

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN HILO WALKING TOUR

This self-guided walking tour will take about one hour if walked continuously. Please go at your own pace and enjoy exploring historic Hilo!

The 21 stops along the way provide information about the town's history dating from 1870 to the present. The history of Hilo begins much earlier, however. Circa 1100 AD, the first Hilo inhabitants arrived from Polynesia and lived along the Wailuku and Wailoa Rivers and the shores of Hilo Bay. During the time of ancient Hawaii they farmed, fished, and traded goods.

Changes came to this lifestyle in 1778 with the arrival of the first European explorers, and in 1820 with the arrival of missionaries. Hilo soon became a stopping place for whaling ships, traders, and explorers curious about the active volcanoes.

By the early 1900s a number of wharves had been constructed, the breakwater was begun, and a new railroad system designated Hilo as a center of commerce. Two destructive tsunamis in 1946 and 1960 destroyed the rail system and caused a dramatic shift in the local economy.

Today, downtown Hilo is alive and bustling with renewed energy. New and old businesses alike are meeting the challenge of revitalizing our city center while preserving Hilo's historic character.

Mahalo to Destination Hilo, Big Island Candies, Cafe Pesto, and downtown Subway for your sponsorship.



The Historic Downtown Hilo Walking Tour is a project of the Hilo Downtown Improvement Association, www.downtownhilo.com



1 Mo'ohau Park, Bus Terminal
329 Kamehameha Ave.

2 Mo'ohau Bandstand
Kamehameha Ave. at Mamo St.

3 S. Hata Building
308 Kamehameha Ave.

4 A.O.F. Building
280 Keawe St.

5 Taishoji Soto Mission
275 Kino'ole St.

6 Central Christian Church
109 Haili St.

7 Haili Church
211 Haili St.

8 St. Joseph Church
43 Kapiolani at Haili St.

9 Lyman Museum & Mission House
276 Haili St.

10 Naha Stone/Hilo Public Library
300 Waianuenue Ave.

11 Federal Building/Post Office
120 Waianuenue Ave.

12 Kalakaua Square
Waianuenue Ave./Kino'ole St./Kalakaua St.

13 East Hawaii Cultural Center/Museum of Contemporary Art
141 Kalakaua St.

14 Hawaiian Telephone Co. Building
135 Kalakaua St.

15 Burns Building & the Pacific Building
Waianuenue Ave. at Keawe St.

16 Kaikodo Building
64 Keawe St.

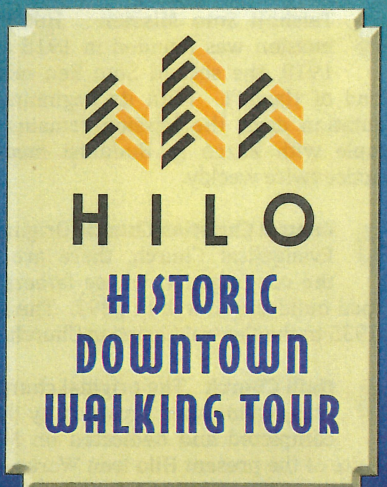
17 Koehnen's Building/Mokupāpapa Discovery Center
76 Kamehameha Ave.

18 Kaipalaoa Landing Wharf
Bottom of Waianuenue Ave.

19 Pacific Tsunami Museum
103 Kamehameha Ave.

20 S. H. Kress Co. Building
174 Kamehameha Ave.

21 Palace Theater
38 Haili St.



1 Mo'ohau Park & Bus Terminal Dedicated in 1905, the park is now central station for Hilo's HeleOn bus system. A kiosk next to the terminal is home to Destination Hilo's Aloha Information Station. Helpful Aloha Ambassadors can provide you with information on accommodations, activities, and dining in East Hawai'i, as well as maps, brochures, and bus schedules. Destination Hilo strives to perpetuate authentic Hawaiian experiences for visitors through its Greetings and other programs.

2 Mo'ohau Bandstand A gift from Admiral George Beckley to the people of Hawaii when the park was dedicated in 1905, the bandstand was built for the Hilo Band and is still used for concerts, events, and performances. The 1946 tsunami destroyed all buildings on the maka'i (ocean) side of Kamehameha Avenue except the bandstand.

3 S. Hata Building Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this building is one of the most recognizable landmarks in Hilo. A good example of renaissance revival architecture with its distinctive row of arched windows on the second floor, it was erected in 1912 as a general store by Japanese immigrant Sadanosuke Hata and his family.

4 A.O.F. Building Built in 1925 in the renaissance revival style with arched entryways, balconies, and decorative columns, this building is still in use by the Ancient Order of Foresters, a group with European origins that was chartered to assist during times of need. King Kalākaua was a member of this fraternal order.

5 Taishoji Soto Mission Hilo's Zen Temple, the mission was founded in 1915 and constructed in 1918, the second Soto Zen mission built on the island of Hawai'i. With its beginnings rooted in early plantation days, the Mission remains a family-oriented temple with Zazen (a Buddhist meditation discipline) practice twice weekly.

6 Central Christian Church Originally the Portuguese Evangelical Church, there are still members of the congregation whose fathers and grandfathers helped build the church in 1892. The name was changed in 1935 to the Central Christian Church.

7 Haili Church The original church building, a large grass canoe shed provided by the local chiefs, was completed and dedicated on May 19, 1824 near the site of the present Hilo Iron Works. This was followed in 1825, 1829, and 1842 by three more thatched hale churches. The fifth and present structure, begun in 1854,

was completed and dedicated on April 8, 1859. On July 15, 1979 a fire destroyed the tower, ceiling, and some of the interior of this building. The restored church was rededicated on June 1, 1980. The Haili Church Choir, established in 1902 and inducted into the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame, still sings at services and presents an annual Christmas Cantata.

8 St. Joseph Church St. Joseph Catholic Church, designed in the style of old mission architecture, has a clock made by the Seth Thomas Clock Company of Thomaston, Connecticut, which at first chimed on the half hour around the clock until nearby residents complained of the disturbance.

9 Lyman Museum & Mission House The Smithsonian-affiliated Lyman Museum highlights Native Hawaiian culture, island geology and volcanoes, sea shells, minerals and gemstones, as well as the unique array of natural habitats and diverse cultural groups that make up today's Hawai'i. The adjacent Mission House is the oldest frame structure on the island, a masterwork of 19th-century craftsmanship and décor, and may be seen by guided tour. Built in the late 1830s (restored in 2010), it was built by David and Sarah Lyman, missionaries from New England.

10 Naha & Pinao Stones/Hilo Public Library The Naha Stone was brought to Hilo by canoe from the chiefly valley of Wailua on Kaua'i, many centuries ago. It resided at one of several heiau (temples) in the Hilo area and was associated with traditions of affirming chiefly status. According to legend, ali'i (royal) infants were placed alone on the stone. If they did not cry they were said to be of high royal status. The ability to move the massive stone was also seen as a sign of high chiefly capacity. Kamehameha, while in his early 20s, confirmed the prophecy that he would become a great warrior king by moving the stone. The Pinao Stone is believed to be from the Pinao Heiau that once stood on or near the site of this State Library. These sacred stones are held in high cultural esteem by Hawai'i's people.

11 The Federal Building & Post Office Located across the street from Kalākaua park, this stately building was designed by architect Henry Whitfield and is typical of Hilo's early 20th-century government buildings. Formerly the courthouse, today it houses government offices, including the downtown branch of the U. S. Post Office. The original structure, one of the first in Hawai'i noteworthy for its use of reinforced concrete, was built in 1919, and the two wings were added in 1936. It has been recently renovated.

12 Kalākaua Square Hilo's town square for over a century. Hilo became a visiting place of King Kalākaua, who designed the first county complex at this site in the late 19th century. The park contains a sundial bearing the inscription: "This sundial was erected in the Fourth Year of the reign of King Kalākaua, A.D. 1877, Hilo, Hawai'i." The trees in the park were planted during the King's time, making them over one hundred years old today. The park also contains a memorial inscribed with the names of the dead from Hawai'i Island from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

13 East Hawai'i Cultural Center/Hawai'i Museum of Contemporary Art Completed in October 1932, this building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was the District Courthouse until 1969; then housed the Hawai'i County Police Department until 1975. The center now provides programs including Hawaiian culture, hula, and language classes; live music, drama, and dance; and exhibitions of local and international artists.

14 Hawaiian Telephone Co. Building C. W. Dickey is credited with developing Hawaiian Regional Architecture in the early 20th century. Note the high-hipped, green tile roof and the brightly colored terra cotta tiles set in the building.

15 Burns Building and the Pacific Building These wooden buildings are typical of many in Hilo constructed in the early part of the 20th century. The simple style that emerged is now very special to Hawai'i. The Burns Building (on the corner) was built in 1913, with stores at street level, and a rooming house above.

16 Kaikodo Building (Toyama Building, former Hilo Masonic Lodge Building) Built in 1908 using steel beams on reinforced concrete, this was among the first "fireproof" commercial buildings in Hilo and was called "the finest of its kind in the territory." Home to Hilo's first Masonic Lodge, the building is listed on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

17 Koehnen's Building / Mokupāpapa Discovery Center This lovely historic structure was originally built for the Hackfeld Company in 1910, with interior walls of koa and floors of `ōhi'a (native woods). The Koehnen's bought the building in 1957 and operated a store there for many years selling fine furnishings. Today the building houses the National Oceanographic Institute's Mokupāpapa Discovery Center, created to interpret the

natural science, culture, and history of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and surrounding marine environment. It features a 3,500-gallon saltwater aquarium, interactive exhibits, life-sized models of wildlife found in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, artwork inspired by those islands and by Hawaiian culture, and many interpretive panels in Hawaiian and English.

18 Kaipalaoa Landing Between 1863 and 1890 a landing wharf and U.S. Coast Guard lighthouse were built at the foot of Waiānuenu Avenue. Passengers and freight were transported to steamers anchored in the bay. Legends note that the site served as a campground and favorite surfing spot for King Kamehameha I, and is where Hilo town earned its name. As Kamehameha set off from Kaipalaoa, he left his servants to stand watch over his canoe. As time passed, they became worried for his safety. They made a rope by twisting ti leaves together, and left the canoe. Such twisting is called 'hilo.' They met Kamehameha unharmed. At first angered that his men did not watch the canoe, Kamehameha was surprised that they knew how to make such a rope and declared that this place be called Hilo.

19 Pacific Tsunami Museum This concrete building with its parapet, fluted columns, and wrought-iron design was built in 1930. It survived both the 1946 and 1960 tsunamis and is now a museum chronicling the history of Hawai'i Island tsunamis and the resulting reconstruction of Hilo town. This building was designed by C.W. Dickey, one of Hawai'i's prominent architects.

20 S.H. Kress Co. Building When it opened in 1932, its floral designs, batwing shapes, and terra cotta front helped introduce a new kind of architecture to Hilo - Art Deco. The interior of the store offered many shopping conveniences including wide aisles, good lighting, and a popular soda fountain. The building housed Hilo's popular five and dime store until 1980, when U.S. Senator Hiram Fong purchased it in order to restore the historic and only remaining Kress building in the nation.

21 Palace Theater The art deco-style Palace Theater was built and opened in 1925, originally part of a small chain of theaters owned and operated by Adam C. Baker. The "stadium" seating was a new innovation that gave customers unobstructed sight lines and created room for a spacious lobby in its limited property size. Today this historic theater, restored after heavy damage suffered in the 1960 tsunami, is a popular venue for concerts, stage plays, musicals, film festivals, movies, gatherings, and celebrations; providing Hilo's residents and visitors with a full artistic menu.