

"BLOCK #35 OF YORE"

By: Roy A. Del Rosario; former resident of Block #33 / #35

Reflections from the past, from whence I had lived at the site that past and present residents of the southeast corner of Lanai city know of it to be as block #35. However, keep in mind that I am referring to the site of block #35 And not block #35 per say. It was where I grew up from age 9 in 1936 and until 1945 at age 17. Then again in 1947 at age 20 for about a year. Thus it can be said that I had lived at block #35 for at least 10 years, except that would not be true, as the site of block #35 had not always been block #35; Lanaians currently at age 80 will attest my presumption to be credible.

In the course of penning the original text of this article, I had done so by utilizing datum derived from an old map of Lanai city and coupled with what I knew of Lanai as seen through my own eyes and that of which I term as my phenomenal memory, that lends credence to this text in regards to the origin of block #35.

Between the early and late 1920's the southeast corner of the city was mostly a cleared area with only a row of eight houses along a wayside and a few structures scattered within the vicinity. It was more likely than not that the area might have not as yet been designated as a numbered block nor was the road fronting it had as yet been given a street number or a name.

It must have been between 1929 and the early 1930's that the southeastern corner of the city had increased to four rows of houses with each consisting of seven or eight houses. Also established in the cleared area eastward and adjacent to the fourth row of houses were a few community shared convenience structures; such as a laundry washhouse, bathhouse and an eight cubical "outhouse." Situated nearby the southern boundary of the rows of houses was a Boardinghouse that provided meals for the bachelor employees residing in the immediate vicinity. Thus to wit in time, the inevitable emergence of the employees residential area at the southeast corner of the city and dubbed as block #33.

All of the houses in the first row consisted of 8 family type abodes having two bedrooms, a living room and a small kitchen with indoor plumbing. Also a small porch with steps and steps outside of the kitchen back door. Some if not most having a boardwalk extending from the kitchen backdoor steps to the front porch steps and onwards to the front lawn entrance way, some edged with single or multicolored akulekule plants. Most of the homes were bordered with either hibiscus hedges, a wooden picket fence or shrubberies of some sort.

The second, third and fourth rows consisted of seven or eight houses that were similarly designed and designated as bachelors quarters. Each of these houses were divided into two sections, with a wall that ran lengthwise through the middle of the house from the front to the back. Each section having two bedrooms and a small kitchen but no living room. Both sections had a door adjoining the two bedrooms, a door adjoining the second bedroom with the kitchen and a large porch with a door for both sections.

I was nine years old when we resided at block #33. Ours was the first house in the front row at the northwest corner of the block and fronted by Lanai Avenue. Other families occupying houses in the same row as I can recall, were the Godinez, Daniel, Sipe, Tadios, Mano, Endrina and two other families whose surnames I am unable to recall.

The second and third rows consisted of seven or eight bachelor type houses. The fourth row had a few family houses, and if I am not amiss in saying so, that among those residing there were the Petaluna family, the Funada family, the Morita family and some other japanese and filipino families. Between 1938 a1940 Most of the bachelor type houses in the second row of block #33 were utilized as living quarters for the summer seasonal employees.

Between 1938 and 1940 the area northward and adjacent to block #33 which was also across from the baseball park and Lanai Ave, was cleared of its public shared convenience structures to provide for the needed space to accommodate all of the family houses that were being relocated from Mikki Camp at the Palawai Basin area to the southeast area of the city. When all of the houses from Mikki Camp were completely situated at the newly cleared site, it then became the new site to be used by the summer seasonal employees and dubbed as the new block #33. Henceforth the old block #33 became the new block #35.

With the arrival of a small Army Signal Corps unit on the island in 1942, the second row was used as a temporary billeting area for the military unit for a few months until they had established a small army camp in the pineapple field area southwest and between the city and kaumalapau.

In the ensuing years all of the bachelor type houses in block #35 would eventually and gradually be converted into family type abodes. The second, third and fourth rows will be occupied by families in the likes of the Goshi, Pagay, Ohashi, Endfield, Alboro, Obado, Del Rosario, Tadios, Dimaya and others whom I am unable to recall their surnames.

Having left the island 58 years ago, it is unlikely that I will be able to recognize many or if not most of those who became residents of block #35

after I had left the island or whom were children when I had left the island in 1952 upon enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Indeed, in viewing a birds eye view of the map of Lanai City as it appears today via Google on my computer, that the block #35 that I had known as a youngster and later as a young adult is somewhat acquired an altered configuration and characteristics. It now consists of five rows of houses, encompassed by Lanai Ave, Queens St., 12th St and interlaced with Nana, Aha, Olapa and Palawai street. But there still exists a slight view and aura of the years of yore. Many of its nearby sites and structures had either been removed, reconstructed, or newly established. Still, memories of the past continue to exists.

For many of those who were residents of block #33 / #35 of yore, there still exist some of whom are well into their golden year ages of 70's, 80's and 90's whom are likely to recall and still able to "talk story" about what block #35 was all about once upon a time and rightly so! As indicative by the brown and yellow T-Shirts they so proudly wear, sporting "ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS, BLOCK #35, PLANTATION DAYS'Much Aloha!