

## **RUSTY THOMAS MENU COLLECTION**

Kapiolani Community College Library  
Preliminary Processing Overview  
May 1996

### **THOMAS, HARRIET "RUSTY." MENUS, ca. 1946-1982. 3 boxes in several folders. 15 linear inches.**

Harriet "Rusty" Thomas was the food editor at the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* from 1949 to 1964, during which time she began collecting menus from her dining experiences. Dubbed "Rusty" for her flaming red curly hair, she was said to have had a voracious appetite; according to the account of one newspaper colleague, she "ate everything on the table that didn't move, yet never gained an ounce ... everything about her just fascinated us."

She donated what she estimated were her "40 pounds of menus" to the Kapiolani Community College Food Service Program in April 1996. The Food Service Program turned the menus over to the library to house and maintain the collection in a secure, climate-controlled atmosphere.

The three boxes of menus span the period from 1946 to around 1982. They have been loosely organized by restaurant location. A detailed inventory list of menus would be helpful, noting their restaurant of origin; meal (if appropriate); address or locale; actual or estimated date; size and physical description/condition; and folder location.

Some of the menus, especially those in the Waikiki and Shipboard folders, are beautiful works of art, suitable for display or other graphic purposes. Others are simply prosaic photocopied menus, dog-eared and faded. These are still useful, however, for the information they convey about dining habits, prices, etc.

#### **Box 1: Hawaii menus**

Contains several folders of menus from "Waikiki & Environs." (For our purposes, I defined this as Waikiki proper and nearby tourist-type destinations such as the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor and Discovery Bay restaurants, delimited by the Ala Moana Hotel on the Ewa side and the Ala Wai Canal on the mauka side.) Several duplicate menus. No attempt has been made as yet to organize them by date, but most seem to be from the 1950s and '60s.

Box 1 also contains Oahu (non-Waikiki) and Neighbor Island menus (much smaller than the Waikiki contributions). As an aside, Ms. Thomas's husband, Ernest H. Thomas, was apparently a military officer, as one envelope was addressed to "Col. Thomas," resulting in a disproportionately large percentage of Oahu menus being from the Pearl Harbor Officer's Club and the Hale Koa in Ft. DeRussy.

#### **Box 2: Mainland and Shipboard menus**

Contains U.S. mainland (California and Boston predominate) and a few foreign menus (Asia and the Philippines) in addition to several folders of "Shipboard" menus, mostly from the 1970s and early 1980s. Some cruise miscellany is included, such as daily bulletins of cruise events. Many of the cruise menus are of framable quality, beautiful collectibles.

#### **Box 3: Oversize menus**

This extra-wide box houses menus from the other categories that simply don't fit into Hollinger boxes. Most are from Waikiki restaurants, but a few recall Mainland addresses as well. Need to be cataloged in greater detail than just "oversized" in future.

#### **Processing Notes:**

Overall, the collection is in fairly good condition considering the storage method (in shopping bags). A few menus are badly stained (the rib restaurant menu comes to mind!) and so were placed in Mylar sleeves to protect the other menus next to them. Research needs to be conducted to discover the date and address of many of the items. Perhaps the donor herself could be contacted.

Gift of Rusty Thomas (922-1142 or 734-4319), Honolulu, Hawaii, April 1996.

Deed of Gift no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Preliminary processing by Jan Zastrow, Archivist, May 1996.