Probably more than we realize.

From the inevitable disappearance of once-packed drive-in theaters and favorite saimin stands to a quaint Hawaiian village at Ala Moana Park and iconic sugar mills, those of us around when Hawaii became a state can chronicle both the changes in our lives and in the islands we call home.

Hawaii's evolution from naive, laid-back, undeveloped territory to airplane-accessed, Internet-connected, more town-than-country state can be documented by the once-familiar landmarks that have been razed, reduced or replaced - Waipahu Sugar Mill, Dole Cannery pineapple tower, the old Honolulu Airport on Lagoon Drive, Honolulu Stadium, Ulu Mau Village, Civic Auditorium, Pearl City Tavern.

In the years immediately following statehood, stories abounded about Hawaii's "new state bird"—the construction crane—bobbing up and down and transforming the landscape of Oahu.

Among the symbols of the post-statehood boom: Ala Moana Center and the new Honolulu Airport in 1959; the Ilikai Hotel in 1962; and the beginnings of the 6,000-acre Hawaii Kai subdivision in the early Sixties.

Ala Moana Center, the airport and Hawaii Kai are still thriving, and recent reports of the demise of the Ilikai, made world-famous in the opening scenes of "Hawaii 5-0" (1968-80), proved to be premature - for now.

But that hasn't been the story for many others of that era or earlier.

Drive-in theaters, for example, are relics of the past. Kam Drive In is the site of a swap meet; Waiialae Drive In, a subdivision; Kailua Drive In, the campus of a private school; and Royal Sunset Drive In, a shopping center.

Varsity Theater, one of the last of the old-time, stand-alone movie theaters, was just a pile of rubble and dust within a few hours in 2007. Designed by famed Hawaii architect C.W. Dickey, it lasted 70 years, but became another victim of multiplexes and stadium seating.

Preceding the Varsity in demise was a host of neighborhood theaters that drew crowds before TV and computers changed our viewing habits. The royalty were dethroned decades ago—King, Queen, Princess and the Palace, although the decaying shell of the Queen still stands on Waialae Avenue—while Haleiwa Theater was replaced by a McDonald's and the Cinerama Theater (once the buzz of the town with its special widescreen format when it opened in 1962) closed in 1999 and now houses an auto parts store.

Check out this YouTube video tribute to movie theaters of the past, including photos of Waikiki Theater (yet another Dickey-designed structure, built in 1936) being razed in 2005: <http://hsblinks.com/ln>. Appropriately, the video is accompanied by Cecilio and Kapono singing, "Life's Different Now."

More telling of Hawaii's transformation over the past 50 years is the disappearance of the sugar mills and pineapple canneries, once the foundation of Hawaii's agriculture-dependent economy.

For most of the past century, sugar cane and pineapple fields covered much of the islands. It was the sugar plantations that lured the immigrant laborers who would thrive in their new island home and become part of its "melting pot" of culture and ethnicities that today make Hawaii a unique part of the United States.

One by one, the sugar mills—dating back to the late 1890s—were forced to close. On Oahu, Kahuku sugar mill closed in 1971, Oahu Sugar Mill in Waipahu, in 1995 and Waialua Sugar Mill, in 1996.

As the mills closed, so too did the old plantation communities disappear. No longer were there employees who depended on the mill whistle to sound the start of work, lunch and pau hana.

Although the sugar mill smoke stack still stands sentinel today, now for the YMCA, at the top of "historic Depot road," another Waipahu plantation mainstay folded the same year as the mill.

Arakawa's, "in the shadow of the sugar mill," sold out its inventory and shut down after nearly 86 years of serving the former plantation town. The property is now home to a church group.

As the sugar mills toppled, so did the pineapple canneries.

Other than Diamond Head, perhaps the most widely referenced Oahu landmark for a long time was the Dole Cannery water tower in Iwilei. Built to resemble a pineapple, spiky crown and all, the 100,000-gallon, 100-plus-foot-tall, 30-ton structure was erected in 1927.

Rust and age set in and the metal tower was dismantled in 1993, two years after Dole Cannery, once the largest pineapple cannery in the world, shut down. "Dole Cannery" still stands on the site, but it now encompasses a movie theater complex and retail shops.

As the two top agricultural crops gave way to hotels and tourists pumping money into the local economy, people began to realize the importance of showcasing Hawaii's culture and uniqueness. The early '60s and '70s saw the coming of the second Hawaiian Renaissance (the first being in the late 1800s).

In 1960, Herman and Malia Solomon created Ulu Mau Village, grass shacks and all, at the Diamond Head end of Ala Moana Park as a way to revive the Hawaiian culture, offering demonstrations of tapa-weaving, poi pounding and other crafts. The village then moved to Heeia Kea, where it eventually just closed.

Over the past 50 years, the mom-and-pop neighborhood shops and the old-time, mainly local retailers (Woolworth's, Cornet, GEM's, McInerney's, Liberty House) have given way to the mainland-based giants (Costco, Wal-Mart, Kmart, Macy's, Target).

Everyone has special and personal memories of former places. Here's a list of some of the ones the Star-Bulletin staff collectively recalls were around at least since the early years of statehood, often with great and nostalgic fondness, and what they were replaced with (dates given, when known):

- **Aiea Sugar Mill**, Aiea Heights Drive, built 1899, demolished 1998 (stopped operating years earlier) - Industrial subdivision
- **Alexander Young Building**, Hotel, Bishop and King streets, opened as a hotel in 1903, converted to office building; demolished 1981 - Bishop Square/Pauahi Tower
- **Aloha Motors**, Kalakaua Avenue and Kapiolani Boulevard, closed 1985 - Hawaii Convention Center
- **Civic Auditorium**, built in 1933, torn down in 1974 - Interstate Building.
- **Chunky's Drive In**, King and Isenberg streets, opened 1957, closed late 1990s - First Hawaiian Bank
- **Club Hubba Hubba**, 21 N. Hotel St. (neon sign, not working, but still up), operating World War II era, closed 1997 - Vacant building being renovated
- **Columbia Inn**, opened in Chinatown in December 1941; moved to the "Top of the (Kapiolani) Boulevard" in 1964; closed in 2001 - Car dealership.
- **Hilton Hawaiian Village dome**, first geodesic dome built in the United States, in 1957; demolished 1999 - Kalia Tower.
- **Honiron (Honolulu Iron Works)**, established 1854 as a foundry and flour mill, moved to Kakaako around 1900, demolished late 1980s - Restaurant Row/Waterfront Plaza
- **Honolulu Rapid Transit bus terminal**, Alapai and King streets (HRT was bought by the city in 1971) - Alapai bus terminal, Honolulu Police Department headquarters and Honolulu Transportation Management Center

- **Honolulu Stadium (aka Termite Palace)**, built 1926, demolished 1976 - Old Stadium Park
- **Kakaako Fire Station**, Queen and South streets, opened 1929, ceased operations 1973 - Replaced by new Kakaako Fire Station, then Honolulu Fire Department headquarters and museum in 2006.
- **Kapiolani Bowl**, Ward and Kapiolani, built 1958, demolished 1996 - Was to have been replaced by luxury condominium building, but remains car lot
- **Kapiolani Drive In (KDI's)**, corner of Ala Moana and Ena Road, demolished in 1960 - Wailana condominiums and coffee shop.
- **Kau Kau Korner**, built in the late '40s, corner of Kapiolani-Kalakaua Avenue - Replaced first by Coco's Coffee House in 1960 then the Hard Rock Cafe in 1986.
- **KC Drive Inn**, Kalakaua and McCully Street, opened 1927 - where the Waikiki Landmark condominium building now stands.
- **King's Bakery (and coffeeshop)**, King Street in McCully, opened early 1960s, closed 1992 - Replaced by various restaurants, now Kochi Restaurant and Lounge by Gulick Deli
- **Kress (Fort Street Mall)**, opened early '50s , closed . Most Kress five-and-dime stores were noted for their architecture because founder S.H. Kress saw his stores as public works of art, according to the National Building Museum - Replaced by 25-story office tower, occupied now by Hawaii Pacific University and various small businesses
- **La Ronde restaurant**, atop the Ala Moana Building, proclaimed the world's first revolving restaurant; opened 1961, closed late 1980s - Replaced by bridal boutique service, including wedding chapel; currently available for lease.
- **McCully Chop Sui**, King and McCully, opened circa 1949, closed 2006 - Art Gallery shop
- **McWayne Marine Supply**, opened 1823 at Honolulu Harbor, moved to Kewalo Basin 1950, closed 1994 - Ala Moana Park extension
- **M's Ranch House**, built in 1957, closed in 1987 - Replaced first by Metro and Rockchild's nightclubs/restaurants, then by headquarters for Jehovah's Witness
- **Pearl City Tavern**, famed for its Monkey Bar, opened 1939, closed 1993 - Car dealership
- **Pinky's Broiler**, in old Pali Palms Hotel, Kailua, closed 1980 - Pinky's Bar & Grill
- **Queen's Surf and Barefoot Bar**, Kapiolani Park, along Waikiki Beach, opened 1949, closed 1969 - Comfort stations

- **Rainbow Roller Land and Scotty's Drive In**, Keeaumoku Street - Small commercial shops
- **Sears Roebuck & Co.**, Beretania and Kalakaua site acquired for \$500,000 in 1940 for first Hawaii store (first two-way escalator in Hawaii installed there in 1947, when second floor was added), closed 1967 - Former HPD headquarters, One Kalakaua Senior Living
- **Tahitian Lanai**, adjacent to Ilikai Hotel, opened 1956, closed 1997 - Grand Waikikian timeshare resort, part of the Hilton Hawaiian Village
- **Trader Vic's**, corner Ward Avenue and King Street - Honolulu Club and vacant TGIF restaurant. Victor "Trader Vic" Bergeron, who opened the Honolulu restaurant in the early 1950s, claims credit for inventing the Mai Tai.
- **Ward Estate (the "Old Plantation")**, at King, Ward and Kapiolani Boulevard, built in 1880 and demolished in 1959 - the "HIC" Arena (Honolulu International Arena), then the Blaisdell Center.