

Archive strives to preserve the fading images of Hawaii

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Full text: From old television footage to home movies, the moving images of Hawaii's history are in peril.

The warm, moist weather in the tropics can easily damage unprotected material, and a lot of the equipment that was used to display each format is obsolete. Worst of all, entire collections are being thrown away because they require too much space to store.

But a new local archive, funded with nearly \$1 million in federal money, hopes to preserve the various media in a digital collection that can be viewed online.

Begun in 2008 by movie producer Chris Lee and independent filmmaker Heather Giugni, the 'Ulu'ulu archive has already collected more than 10,000 hours of material.

It's an eclectic collection:

- Footage of the first commercial interisland flight from 1927.
- Thirty years of news material from KGMB.
- The 1980 Sand Island evictions.
- Clips of visiting presidents Kennedy and Johnson.
- Color footage from the Matson passenger ship Lurline.
- And, of course, episodes of the popular children's show "Checkers & Pogo."

"This is stuff you can't find in any library," Lee said. "There hasn't been an effort to save this material. It's a race against time. The formats are obsolete and the film is deteriorating."

The 'Ulu'ulu collection will be housed in the library at the new University of Hawaii-West Oahu campus, which set aside 11,000 square feet for a digital conversion center, a temperature-controlled vault and a theater.

A website, which should be up sometime this month, will allow access to the 'Ulu'ulu catalog and digital video files, Lee said.

"It literally looks like YouTube," he said. "It is the YouTube of Hawaii."

Much of Hawaii's history, as it was recorded by TV news cameras, has already been lost, Giugni said. There just wasn't enough room to store it all.

"It's no one's fault," she said. "There was a time when you bulk-erased those tapes not realizing that what you captured on those tapes would one day be historical."

Some of it wound up in trash bins, and Giugni knows people who have dived in after it.

Future generations in Hawaii will benefit.

"The point of all this is about access," she said. "You can have your film in a box, but if it is in a box, no one will ever see it."

If you think you have something that should be archived, call 'Ulu'ulu at 956-0422 or 853-4676.

CRITICS HAVE raved about "The Descendants" since before its November release, so it shouldn't have surprised anyone that the film received five Golden Globe nominations, for best picture, director (Alexander Payne), actor (George Clooney), supporting actress (Shailene Woodley) and screenplay (Payne, Nat Faxon and Jim Rash).

Even so, producer Jim Burke called the nominations a nice surprise.

"You don't expect it," he said Thursday. "I don't expect it. I hope for it because there are so many great films out there. To be compared to those films - you don't want to think about it too much. It can confuse you."

The Golden Globes will be awarded Jan. 15, which is 10 days before the Academy Award nominations will be announced. But Burke doesn't want to dream any bigger than the moment.

"The impulse is to imagine what might happen, but I personally fight that and try to live in the moment and to

just appreciate what is happening right now," he said. "What is happening months from now is way, way beyond my control. I just want to savor this."

And that is a wrap.

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