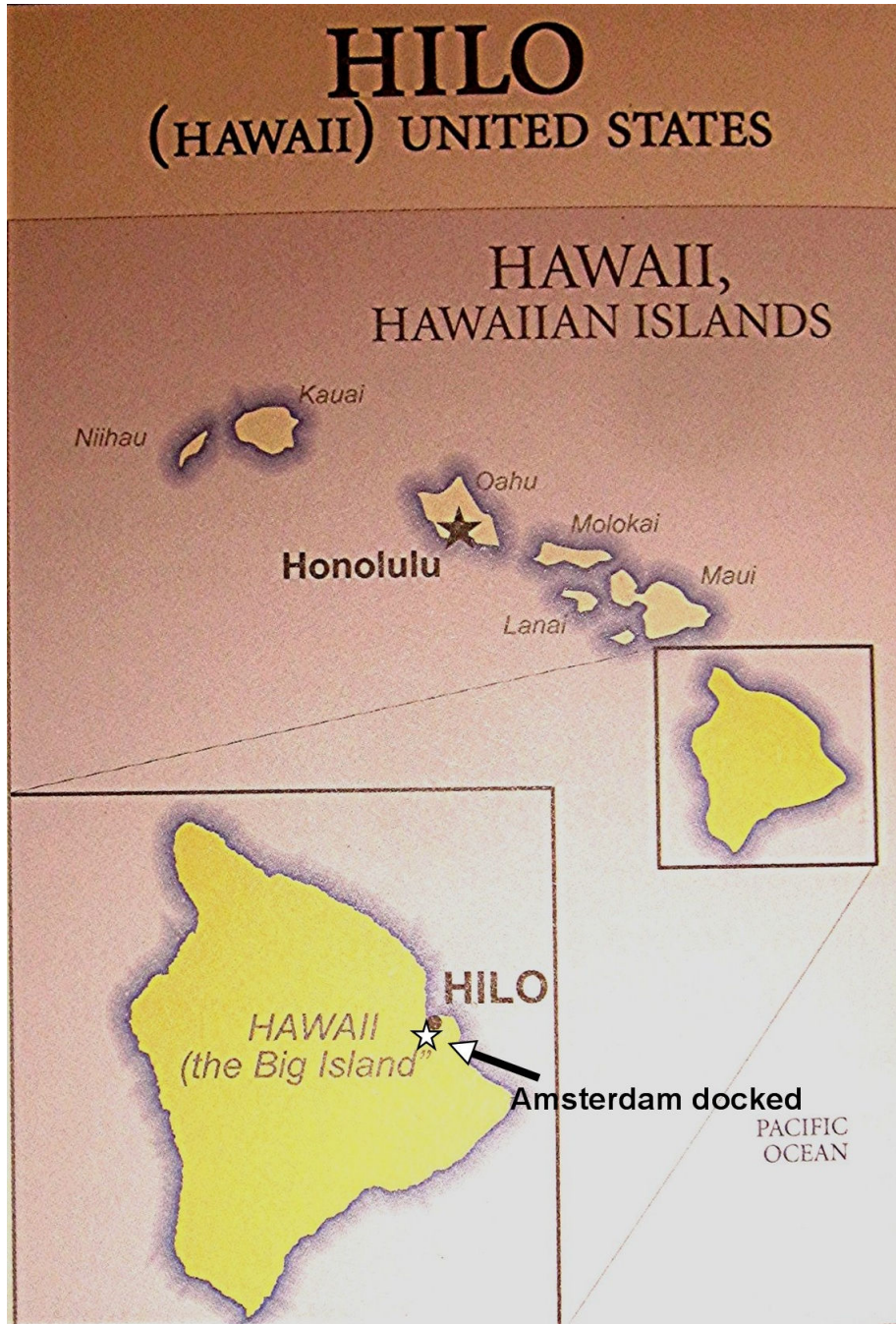


Day 63-Hilo, Hawaii-Banyans-Liliuokalani-Tsunami Museum-27 Nov 09: The day started with sky partly cloudy, calm sea and temperature in the mid 70s. We were entering the harbor at Hilo, Hawaii at about 7am. The maps below show where Hilo is located in the Hawaiian Island Chain and on the island of Hawaii. A street map of Hilo shows the places we visited in Hilo during our stay.





One of the first things that we noticed about Hilo Harbor is the long curved breakwater that has been built out into the sea, as shown in the photo below. Without the breakwater the ships in the harbor would have little protection from storms and the normal ocean swells.



The Amsterdam proceeded on to the dock at Pier 1 and it was safely tied up by 8am. Shortly thereafter we were cleared by the authorities and could go ashore. The ship was located next to the cruise terminal building. In addition to the cruise terminal, Pier 1 contained a storage yard that was filled with parked semi trailer beds used to haul the large sea going cargo containers, as shown on the right. We wondered if this large yard of idle trailers was another sign of the worldwide economic downturn.



We had been to Hilo several times in the past and seen the volcanoes and water falls so didn't have any tours scheduled. Our plan was to walk from the ship into Hilo and visit the Pacific Tsunami Museum in the morning. The Amsterdam was scheduled to leave port fairly early. All aboard was at 3:30 pm so we didn't have a lot of time to spend in Hilo.

About 9:30 we left the Amsterdam and passed through the cruise terminal. It was threatening to rain so we wore our rain jackets and were comfortable. We walked off of Pier 1 and turned right on Kalaniana'ole Avenue towards downtown Hilo. We walked

down Kalaniana'ole Avenue and, as can be seen in the street map above, that took us by the Reed's Bay Beach Park and Liliuokalani Gardens.

Soon after turning onto Kalaniana'ole Avenue we noticed a severely worn image of a pair of thongs on the sidewalk pointing us in the direction of downtown Hilo, as shown on the right. This was probably the clever idea of some Visitor Bureau project of a few years ago.



At Reed's Bay Beach Park we turned right so that we could walk around the edge of the harbor in the direction of Liliuokalani Gardens. Shortly after turning toward the harbor



we saw the Holland American ship, Zaandam, gliding past us on its way to a dock near the Amsterdam, as shown in the picture on the left.

We had been unaware of what was on this road but we soon found

that it was lined with beautiful banyan trees as shown below.



It appeared that back in the 1930s there must have been a civic project to plant the banyan trees and various people would sponsor the tree or dedicate it to the memory of another person. Now there were wooden plaques by most of the trees showing the name of the person associated with that tree. The pictures below show some of the plaques we saw as we walked along.



The plaque by this tree on the left read, Dr. L.L. Doggegett July 20 1937.

The plaque below for Dr. Poling was dated 1930, indicating the tree was planted nearly 80 years ago. That was the earliest date we saw on our walk.

The plaque shown below was dedicated to Babe Ruth in 1933.



Leo Carrillo was commemorated by the plaque on the right in 1933. Barbara remembered how this movie star of Western Films would often ride in San Diego County Fair parades in the 1950s and 1960s.



It was difficult to get good quality photos of the giant banyan trees but the pictures below give some notion of views that we had.



We passed by Uncle Billy's Fish & Steak House which was surrounded by palm and banyan trees. They were still advertising the Thanksgiving Buffet that they had yesterday.



Next to Uncle Billy's Fish & Steak House was a large banyan tree, shown below, with a dedication plaque for Uncle Billy Kimi, June 1964. That tree got a late start compared with most of the others.

We walked along the street lined with banyan trees and eventually came to the Liliuokalani Gardens.



The Liliuokalani Gardens presented a beautiful Japanese style landscape as shown in the picture on the right and below.

While we walked along there were several van loads of Japanese tourists visiting the park, with guides describing the features.



Later, at the Pacific Tsunami Museum we found out that this area was covered with businesses and homes in the 1940s but that was all destroyed in the tsunami of 1946. After the tsunami the people of Hilo turned the harbor area at risk of flooding into these gardens and other parks. Apparently the giant banyan trees we saw earlier were here at the time of the tsunami but were spared being uprooted and killed. The green park area along the Hilo harbor is one of the best examples we know of where a tragedy was turned into a positive result.

There was a light rain misting down onto us intermittently but we continued walking along the harbor towards downtown Hilo. We passed the Kamehameha Canoe Club with all the boats lined up along the beach and on the lawn. Finally we crossed Kamehameha Avenue and came to the Pacific Tsunami Museum as shown on the right.



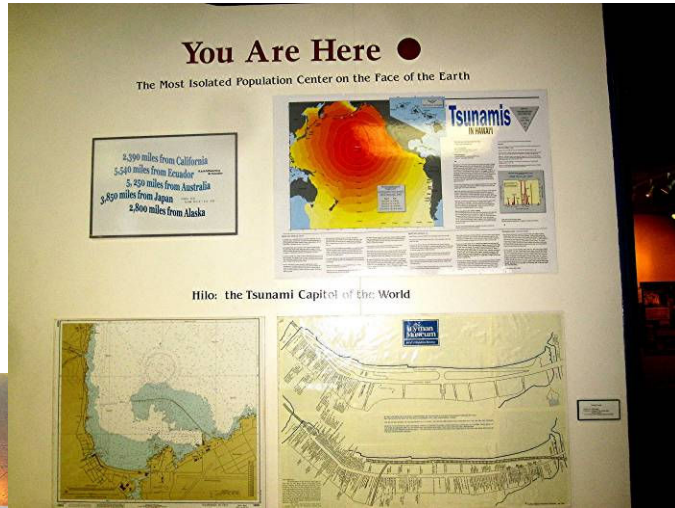
We bought tickets to the museum at \$7 each for seniors and immediately joined a lecture that was being given about the tsunami phenomenon and in particular the disastrous tsunami that hit Hilo on April Fool's Day 1946 (4/1/46).

A tsunami is a wave that travels through the ocean as the result of an earthquake that causes vertical movement of the earth's surface at the bottom of the ocean. The wave may be only a foot or so high as it travels across the miles of open ocean so it wouldn't be noticed by people on a ship. However, when the wave approached the shallow water of land it rises up and can be 10 or 20 feet high. These waves used to be called "tidal waves" because the water would rise and fall much like tidal action. However, the phenomenon has nothing to do with tidal forces so now it is called a "tsunami" which is the Japanese word for the effect.

Hilo harbor is ideally positioned to catch a tsunami coming from the north. By reference to the map of the island of Hawaii above one can see that at the place where Hilo is located the shoreline of the island forms a cup with the opening facing north and the city of Hilo at the bottom of the cup. While tsunamis approaching from any direction are dangerous the ones coming from the north are the most destructive. Old Hilo was built with dense housing built right down to the water's edge along the harbor. On April 1, 1946 a tsunami approached Hilo from the Aleutian Islands. At first the water receded and the harbor was empty out to where the current breakwater, as shown earlier, is located. Fish were left flopping around on the mud and some people rushed out to gather them up. However, minutes later the water surged back in as the crest of the tsunami wave passed. The water surge wiped out the homes and businesses along the harbor for about 1000 feet back from the normal water's edge. In Hilo 96 people were killed and on the whole island of Hawaii 159 people were killed by the event.

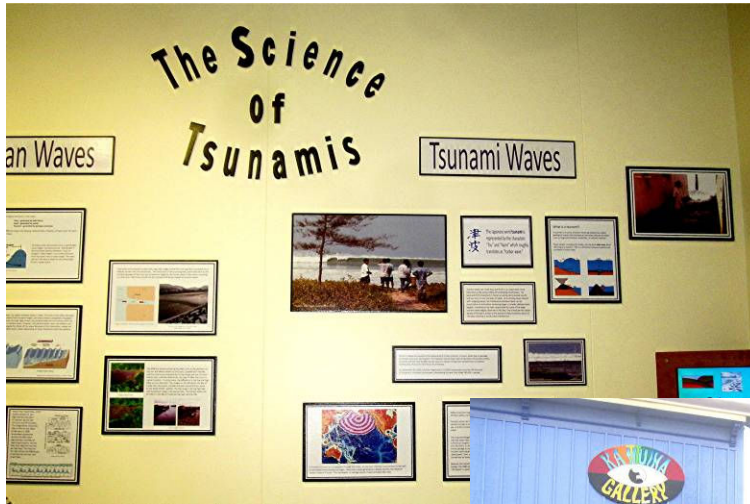
There were also tsunami events in the Hilo harbor in 1952, 1957 and 1960. The 1946 and 1960 tsunamis were the most devastating. Barbara visited Hilo in 1960 and can remember seeing the wreckage from the 1960 tsunami.

As a result of all this sad experience and the realization that tsunamis are inevitable, the people of Hilo designated the land along the harbor as a park area so that future tsunamis will not cause the economic and human life loss that was suffered in the past. In addition the international community has created the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center to provide ample warning. The Pacific Tsunami Museum has many exhibits documenting tsunami detection technology and the damage



caused by tsunamis that have swept through the region, as shown above and below.





After about an hour of perusing the exhibits we left the Pacific Tsunami Museum much better informed about tsunamis than before.

We proceeded up a slight grade into the part of Hilo that was not washed by previous tsunamis. The town looked a bit “down at the heels” as shown in the photo on the right.



We returned to the harbor front area where businesses were rebuilt after the tsunamis. They were built back from the water along a line considered beyond the reach of typical tsunamis. Here is a photo of some of those business buildings below, from the viewpoint of the park area across the street.



The street here was Kamehameha Avenue, the main street of Hilo. One of the stores along the street sells fireplaces as their sign indicates. We thought that it would be a brave kind of entrepreneur who could survive selling fireplaces in a tropical place like Hilo. However, they have 30 years of experience to show it can be done.



We found a gas station where regular unleaded gas was selling for \$3.699 dollars per gallon, as shown on the right.



Across the street we saw the perfect backdrop for Barbara's library card to verify the visit to Hilo, as shown on the below.



Crossing the street again we entered the Farmer's Market which was loaded with all kinds of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers as shown below.



We even found an old fashioned public pay telephone. These are getting hard to find in this day of the ubiquitous cell phone glued to every ear.



By this time it was early afternoon. The rain had stopped but with all-aboard scheduled for 3:30pm we decided to bring our visit of downtown Hilo to a close. We went by a bus stop where a lot of people were waiting for the free shuttle bus back to the ship. An enterprising young taxi van driver announced that we had a 45 minute wait for the next bus and he would shuttle us back to the ship for \$2. That sounded like a bargain to us so we piled into the van for the ride back to Pier 1 and the Amsterdam. With some nostalgia we took the short walk back from the harbor gate to the Amsterdam. We had been taking these walks for the last two months and this was our last return to the ship before landing in Los Angeles and leaving for home in four days. In the photo on the right Barbara can be seen plodding back to the Amsterdam for the last time on this cruise.



Back on board the Amsterdam we were able to get a photograph of the Zaandam as shown below. It has a profile similar to that of the Amsterdam except it has only one smoke stack.



The waves were kicking up out in the ocean and we could see them crashing over the Hilo Harbor breakwater as shown in this photo on the right. We wondered how rough the ride would be when we got underway later.



The Amsterdam got underway at 4pm and we sailed out of the harbor past the entrance in the breakwater shown below.



As it turned out the stabilizers did their job and the ride was just a gentle rocking when we hit the open waters.

After dinner we went to the last show of the Amsterdam Singers and Dancers for this cruise. We went to the show called “Love Songs from Broadway, Costumes from Mackie” where the stewards were serving Champagne while we waited before this closing show got underway. Before the opening scene, Bruce had all the players come out in front of the curtain for a Champagne toast and recognition by the audience for a job well done in entertainment for the last two months. The assembled cast is shown below with Cruise Director, Bruce, in the middle.



The show was terrific as they all have been during the cruise.

The Amsterdam continued cruising on a north easterly course at about 20 knots during the night. We have 4 days at sea and then the inevitable check-out day in Los Angeles.