

THE TOURIST AND OLD HAWAII

The tourist has saved much of Hawaii's ancient lore from complete oblivion.

The proving of that fact is easy, and it forms an effective answer to those who are constantly inveighing against "commercialization" of things native and peculiar to the islands.

Hawaii perhaps would always have its leis, but it would not have them in the present infinite variety and beauty unless great ships arrived here almost daily with hundreds of malihinis to admire them and feel the thrill of wearing them.

The Star-Bulletin prints an interesting story to the effect that school students of Honolulu are doing much to preserve the leis of olden times. The ilima flourishes in one school garden. A few years ago it was almost as great a curiosity as the sandalwood tree is today.

The students cultivate with loving care all that they can of the olden flowers, and many classes weave them into leis according to the ancient fashion. What money accrues goes to the student fund. It is hard to apply the epithet "commercialization" to such activity.

Years ago, before there were many large ships and before there were hardly any tourists at all, the ancient Hawaiian chants and songs were at the point of being forgotten. Aging Hawaiians, a few haole kamaainas, alone knew them. Now, because the world that comes to Hawaii's doors knows them and loves them, they are being revived. Tinpan Alley's idea of Hawaiian music is declining.

The same can be said for the dances. Ceremonial hulas of the far past have come to life again through the efforts of many individuals and organizations. One may, if one wishes, call it "commercialization" when those hulas are capably and beautifully performed in pageants and plays and at entertainments, but those who see the truth will know it to be a benefaction.

Typical Hawaiian sports of the surf were practiced hardly at all here a couple of decades ago. But today, thanks to the energetic Outrigger Canoe club and enthusiastic individuals, the gorgeous waves of Waikiki are alive with surf boards and canoes in all the sports for which they can be used, and it is due in largest extent to the wishes of the visitor from other places.

Much more of original Hawaii remains for resurrection. It will be the enlivening influence of the tourist which will bring it about.
