



Ka Wai Ola

THE LIVING WATER OF OHA

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A message of

KULEANA,
set to **MUSIC**

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By Lurline Wailana McGregor

When 16 mm home movie cameras became popular in the 1920s, Hawai'i residents started documenting everything, from backyard parties to community events. Over the years, films not stored in climate-controlled environments started disintegrating, suffering from a condition called "vinegar syndrome," which left the degraded filmstrips unviewable. Even film collections in storage at museums weren't assured of survival, like at the Lyman Museum in Hilo, where, for decades, members of the community have donated their home and corporate movies. The museum had not even viewed or cataloged the films because it didn't have projection equipment.

Three years ago, 'Ulu'ulu: The Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i, accepted the Lyman Museum's film collection as part of a pilot project to restore and digitize the film. The museum sent 'Ulu'ulu its collection of 56 8-mm and 16-mm films, some of which dated back to the 1920s. 'Ulu'ulu sent the films to a film preservation company on the continent, which was able to restore 45 of the films, translating to more than seven hours of moving images. The movies date back as far as the 11th Maui County Fair in 1928 to Kīlauea Iki eruptions in 1959 to a demonstration by Mrs. DeLuz of Pa'auilo Mauka on how to make Portuguese bread. Since the project has been completed, the Lyman Museum has used the films in different exhibits, including an exhibit on "Hawai'i Volcanoes," where Lyman's archivist Miki Bulos described the volcano footage, most of it from the 1950s, as a "showstopper."

"We were on the verge of losing all these films when 'Ulu'ulu stepped in. Now, we are screening the films to standing room only audiences," she says. These films have now been preserved, cataloged, digitized and clips from them are available for the world to view on 'Ulu'ulu's website, uluulu.hawaii.edu.

Heather Giugni, co-founder of 'Ulu'ulu and daughter to the late Henry Giugni, calls it "a safe haven for community memories." She has worked tirelessly to find a permanent home for the archive, secure funding and grow its collection. "In the past, only a handful of librarians and archivists really understood the importance of saving moving images while photographs and printed materials were already being preserved," says Giugni. "It is our history, our memory – the voices of our ancestors are a primary educational resource."

The research and historical value of these



A 16 mm motion picture film is inspected for deterioration, damage and to determine content. This reel is circa 1950s from the Ted Shibuya Collection. - Images: Courtesy 'Ulu'ulu



'Ulu'ulu co-founder Heather Giugni watches newly digitized footage from the 1978 Constitutional Convention. The original 16 mm film comes from the KGMB news collection and includes video of delegates Frenchy DeSoto, top right, and John Waihe'e, second from top. DeSoto would go on to become the first chairperson of OHA. Waihe'e would become the state's first Hawaiian governor.

old tapes is limitless. The outtakes from television news camera footage, which covered Hawaiians and Hawaiian issues extensively in the 1970s and 80s and the hundreds of hours of film or video that are shot for a one-hour television documentary are as valuable as the shots used in the final production. An example of this is a recently completed video about the history of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, "Kūkulu Hou." Unedited KGMB news footage shows Native Hawaiians in a confrontation with National Guard troops in 1978 as they protest the state's use of Hawaiian homestead lands for Hilo Airport. In another section of the video, footage of Auntie Frenchy DeSoto's passionate floor speech at the 1978 Constitutional Convention in support of creating an office of Hawaiian affairs speaks for itself as to why every one of her resolutions passed by a unanimous vote.

"Seeing images of Hawai'i that I've never seen, seeing history, not just reading about it is what excites me most about my job," says

Janel Quirante, head archivist at 'Ulu'ulu. In less than one year since it opened, the archive has already acquired nearly 20,000 culturally and historically significant videotapes and films in its permanent collection, of which 400 hours have been digitized so far. 'Ulu'ulu is a state of the art moving image archive that uses "best practices" methods to preserve, catalog, manage and digitize its collection. "Its regional focus on Hawai'i, including history and culture, make it unique among moving image archives as well as it being a public resource," says Quirante. The archive is housed at University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu, and

the collection is open to the public. Anyone can go to the website and browse film clips or make an appointment to screen full tapes. The metadata, or descriptive information about the films that the cataloger adds to each clip, adds to the research value.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs recently partnered with 'Ulu'ulu to share its digital collection with its Papakilo Database, OHA's comprehensive online repository for data pertaining to historically and culturally significant places, events and documents in Hawai'i's history. As Heather Giugni, the archive co-founder, sums it up: "'Ulu'ulu is the new media library – preserving our images, our actions, our voices. It is a pu'uhonua for our community stories."

For more information about 'Ulu'ulu and to view clips, visit uluulu.hawaii.edu. ■

Lurline Wailana McGregor is a writer, filmmaker and author of Between The Deep Blue Sea and Me.



Frame grab from the 1989 Hawai'i State Spelling Bee from the KGMB programming collection. The original videotape, a 1-inch open reel tape, was digitized in the The Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i facility.



The archive works to preserve, catalog and digitize film, and make film clips available for viewing on 'Ulu'ulu's website, uluulu.hawaii.edu.