

By GORDON YOUNG

Photographs by ROBERT W. MADDEN

BOTH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

EACH DAY the jumbo jets disgorge their throngs of passengers at Honolulu International Airport on Oahu. Then a curious phenomenon occurs. Instead of scattering to pleasure spots all over the Hawaiian Islands' 6,450 square miles—an area triple that of Delaware—90 percent of those visitors will spend at least part of their stay in a 602-acre patch of drained swampland called Waikiki.

Why? Because, to most of the world, Waikiki *is* Hawaii. A staggering 27,000 hotel rooms line its streets, and when winter hits the mainland, virtually all the rooms are full. Three and a half million visitors came to the islands last year, spending more than two billion dollars.

Waikiki got most of it.

Those visitors join the shopping crowds on Kalakaua Avenue, edging past hand-carried surfboards and waiting lines in front of restaurants, bicycle-powered pedicabs seeking passengers, and unsteady tourists on rented roller skates.

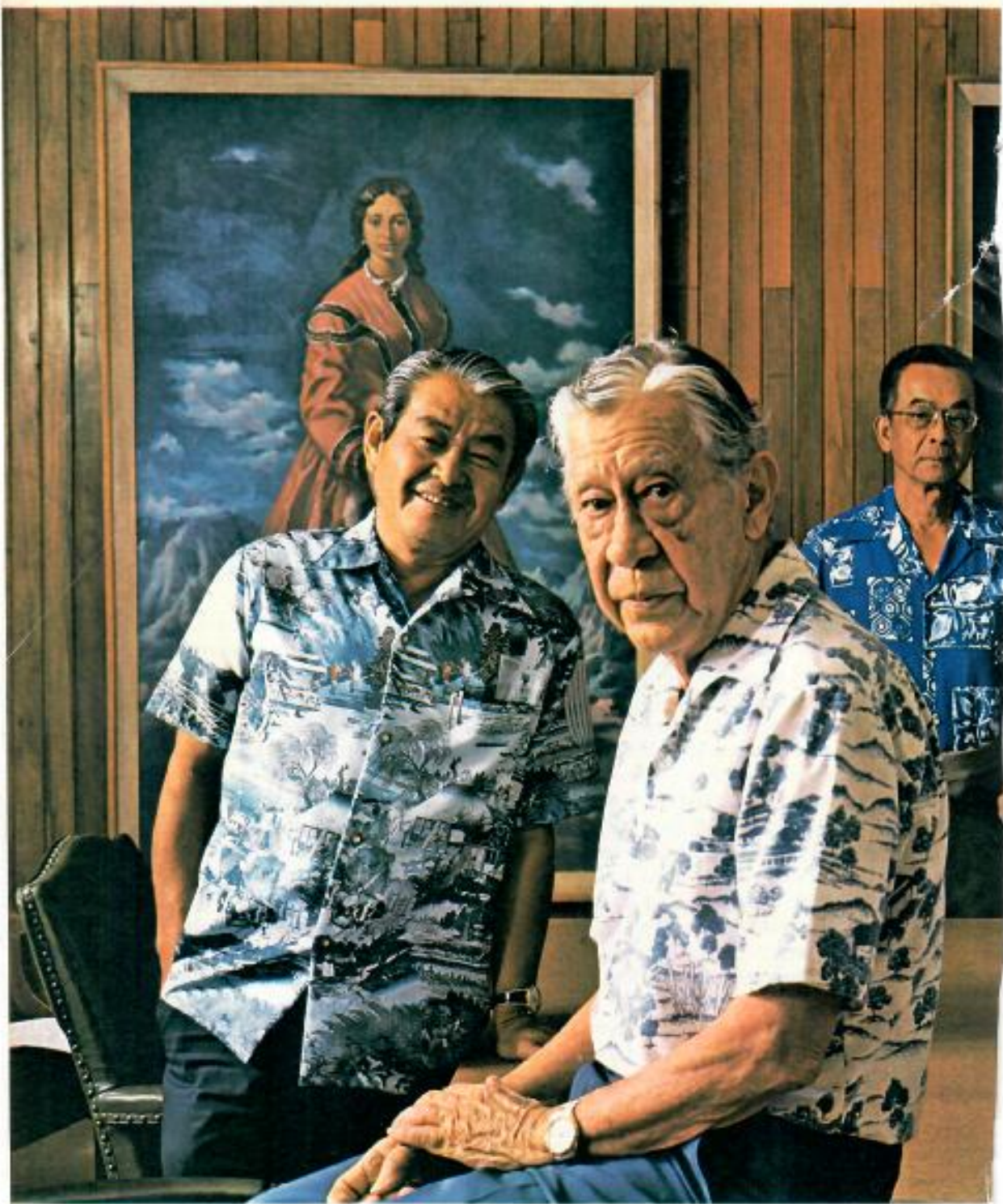
Across Kalakaua is the beach of Waikiki, much of it hidden beyond hotels and shops. Overhead, palm fronds rustle. At night propane-fueled torches add their flicker to the multicolored glow of store windows.

These are the memories many tourists bring home from Oahu. I have them too. But even more, I savor recollections of lively prowls through Honolulu and drives into the green world beyond the skyscrapers. Out there, jagged mountains slope down to gorgeous bays. Valleys are carpeted with sugarcane and pineapples. Villages as

Which Way Oahu?

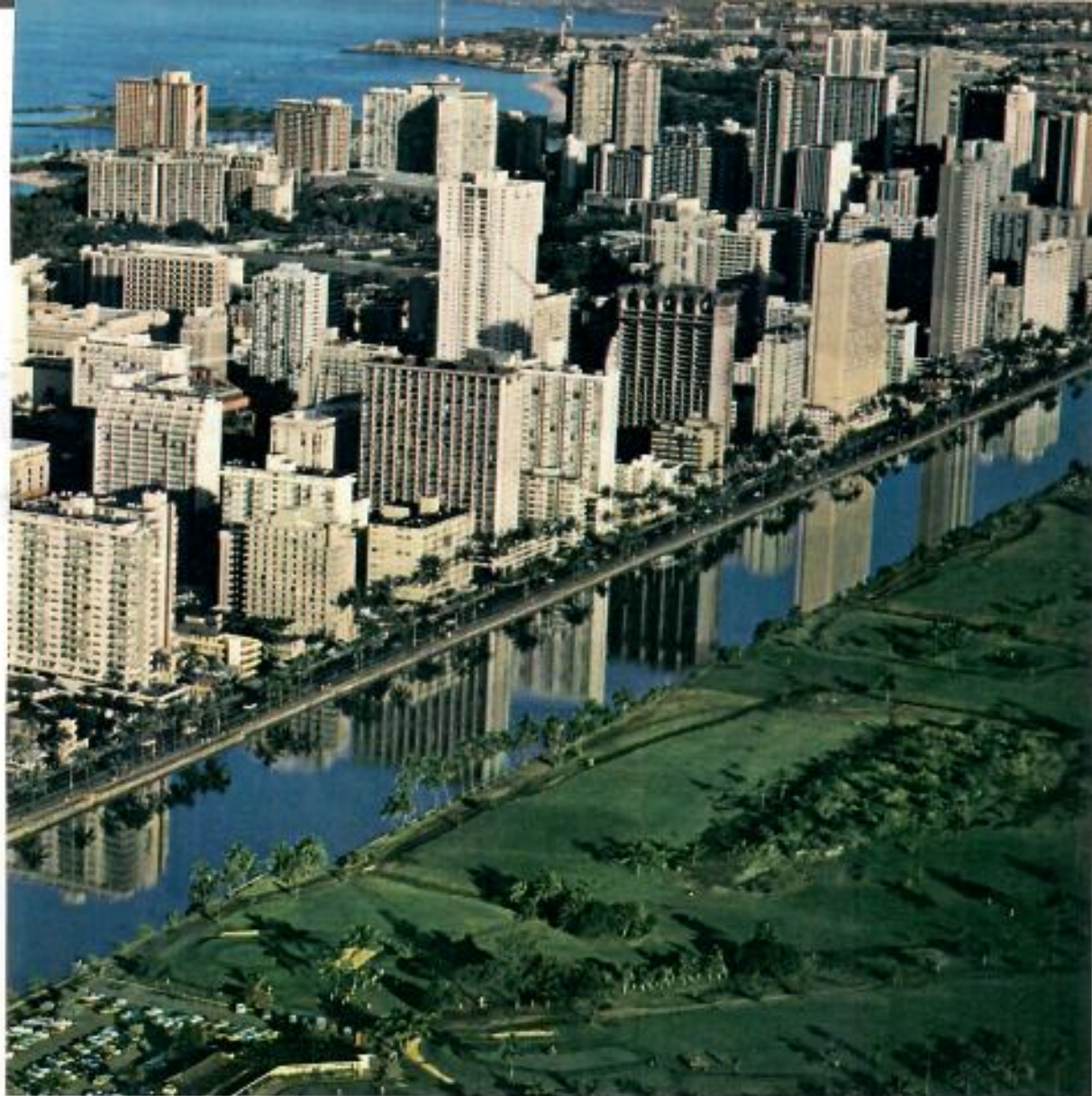


WERNER STOY, CAMERA HAWAII



Faces and fashions of two centuries meet in the boardroom of the Bishop Estate, Oahu's largest private landowner, with 55,000 acres. Estate revenues help educate children of Hawaiian ancestry. The land was bequeathed for that use in the late

1800's by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop and her husband, Charles. Their portraits overlook the trustees, who personify Hawaii's ethnic mix. From left: Matsuo Takabuki, Richard Lyman, Hung Wo Ching, Frank Midkiff, and Myron Thompson.



Lofty reflections of the state's two-billion-dollar tourist industry, hotels and condominiums (above) rise between the Ala Wai Canal and Waikiki Beach. In a 1960 photograph showing the same swath of real estate from a different angle (left), the extinct volcano Diamond Head, background, had few rivals in prominence. The skyscrapers sprang up during a building boom that has continued unabated since Hawaii gained statehood in 1959. More than a third of Hawaii's 900,000 residents live in Honolulu, capital of the state and its tourist center. Of 3.5 million visitors

every year, Oahu gets the lion's share.

The Waikiki strip now has 27,000 hotel rooms and more on the way. Though the skyline is symbolic of the prosperity of Honolulu, Oahu, and Hawaii as a whole, some see it as an omen of what will happen in still pristine areas of the Hawaiian archipelago if development is not checked or strictly controlled. A big factor will be the actions of the Bishop Estate and 38 other private landowners, who together own 45 percent of Hawaii's 4.1 million acres—88 percent when government land is excluded.

interesting as their vowel-laden names peep out along the road that almost circles Oahu.

If I were a Honolulu dweller, I'd spend my weekends out there.

Many do, of course. You're lucky to find a parking spot near Sunset Beach on a Saturday when the surf is up. Cars line the road for miles.

Like the state's five other major islands, Oahu has a nickname: the Gathering Place. It was sighted by Britain's Capt. James Cook in 1778, but contrary winds prevented his landing there; he sailed on to Waimea on Kauai, where he first set foot on the archipelago he named the Sandwich Islands. Then came New England missionaries, with their dark wool suits and pious ways.

But that was a century and a half ago. Oahu has changed since then. Particularly Waikiki (preceding pages).

"More than half the hotel rooms in the state are jammed in there," an islander grumbled. He talked of Waikiki's still booming construction, symbolized by skeletal blue construction derricks that rear above unfinished buildings. "Our state bird: the great Hawaiian crane."

In spite of the building bustle, Waikiki's

tourist population explosion is beginning to taper off. Hideto Kono, director of the state's Department of Planning and Economic Development, assured me that the hotel-building boom is ending. "The ceiling has almost been reached. We may allow a few thousand additional hotel rooms, and then tourists will have to go elsewhere."

Neighboring islands will absorb much of Hawaii's anticipated 5 percent annual tourist growth, but state officials are eyeing rural Oahu too. I walked out of the office bearing a volume describing the state plan.

The gist of it is this: Rather than strew tourist hotels all over Oahu, a few resort areas should be chosen and tourism concentrated there—experience has shown that tourists get restless at isolated hotels. Those new resort areas should create jobs (Oahu's unemployment rate runs more than 7 percent) and generate income for local stores.

The state plan is not universally loved. Driving around the island, I passed hand-lettered signs telling of dissent. TO HELL WITH THE STATE PLAN, read one. STATE PLAN IN THE CAN, read another. Many Hawaii farmers—and, for that matter, owners of homes and condominiums—view the



plan with deep distrust. Don't turn my farm into a subdivision, mutter farmers. Don't bring Honolulu's traffic jams out here, grow homeowners.

Still, pressure for more tourist accommodations continues. With Dave Raney, regional vice-president of the Sierra Club, I drove to the north end of the island, where the Prudential Insurance Company of America hopes to build a large complex, the Kuilima Resort Community. A renovated 487-room hotel is already open. The plans, Dave said, call for as many as 4,700 rooms in additional hotels, as well as condominium apartments and single-family homes.

Resort Growth Pushes Land Prices Up

"Prudential is trying hard to do a responsible job of this," he admitted. "But they are thinking on a mainland scale. A project this size in rural Oahu? I wonder if they realize the impact it will have."

The complex, stretching three and a half miles along the shores of Kahuku Point, will indeed furnish construction jobs. "But when everything is built," Dave commented, "only the hotels will need many employees. Most of the buildings are scheduled to

be condominiums, and they will create mainly temporary construction jobs. The basic problem, though, is that land prices will shoot up. Low-income families won't be able to make high lease payments, so they'll either have to go farther back into rural areas and start over, or move into Honolulu, onto the welfare rolls. And the rural character of this part of the island will be threatened."

How, I wondered, can a small farmer survive on high-priced Oahu? Supermarkets buy produce from big mainland growers, who often can ship it to Honolulu and sell at lower prices than Oahu's farmers must ask.

"Local people sell their crops in village markets or through a wholesale cooperative," Dave said. "Sometimes they just barter for things they need, and there's a lot of sharing among Hawaiians. That's why it's hard on low-income residents who are displaced from their traditional communities. They need more cash to survive in the city."

He was silent a moment. "Bartering side-steps inflation, but it's a trap too. They can't afford to move to another community, away from their trading connections."

Islanders talk about land prices in terms of lease payments; more than half of Oahu belongs to large private landowners (map, page 659). In Honolulu, even without the land, home prices average \$110,000—in a place where basements, heating plants, and insulation are superfluous.

"My monthly mortgage payment is more than \$700," an acquaintance lamented to me. "No wonder so many married couples hold down two jobs. It's expensive to live in paradise."

Some native Hawaiians on Oahu feel that they should be the landowners. From graceful, dark-haired Billie Beamer, past chairwoman of the state's Hawaiian Homes Commission, I learned about that claim.



Spirits jump an octave during the annual intramural singing contests at Kamehameha Schools, beneficiaries of the Bishop Estate. The senior boys' leader eggs on his charges (left); junior and senior girls embrace after a tie (far left). The schools educate 2,600 on-campus students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

"These Hawaiians believe that the overthrow in 1893 of our last monarch—Queen Liliuokalani—was illegal. After she was forced to abdicate and was put in prison, the businessmen who organized that move took more than 900,000 acres of crown land, which ended up as government property. The Hawaiians want it back, plus damages. Congress is studying their claim."

She reflected. "Hawaiians are becoming more obsessed with their Hawaiianness these days. They are making progress—the literacy rate is high, and many are moving up in business—but there's the feeling that the world is moving away from them."

Immigrants Brought Many Cultures

Mrs. Beamer, whose ancestors lived on this island long before the arrival of Captain Cook, believes that religious and social customs made it almost inevitable that Hawaiians would fall behind in the economic struggle.

"Remember," she told me, "most immigrants—Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Portuguese, and others—came here from long-established civilizations, each with its strong religion, and they worked hard to get ahead. On the other hand, Hawaiian society was adrift, halfway between its old gods and the one the missionaries brought."

About one percent of the islanders today are pureblood Hawaiians, though any fraction of Hawaiian ancestry is enough for official recognition as a member of that race. Seventeen percent of the islanders qualify. I asked Mrs. Beamer about her lineage; she laughed.

"I'm three-eighths Hawaiian. But really, I'm 'calico'—like a lot of us on these islands. Among my ancestors were an Irish sea captain, a Spanish sailor, and a Chinese cook. All of them married Hawaiian women. My full name is Martha Mary Ah Ung Kawaiola Fernandez Beamer."

She pointed out to me that the hunger for landownership extends to Oahu's other ethnic groups as well. "Hawaii's Land Reform Act gives leaseholders the right to petition the state to buy the land they are renting. The state can force private landowners to sell at a price determined by formula. But the state's land prices usually are considered too high by the petitioner and too low by the

landowner. Extended litigation is delaying many of the land transfers."

Even Waikiki's posh hotels rest on crazy-quilt patterns of landownership. An official of the fine old Halekulani Hotel expressed satisfaction at the hotel's relatively simple land-rent situation: "We have only four different leases to pay on the land that we don't own outright."

Considering the land tangle and all of Honolulu's business affairs, it came as no surprise to find that the island telephone book has ten pages of attorneys. Many of them are kept busy on the complex problems of converting leasehold land into fee-simple ownership, or are engaged in the tortuous business of arranging new leases.

Waikiki's borders are well defined—by an ocean, a park, and two legs of a drainage canal that fifty-five years ago turned swamp into high-priced tourist acres now packed with hotels. A different world lies on the other side of that canal.

Give that other Honolulu a casual glance and it resembles any number of mainland cities, with busy traffic, quiet suburbs, and towering downtown office buildings. But there is a royal palace near the city center. You can buy octopus tentacles in the local supermarket and have your hamburger at McDonald's with a side order of Oriental noodles served with chopsticks.

One of life's simple pleasures in this city is to amble shirt-sleeved through Ala Moana Park on a winter's day. Joggers will be out in force; so will Hawaiian youths, each with a transistor radio tuned to a rock station, and a pretty *wahine* attuned to him.

One day I roamed through downtown Honolulu, looking for a certain restaurant. "Go *ewa* one block, turn *makai* at the traffic light, go two blocks Diamond Head, and you'll find the (Continued on page 664)

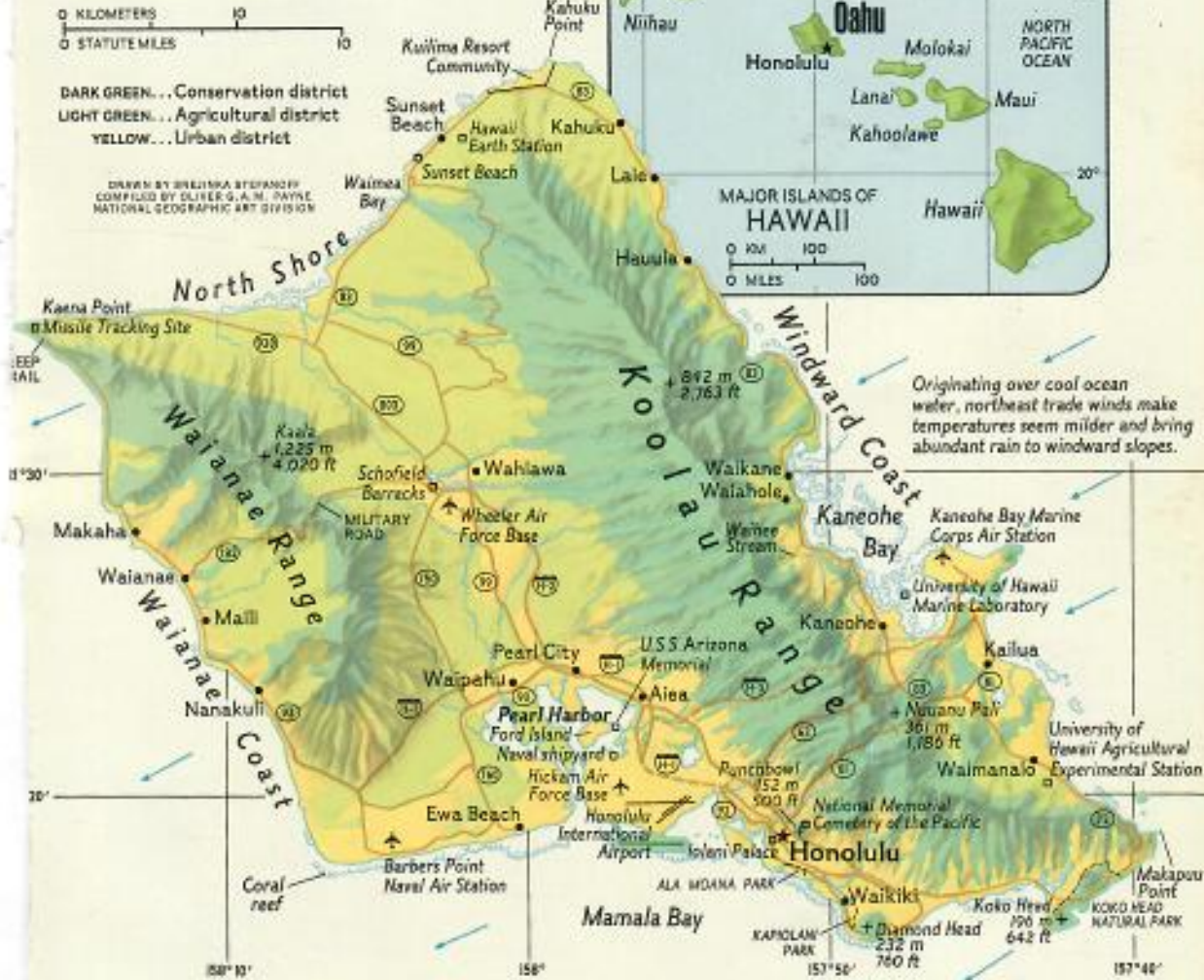
Born amid fire and water, Oahu is the offspring of two volcanoes that eroded into parallel mountain ranges. Their steep lava slopes are mostly unsuitable for development, putting a premium on lower elevations. A new state plan aims at establishing policies for such land uses as conservation, recreation, and historical preservation.

Oahu

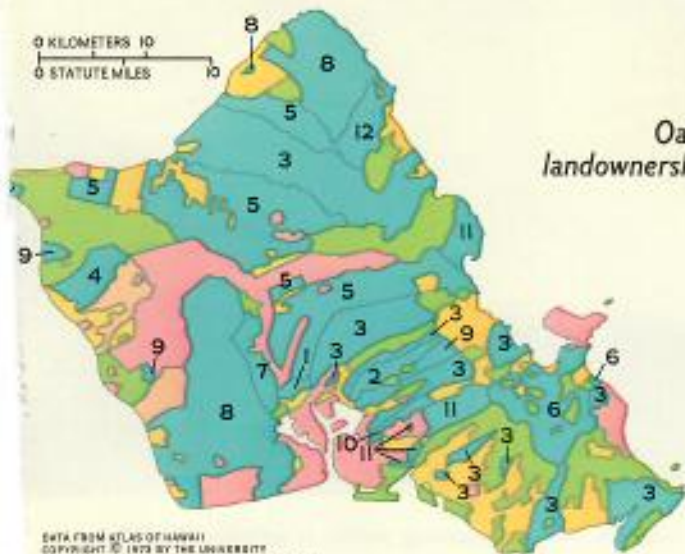
0 KILOMETERS 10
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DARK GREEN... Conservation district
LIGHT GREEN... Agricultural district
YELLOW... Urban district

DRAWN BY IRENIKA STEFANOVIĆ
COMPILED BY OLIVER G. A. M. PAYNE
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ART DIVISION



0 KILOMETERS 10
0 STATUTE MILES



Oahu landownership

- STATE OF HAWAII
- HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS
- FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
- MAJOR PRIVATE OWNERS (LIST BELOW)
- SMALL PRIVATE OWNERS (LESS THAN 5,000 ACRES)

- 1 Amfac, Inc.
- 2 Austin Heirs
- 3 Bernice P. Bishop Estate
- 4 Capital Investment Co., Ltd.
- 5 Castle & Cooke, Inc.
- 6 Estate of H.K.L. Castle (Kaneohe Ranch)
- 7 Gay and Robinson
- 8 James Campbell Estate
- 9 McCandless Heirs
- 10 Queen's Hospital
- 11 Samuel M. Damon Estate
- 12 Zion Securities Corp.

DATA FROM ATLAS OF HAWAII
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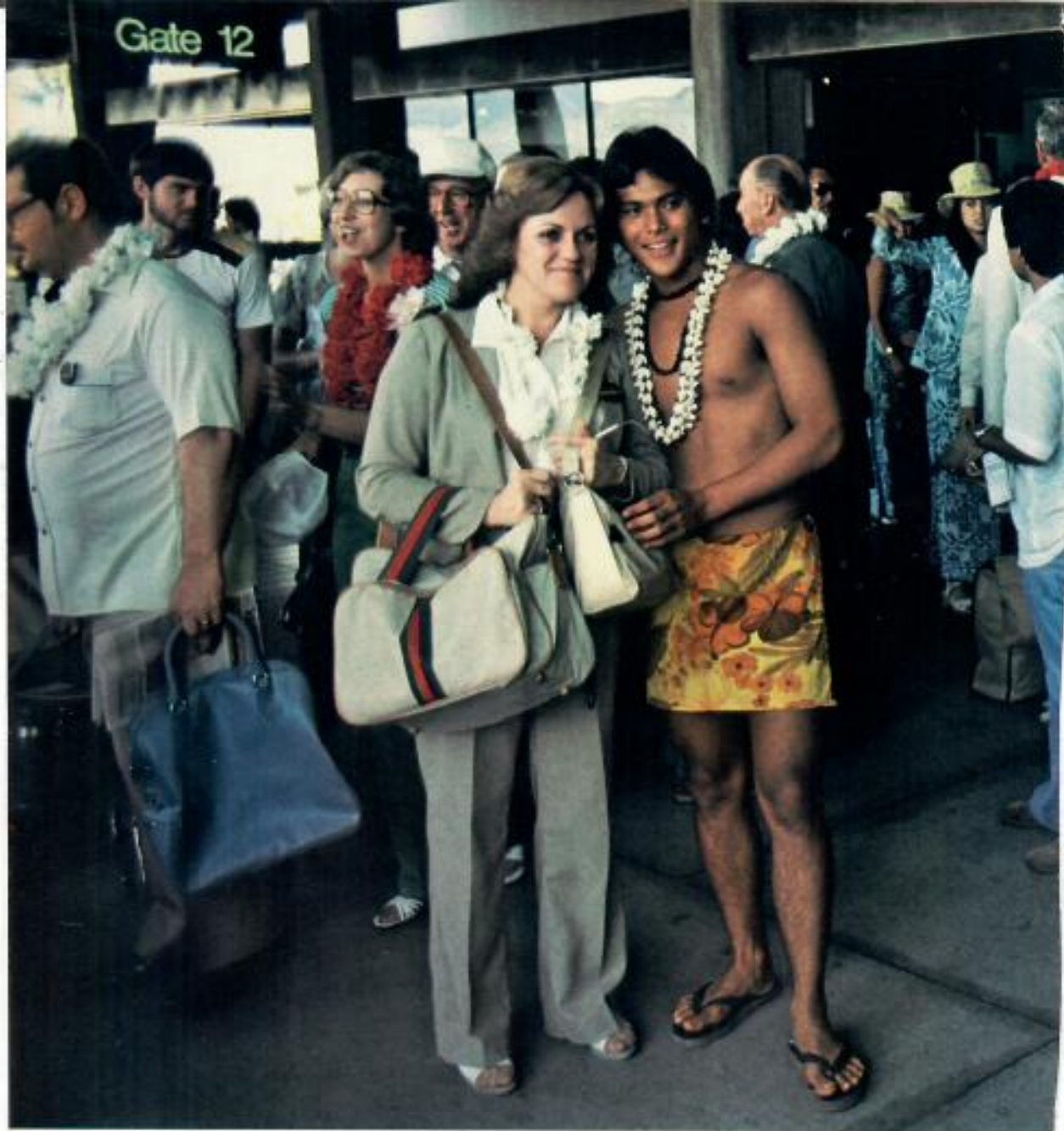


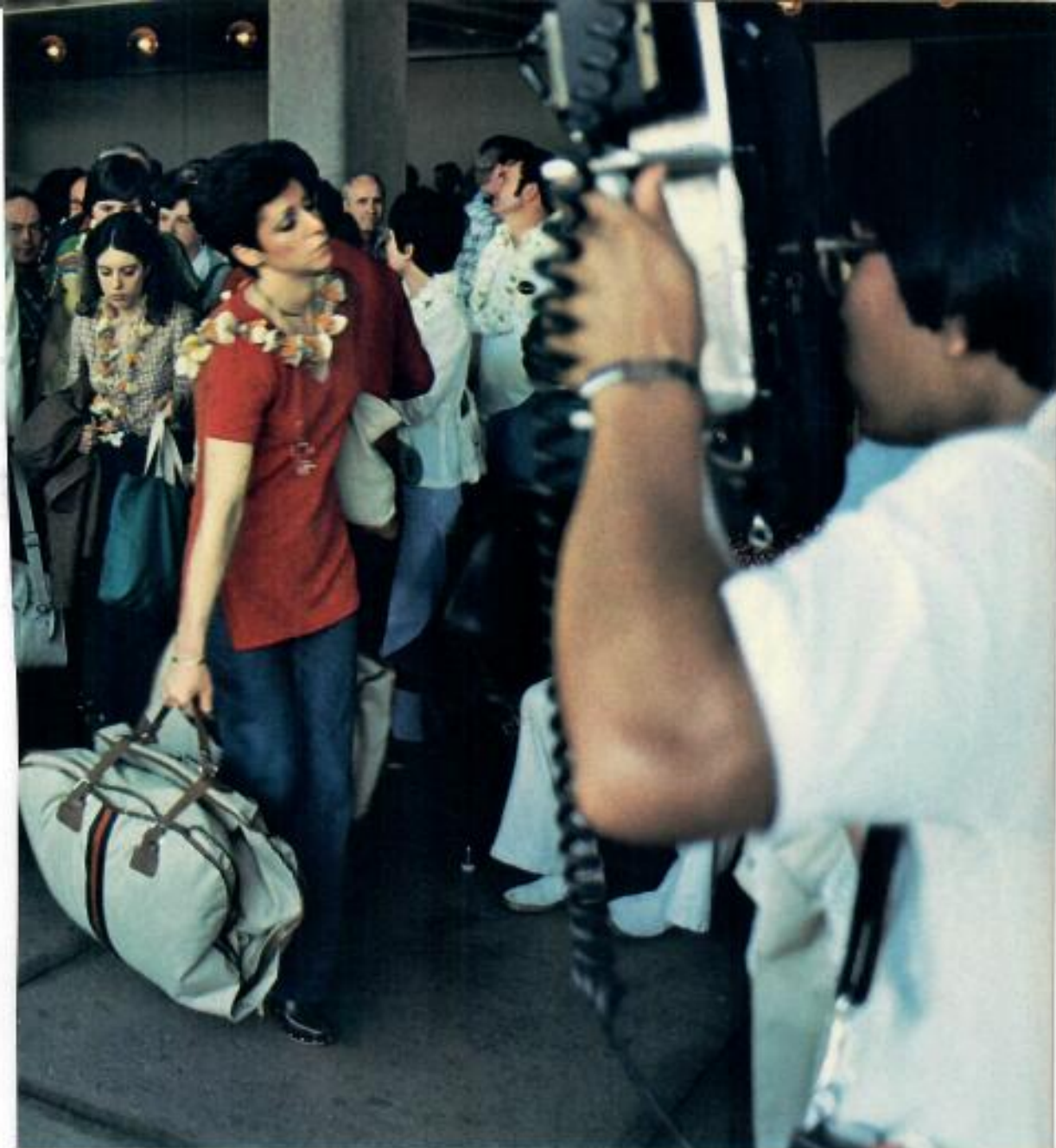
Vaulting like a dolphin over a spuming wave, a windsurfing board



puts sail and sailor horizontal on a seaward sprint off Diamond Head.

BILL MECHISLAND





An assembly-line aloha awaits arrivals at Honolulu International Airport, where Rickie Manuel poses with tourists after presenting them with leis (above). Averaging less than ten seconds a person, Manuel greets as many as 500 passengers a day. His employer, using a stable of 40 greeters and 14 photographers, every year sells about 40,000 souvenir pictures such as these.

PHOTO MANAGEMENT, INC. (CALL BELOW)



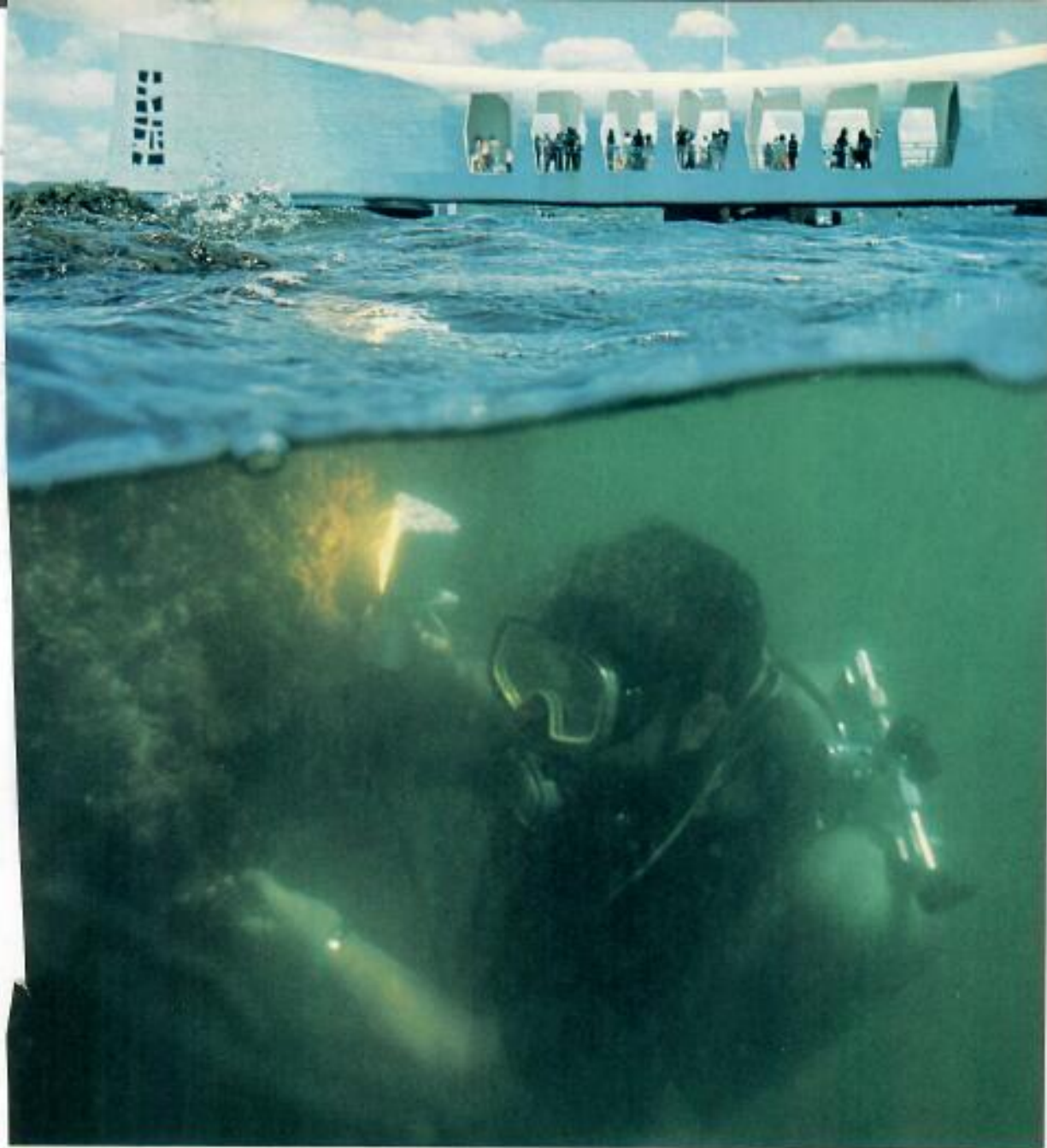


Japanese enter Pearl Harbor to open arms these days, as this lei-bedecked destroyer on a refueling stop demonstrates (above). Beyond lie the mountains crossed by Japanese planes that bombed the harbor on December 7, 1941. Nearby, a U. S. Navy diver views the hulk of the U.S.S. Arizona (right). Sunk in the attack, the battleship still entombs more than a thousand of her crew. Though almost completely submerged, much of the ship is visible from the Arizona memorial, background.

(Continued from page 658) place on the *mauka* side of the street," a helpful passerby advised. I mumbled my *mahalo* (thanks) and studied my map again, unenlightened.

It would do little good to translate these as directions here—for on the other side of Oahu two of the terms are not used, and the other two have opposite meanings.

In addition to its exotic touches, Honolulu has most of the unglamorous problems that plague other United States cities. "Robberies on Oahu Soar by 36%," a front-page newspaper story reported. Alarming, but



when I read the first paragraph of the article, I learned that robberies had climbed from three to four a day. Most cities on the mainland should be that lucky, I thought.

Mike Keller, criminal-justice reporter for the *Honolulu Advertiser*, had written that news story, and he grinned at my observation. "We're not comparing ourselves to anyone, but just looking at our own problem. It's a way of reminding people here that there is a problem."

The crime increase, he feels, reflects the arrival of more people in Honolulu each

year. "Vandalism is on the upswing too," he pointed out. "Maybe it comes from the population increase—or it could be the result of a growing conflict in life-styles."

Green Harvest of "Gold"

Another big problem is Hawaiian marijuana—"Kona gold." It has frustrated local police for more than a decade. In 1977 the state conducted its first Operation Green Harvest—an aerial sweep over all the major islands to spot marijuana patches. "They located and destroyed plenty of them," Mike



Big push for charity: In the annual Carole Kai Bed Race, teams propel passenger-laden beds down Honolulu's Kalakaua Avenue (above). Named for the singer who

founded the benefit for handicapped children, the event attracts entries sponsored by firms such as the bank whose advertising logo decorates T-shirts (below).



said, "but not enough to put much of a dent in the traffic."

And growing pot is a lucrative business in Hawaii. "If you grow sugar," Mike said, "you get about 15 cents a pound. Kona gold brings \$2,000 a pound."

Politics, too, makes headlines in Honolulu. Hawaii became a United States territory in 1900, a state in 1959. For the first half of this century, the Republican Party ruled. Then came the "revolution of 1954." Backed by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and many AJA's—Americans of Japanese Ancestry—a Democratic regime began. Governor George R. Ariyoshi now heads Hawaii's government.

Honolulu's mayor, Frank Fasi, like the governor, is a Democrat, though party regulars consider him something of a maverick. For nearly a decade Mayor Fasi and the governor have conducted a running feud that has enlivened the political scene.

Governor Ariyoshi would like to hold down the growth rate of Oahu's resident and tourist populations. Mayor Fasi believes growth is inevitable and wants to plan for it, to lessen its impact. While both agree that improved transportation is needed on the island, they differ on how to achieve it. The governor favors a new highway; the mayor wants a mass-transit rail line.

Trade Winds Always Return

There are days when the northeast trades are stilled, and the kona (leeward) wind blows. Back on the mainland the unsettled breezes would hardly be noticed, but Oahu residents are inclined to grumble about such "terrible weather."

Terrible? I left my home near Washington, D. C., with a foot of snow on the ground and subfreezing temperatures. I stepped out of the plane at Honolulu into the balmy 70's. "Bundle up a little bit tomorrow," the TV newscaster advised that evening. "It will be getting down into the 60's."

Such "cold" days are rare, for the yearly average temperature range in Honolulu is less than 14 degrees. Nevertheless, during my stay the weather made front-page news on the Big Island of Hawaii, at the southern end of the archipelago. Torrential downpours there caused major damage and sent Governor Ariyoshi flying over to declare it a

disaster area. Meanwhile, only occasional rains fell on Waikiki, not nearly enough to dampen tourists' spirits. "Pineapple juice," they called the rain, and went on strolling Kalakaua. After a week the northeast trades came back, sweeping the skies clear again.

Just past Waikiki famous Diamond Head looms—a towering reminder that this island was born in volcanic fire and smoke. Another long-dead volcano rises from within the city of Honolulu itself; residents know it as Punchbowl.

Together, the craters of these two mountains tell of another inferno—the day Japanese warplanes bombed the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor.

Diamond Head's crater became a fort. The gun emplacements carved through the crater's rim are empty now, visited only by hikers. The Punchbowl crater became the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Many of the gravestones on its vast green lawn are dated December 7, 1941.

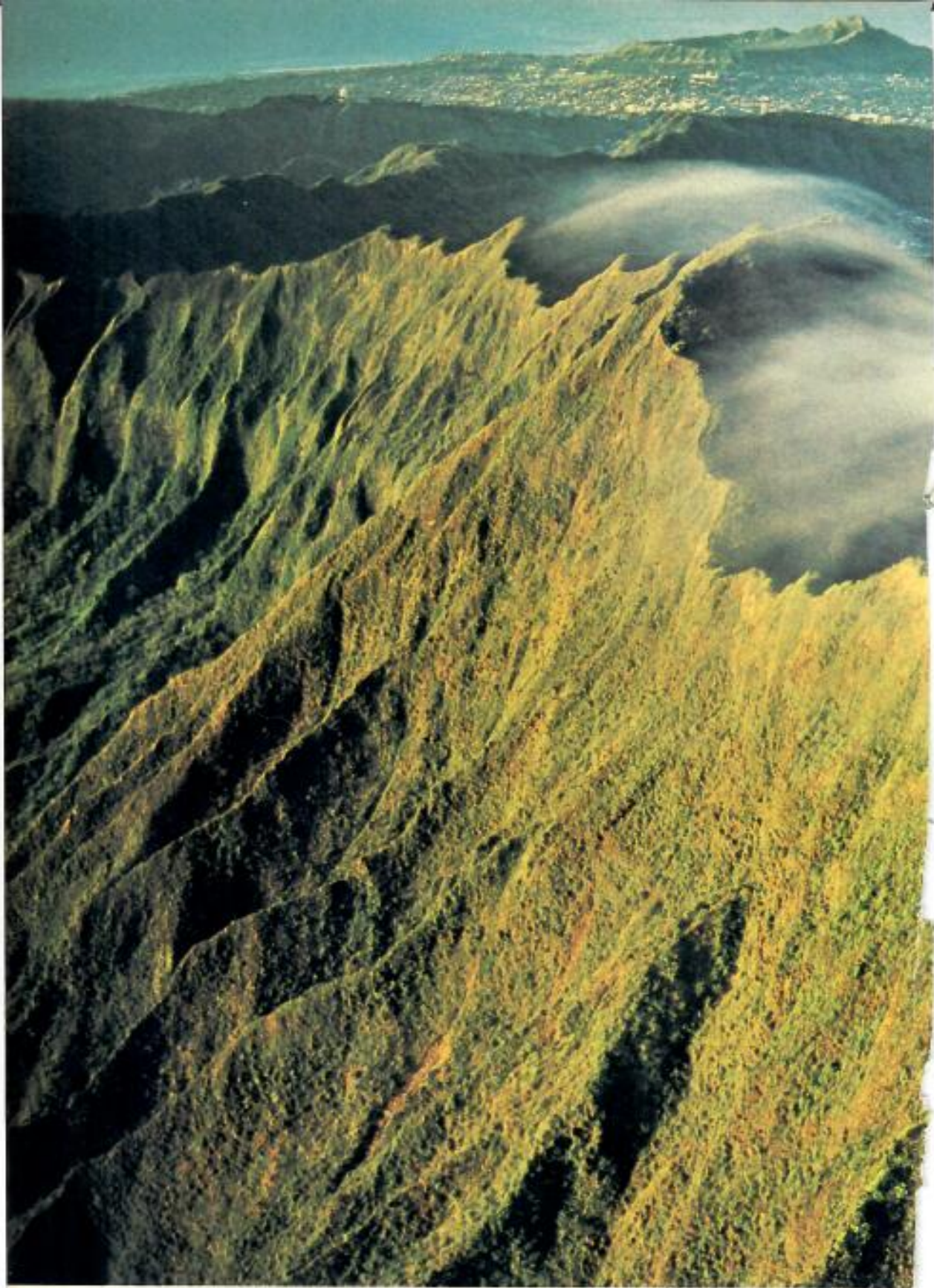
Sunken Ship Stirs Memories

World War II: It was my generation's war. With hundreds of other tourists—many of them Japanese—I cruised through Pearl Harbor, reliving that December 7 attack. Slowly we steamed past the gleaming white memorial to the U. S. S. *Arizona* (pages 664-5). As our boat turned to leave, a crewman dropped his red Hawaiian lei onto the waters, in tribute. I watched it bob in our wake and wondered what thoughts made the gray-haired Japanese near me bury his face in his hands.

Few scars of war still mark the naval base at Pearl Harbor. Its giant shipyard is the largest employer on the island, and a new generation of ships—nuclear submarines—was moored to the docks as I drove by with my Navy escort.

Yes, my war was over. A contingent of foreign warships was due to be welcomed here in the week ahead. Among them would be a Japanese destroyer.

"The Japanese own practically everything on Waikiki now," mainland friends had told me before my trip. A slight exaggeration, it turned out. Less than a third of Waikiki's 27,000 hotel rooms are Japanese owned, though many shopwindows bear signs in that language.

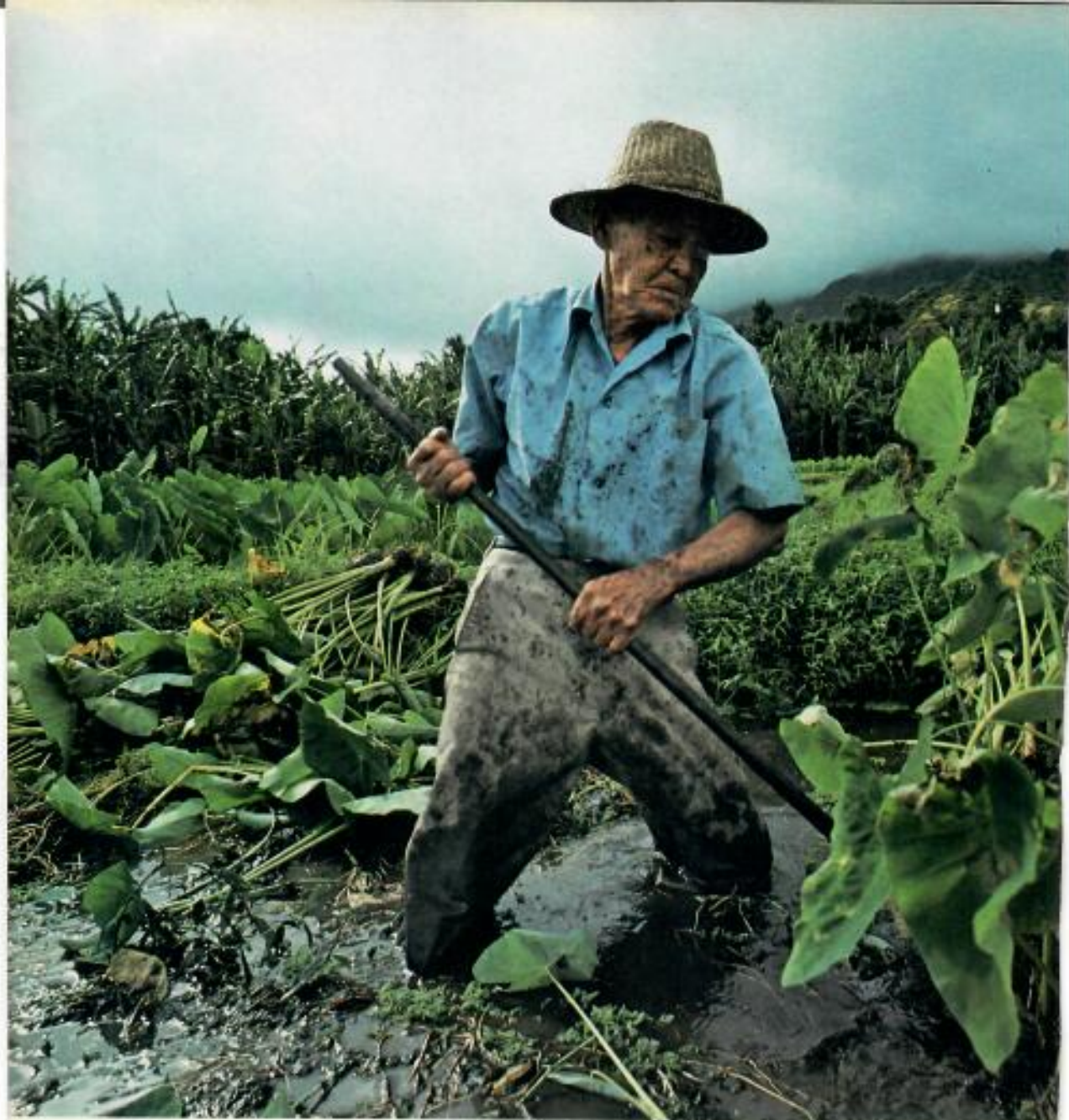


Honolulu sprawls beyond the Niuuanu Pali escarpment, where King



DEVON JACKLIN

Kamehameha I's warriors pushed island defenders to their deaths in his 1795 conquest.



Where were all the Japanese tourists? Most of the "foreigners" I met at Waikiki spoke my language. They were Canadians.

"We got all geared up for the Japanese invasion, and it never really happened," a Waikiki shopkeeper told me. "The ones we see are good customers; they load up on gifts to take home. But this is a foreign country to them. I hear they're taking their vacations on Guam now, where they feel more comfortable."

That, too, was a slight exaggeration. The number of Japanese tourists on the island is

growing, but at a slower rate than that of tourists coming from the U. S. mainland.

Road Circles the Island—Almost

There are four "sides" to Oahu, for the island is roughly diamond-shaped. Half the population clusters on the southern side—Honolulu and the huge Pearl Harbor Naval Base are there.

The eastern side of Oahu, known as the Windward Coast, faces intensive pressure from real estate developers, for it is easily accessible from downtown Honolulu. Three



Unquenchable thirst of plant and man led to a water-rights dispute between taro growers and urban dwellers. Seiyu Nakata (left) needs fresh flowing water to prevent rotting of the taro roots, from which poi is made. A judge's order that farmers and the Honolulu Water Board share Waihee Valley water satisfied neither side. Fortunately for Aquatic Farms, Ltd., cultivated oysters thrive in algae-enriched salt water (below).



roads already lead to that coast from the city, and a fourth is in the planning stage.

The modest road that winds along the Windward Coast swings left at Kahuku Point and runs along the North Shore. The pavement ends just short of Kaena Point; only four-wheel-drive vehicles can cover the eight-mile gap between the North Shore road and the one that runs along Oahu's fourth side, the Waianae Coast. To reach that coast, a motorist must drive halfway back to Honolulu and resume his trip in a clockwise direction.

That eight-mile gap is not an oversight. Environmentalists and others who oppose expanded tourism on Oahu also oppose the concept of an island-girdling highway.

Much of the mountainous interior is state watershed or military land, off limits to developers. Only a broad saddle lying between the Koolau and Waianae Ranges is level enough for sizable farms, but developments are rare. The highway passing through this level area is lined with fields of sugarcane and pineapples. There are fewer of those fields than there used to be, for



The sea's awesome power creates some of the world's most challenging surf along Oahu's North Shore. A rushing wave curls its lip in Waimea Bay (**left**), where experts try to vanquish swells up to 25 feet. Flippered feet point skyward as a bodysurfer wipes out amid the fury of a "banzai pipeline" wave near Sunset Beach (**below**).

Surfing was common in Polynesia for centuries before Capt. James Cook saw a Tahitian "driven so fast and so smoothly by the sea" in 1777. The sport had nearly

died out in Hawaii by the late 1800's, after missionaries discouraged it and natives became preoccupied with the ways of the haoles, or Caucasians. But a revival, sparked largely by haole sporting clubs, began at the turn of the century. Today surfing is widespread and a multimillion-dollar business. World surfing championships are held at Sunset Beach—and down the coast awaits what may be the ocean's ultimate challenge, the rare fifty-foot breakers at Kaena Point.

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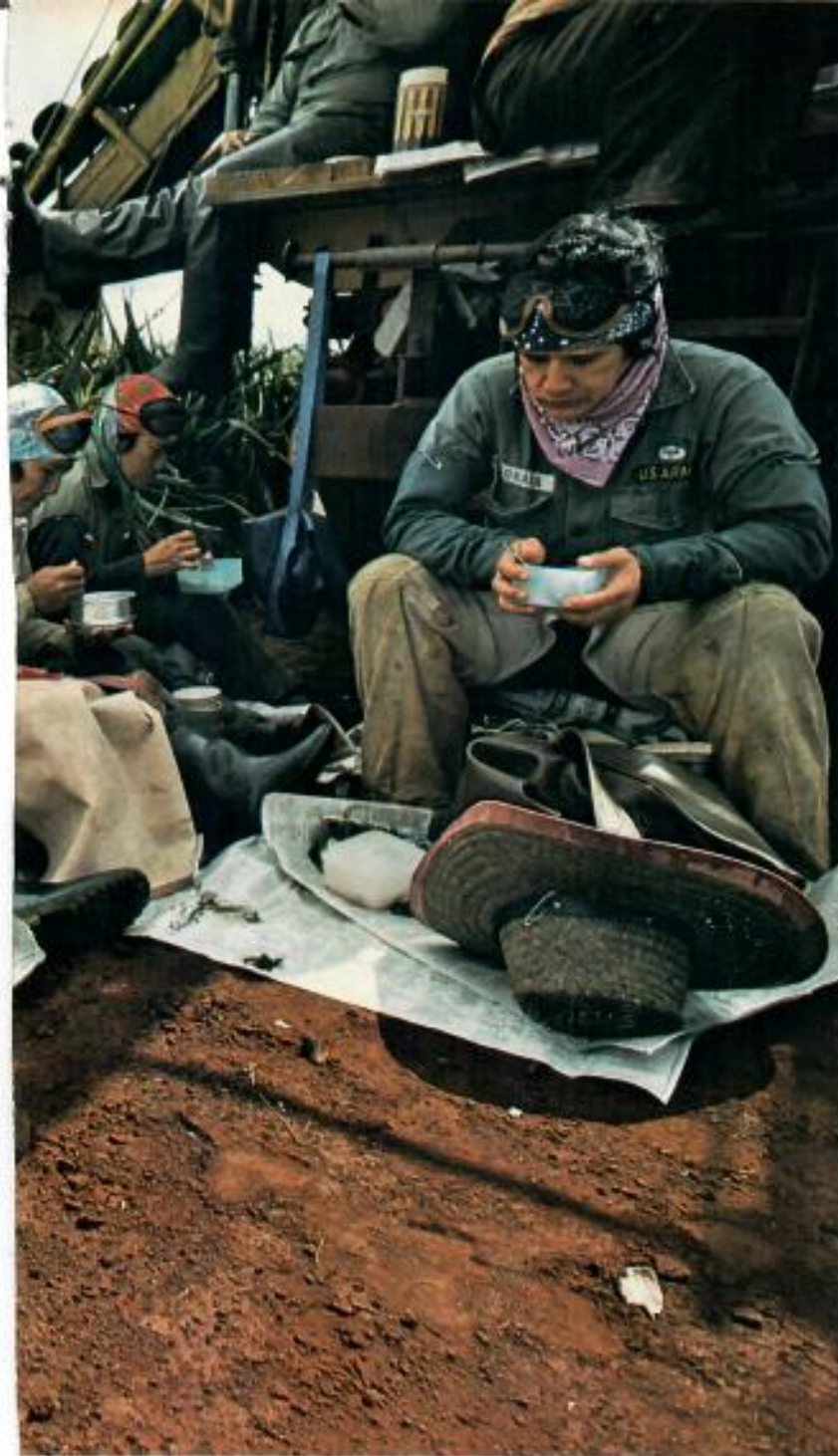


foreign pineapples and sugar have cut into Oahu's share of the market. Still it is clear, as one drives around the island, why the shoreline areas are so coveted for housing and resorts. The views are nothing short of magnificent, the roads are nearby, and the land is level enough for building lots.

With Dave Raney, I drove along the Windward Coast on the road hugging the

Koolau Range. When we paused to view Kaneohe Bay, my companion cast a forlorn glance at the shoreline. "I've seen a lot of construction since I first came out here in 1968. Now look at the urban sprawl."

He pointed offshore. "The reefs out there have been smothered by as much as five feet of sediment from home and highway construction projects. They're clearing up



Bundled up under a warm spring sun, field workers lunch amid the sharp pineapple leaves that require them to wear goggles and thick clothing while they stoop and pick. Floodlights, background, permit round-the-clock harvesting on this plantation owned by Castle & Cooke, Inc., which markets under the Dole trade name. Growers of pineapples, Hawaii's second largest farm product, suffered in the past from foreign competition, but the market has stabilized. Industry spokesmen give credit to "consumers' recognition of the fresh Hawaiian pineapple's superior quality."

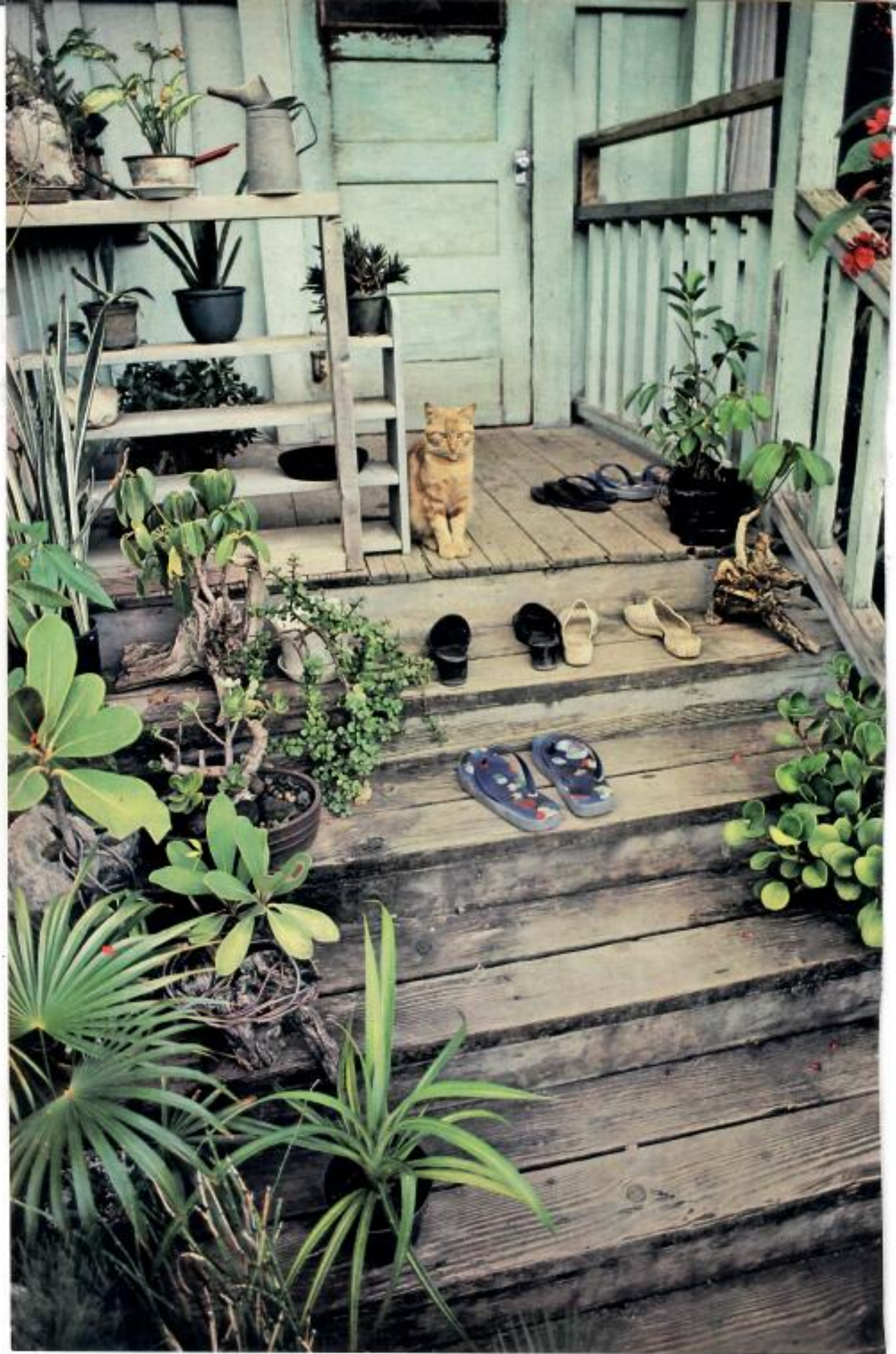
Problems still plague the state's number one crop: sugar. U. S. growers enjoyed price supports and tariff protection until the Sugar Act expired in 1974. Recession and rising food costs made Washington slow to re-establish them.

somewhat now. But Kaneohe Bay has a barrier reef around it, and that means the bay flushes slowly. It will take a long time for nature to repair the damage."

Farther north along the Windward Coast, the road passes through the Waiahole Valley. Dave told me of the fight to save it from development. "It's a farming community. When developers managed to get the

leases, the farmers refused to be evicted. They organized, and even blocked the road. Public sympathy moved to their side, and the state ended up buying most of the valley. But some of the money came from the state housing fund, so people here are still nervous. Is the state planning to put housing in here? Nobody seems to know."

Another village, another real estate



battle. Waikane, two miles farther down the road, is also zoned as agricultural land. "But the land is beginning to go on the market in two-acre plots, as farms," Dave commented. "There is no way of guaranteeing that the buyers will be farmers, of course. Their 'crops' just might turn out to be high-rise buildings."

Many of the battles have already been lost. Dave guided me off the main road, onto a suburban street, wanting to show me the remnants of an ancient Hawaiian fishpond—a semicircular dike in the bay, where ocean fish once were kept as a food supply. Our view was blocked though, by a row of bungalows with high board fences. "By law all beaches are public, as far as the high-water line," Dave muttered. "There has to be an access road." We found it, finally, at the end of the street and drove in—past a stern NO TRESPASSING sign.

That afternoon we stopped to watch Hawaiian surfers ride the waves. One of them, chatting with us, pointed to a row of condominiums a quarter of a mile down the shore. "I learned to surf there when I was little," he said. "It's a better beach than this. But no way I'm going back there, because the rich haoles sit up on their balconies and give me the stink eye."

The poignant words of a Hawaiian song drifted through my mind:

*The beaches they sell to build their hotels
My fathers and I once knew.**

Only rarely on Oahu did I find the militant resentment that typifies so many minority struggles. Once, at a tiny roadside café on the Windward Coast, I overheard a conversation from a nearby table. Four islanders were sitting there, and one of them had lost his leasehold land. The bulldozers were due to move in next day to regrade his farm for housing lots.

"How much dozing they going to get done," he asked, "when I'm sitting up in the hills, popping away at them with a rifle?" But it was obviously rhetorical talk.

Oahu has enough uncluttered beaches left to satisfy any taste. Beaches with fine snorkeling and scuba-diving waters, others with waves for big-board surfing and for body-surfing (using no board at all, or the short, light "boogie board"). One of the most famous is Sunset Beach, on Oahu's North Shore. Each year internationally known surfers come here to compete.

At times the combers at Sunset Beach are too powerful for even the Hawaiian experts to challenge. The boards stay in the cars then, and hundreds of surf-watchers stare silently at thirty-foot combers breaking half a mile offshore, churning the intervening shallows into white maelstroms. Truly it is an awesome sight.

Water for Poi or People?

As Oahu's population grows, fresh water is a subject of mounting concern. Some of the island's restaurants serve it only on request, and a state agency gently coaxes homeowners to grow only "unthirsty" types of plants.

Unfortunately, one of Oahu's traditional crops—taro, from which poi is made—is very thirsty indeed. During my stay on Oahu, taro farmers were demanding more than four million gallons of fresh water a day. Only cool, flowing fresh water would do; otherwise, the taro roots would rot.

Government officials searched for an answer to the dilemma. If taro went, Hawaiian culture would be the loser, but water supplies were already critically short. The taro farmers, in the end, were allocated about half the water they had asked for—a compromise that seemed to satisfy nobody. And, of course, the price of poi went up again.

Ancient Hawaiians looked to the sea for sustenance, but that ocean orientation has been lost, some marine experts feel.

Dr. John Craven, Dean of Marine Programs at the University of Hawaii and State Marine Affairs Coordinator, summarized

* "Waimanalo Blues," by Liko Martin & Thor Wold, Mauna Kea Publ. (BMI).

Invitation to the simpler side of Hawaiian life, well-worn staircases lead to a house in the North Shore town of Kahuku. On a nearby 880-acre tract, the Prudential Insurance Company plans to build a resort community with 5,000 hotel rooms and 2,000 condominiums, a plan fought by those who fear it would rob the town of its identity.

reasons for that change. "The waves of people who came here focused on agriculture, rather than on the ocean," he said. "Now the focus is on tourism. But there is an immense potential out beyond the reef. Tuna migrate past the island about 200 miles out—we should have a true tuna-fishing industry. Mariculture [farming the open sea] has yet to be developed here. We are beginning to get into aquaculture; more than 100 acres of ponds are going in on the North Shore of the island, to raise freshwater prawns."

Dr. Craven branched off onto a new subject. "Remember, the ocean is a place. Anything you can do on land, you should be able to do out there. Build floating cities, for instance. The technology is here now—look at the offshore oil rigs, even in such inhospitable places as the North Sea."

Some are utilizing even the skies above Oahu. "This island is a communications center," a businessman declared. "A link between East and West. Because we're situated way out in the Pacific, I can line up a conference telephone call between associates in New York and Tokyo and get them both during daylight hours."

That phone call is routed to an earth station on northern Oahu, then beamed up to a satellite parked over the Equator 22,240 miles above the earth, before moving on.

Across the island from that hilltop earth station, other scientists work on a more down-to-earth project. For decades the agricultural aid that the United States has given to Third World countries has been based on temperate-zone crops. Now agronomists at the University of Hawaii's Agricultural Experimental Station at Waimanalo are developing special varieties of corn and other high-protein crops that will grow well in the earth's tropical regions.

Energy From Sugarcane and the Sun

Six years ago I landed in Honolulu at the height of an oil embargo. "We lucked out at first," a Hawaiian acquaintance told me at the time. "Then the Arabs realized that this island was really a part of the United States, and they shut us off." I still wince, thinking of getting my rental car in line each day for my allotted three gallons of gasoline.

There is no doubt about it; these remote islands are vulnerable, for they consume

more than twenty million barrels of oil a year, producing not a drop of it.

Still, there are alternatives. "Sugarcane can be used to make methane gas or ethanol for gasohol," state planning director Hideto Kono said. "We can burn the leftover, called bagasse, for fuel, as we do on the Big Island of Hawaii and on Kauai. Fast-growing trees, such as eucalyptus, could be raised as fuel too. There's a project under way off the coast of the Big Island, pumping cold water up from the depths. The temperature differential between it and the warmer surface water will be translated into power."

He gestured toward the window, which framed downtown Honolulu. "There is plenty of natural energy out there. Already Hawaii has more than 7,000 solar collectors in use. The northeast trades blow 70 percent of the time—soon a 200-kilowatt wind generator will be operating in the mountains not far from here."

He stared out at the tall, air-conditioned buildings. "Our architects were trained in other states, so the legacy has been heavy mainland-type building. We should have lighter, more open structures than those; buildings cooled by the trade winds."

Mr. Kono veered to a happier subject. "You know, these are exciting days in the islands. Here we are, 200 years after Captain Cook and twenty years after statehood, ready to become the nation's major link with Asia. We have a good racial mix—well-trained people who know how to get along with East and West."

Animated, he leaned across his desk. "The Pacific trade area is growing fast, as the Asian nations work hard to upgrade their living standards. Today it develops 80 billion dollars in U. S. trade each year—more than the Atlantic trade. And we in Honolulu are in the middle of it, with people who understand Asian ways."

Mr. Kono sees Oahu as regional headquarters for great multinational corporations, doing business and shipping cargo all over the Pacific.

He is not alone in believing that Hawaii's destiny is tied to Asia. An elaborate new World Trade Center is planned for the Honolulu waterfront. A foreign-trade zone already serves as a warehouse for goods in transshipment from both East and West.

But before that Pacific destiny comes to pass, there are urgent problems to face. More than 80 percent of the state's income stems from tourism plus defense and other federal spending. Suppose an oil crisis stops the jumbo jets; suppose sizable cuts are made in military budgets? Nightmarish thoughts, these, to islanders. Last spring a strike at United Airlines reminded Oahu of its vulnerability. United's planes were grounded—and Waikiki's tourist population dropped suddenly.

Oahu Seeks a Workable Balance

Last year Hawaii became the first state in the nation to enact a comprehensive state plan, outlining its goals and the policies

needed to attain them. Detractors call it an ineffective collection of noble generalities and point out that it can be interpreted to suit the convenience of any future politician.

But, say supporters, at least it is a start. While it won't solve problems, it will focus on them. Diversification of industry, protection of a fragile environment, balancing needs of farmers and developers—the problems are many. Somewhere there may be an answer to each one of them.

Wait: all but one. Waikiki's crowded thoroughfares will become more crowded still, as the tourist crush intensifies.

Unless, of course, Dr. Craven's dream of floating cities does come true. Then Waikiki's hotels could simply put to sea. □



Strength in numbers helped Pascual Saoit and others who leased homes and land from the state on a former plantation at Waimanalo. Facing eviction, they organized, got a new 65-year lease, and used public financing to buy old houses and build new ones. Meanwhile, the state dropped its plans for an industrial park on the site.

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