

VIEW FROM WAIKĪKĪ

Royal Residence

Waikīkī became an important residence for O'ahu *ali'i* (chiefs) in the 1400s and a large population settled along the shoreline. This area was favored for its fishponds, taro fields, and groves of coconut trees. At least 4 *heiau* (temples) were built between the crater and Waikīkī.

In the late 1800s, the landscape began to change. Taro was replaced by rice and fishponds were converted to duck ponds.

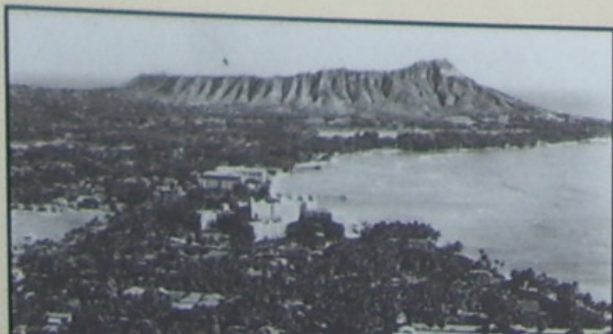


The Waikīkī shoreline in the late 1800s was dominated by groves of coconut trees.

Hawaii State Archives

Visitor Destination

The ponds and fields were drained and water was diverted with the construction of the Ala Wai Canal in the 1920s. The lands behind the beach were filled and hotels were built. The first was the Moana Hotel built in 1901 and followed by the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in 1927. The 1950s brought the first high-rise hotels along Waikīkī beach.



◀ The Moana and Royal Hawaiian Hotels are the landmarks of Waikīkī in this 1929 photograph.

The rapid expansion of the high-rise hotels in Waikīkī is evident in this photograph from the 1960s. ▶



Robert Dampier
View of Waikīkī and Diamond Head, 1825
Voyage of the H.M.S. Blonde

Bishop Museum Archives

A Place of Leisure

Waikīkī became a popular retreat for the royal families, the merchants of Honolulu, and visitors in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They were attracted by the long white sand beach, the protective reef, and the proximity to Honolulu.

King Kalakaua's residence in Waikīkī was a center for entertainment and perpetuation of Hawaiian music and dance. Canoeing and surfing, traditional sports of the *ali'i*, remain popular recreational activities along Waikīkī Beach.



Moana Hotel and Waikīkī Beach, 1920 to 1930.

Hawaii State Archives

Backdrop to Waikīkī

Diamond Head is O'ahu's most notable natural landmark. It forms the backdrop to Waikīkī, Hawai'i's most famous place. The views of Diamond Head are protected for the future by its designation as a state monument.

