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Diamond Head: A Lighthouse Trek



August birthdays have come and gone. A delightful person turned 90 this year. The occasion was celebrated by family and friends from near and far. She is a wonderful woman who loves to paint, loves life and gives generously of her storehouse of knowledge of life and the living of it. Another marvelous lady had her birthday on the 1st. She is vibrant and active well into her senior years, and shows no sign of slowing down. Outspoken and frank are two of her attributes that I admire very much. What is it about those born in August that makes them stand out so? My dear friend and confidante and her husband have birthdays in August two days apart. They travel and play golf and maintain a lifestyle pace that could daunt someone in their twenties. I almost envy you who are August children. I rather imagine that your life is like the last month of the summer, when there is so much to pack into living before the decline of the season and the slower days of autumn. So, here's to those with August birthdays. I wish you all the joys and robust health of this life. May you burst on through the doors of time without a single glance backward, except to share the knowledge of your being there!

Next Issue: In Search Of Windmills

Dark ominous rain clouds loomed on the horizon as my husband, Ed, and I drove the short distance from our hotel room in Honolulu, Hawaii, to the park in a crater below Diamond Head on the island of Oahu. We had been told by fellow kite flying enthusiasts, that the trek to the top of Diamond Head was an experience not to be missed. We had come to the island to attend a kite flying convention. We had taken the bus tour around Oahu, and flew our kites on rocky secluded shores and lush open parks. I made numerous sketches of the scenes. I recorded as much as I could with camera and mental notes. The impressive mountain range slicing through the island intrigued and awed me. We did all the tourist things, from the waterfalls to the nightlife. Now, the culmination of our brief vacation would be to see the island and her surrounding sea from the high vantage point at the top of Diamond Head.

"We did all the tourist things, from the waterfalls to the nightlife"

At the park headquarters we were offered the opportunity to rent a flashlight. There would be a long dark tunnel through which we had to pass on our climb to the top. We declined. The gradual incline soon gave way to rough hewn steps twisting ever upward. There were numerous pauses for me to "catch my breath". Eventually we came upon the tunnel that had been described to us. There was a group of teenagers ahead of us. As we entered the blackness we realized that they did not have a flashlight either. Any glimmer of light soon disappeared behind us. For what seemed an interminable interlude, we pressed forward within cold, damp walls accompanied by shrieks and squeals from somewhere up ahead. Determinedly I pressed on. At last the light glowed before us and we were out into the welcome breath of fresh air recently sweetened by a sudden shower. Again we climbed steeply along the serpentine torturous trail.

There was one more obstacle yet to be overcome. It seems that during the second World War, a bunker had been constructed at the top of the mountain for a look out. This, it appeared, was our destination. However, to get through to

the top there was a dark narrow passageway (straight upward by only a slippery metal ladder) to be negotiated by someone of dexterity and slenderness of build. (Only one of which traits I possessed.)

The reward at the apex was worth the trip. Before us stretched the mighty ocean as far as you could see in 180 degrees. To our right lay the glittering city of Honolulu, a rainbow crowning her glory. To the left we saw distant shafts of slanting rain. And far below we perceived the lighthouse and surrounding homes with swimming pools in large impressive estates. It was the lighthouse that captured my attention.

"It was the lighthouse that captured my attention."

The lighthouse at Diamond Head has been a continuous beacon to warn mariners of the treacherous rocks off Waikiki Beach since first erected in 1899. A third order Fresnel lens rests atop a 55' tower of reinforced concrete that was built in 1917. (To learn more about this historic site, enter keywords on your favorite search engine: Diamond Head Lighthouse). Many wonderful photographs have been published of this lighthouse, but I chose to paint her from the vantage point at the top of the headland looking down. It shows the unique shape of the tower with the coral reefs far below in the crystal clear aquamarine water.

The trek to the top of Diamond Head stands out in my memory as an adventure unequalled. I plan to return to the Hawaiian Islands soon to gather research material on the other lighthouses of this delightful paradise.

Carol Thompson

Featured Artwork

Diamond Head



"After an adventurous hike to the top of Diamond Head on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, a breathtaking view of Honolulu, the sea, and this unusually shaped lighthouse greets the stout of heart. Looking much like an elongated pyramid, topped by light and conical cap, the lighthouse at Diamond Head is well worth the climb."

The Island Seas



"The quiet rising of the sun casts rainbows of soft color onto the waters and skies and a rolling breaker in the 'island seas!'"

A Time Away



"A tropical island sunset burns the sky and sea. The sand is warm and the tall palms gently sway in the soft evening breeze."