

## 22. TEACHING AND SURFING IN HAWAII, HONOLULU, 1971

Paul Demeny was in charge of the Department of Population at the University of Hawaii and he invited me to join the tenured staff. I was not ready to do that, but a three month spell out in the Pacific Ocean was more than acceptable. Beatrice and I moved out there, and agreed that the climate was everything that had been said about it. Even the rain was pleasant--"liquid sunshine" Paul called it.

Once I had my classes organized I turned my attention to Waikiki Beach. I hired a surfing instructor, rented a very large surf board (the larger the board the less difficult to stand up on), and got going. Following my instructor I waded and swam what seemed like half a mile out into the water, and stopped. My instructor turned his educated eye towards the incoming waves, and when he saw one that looked good I clambered aboard and lay on my stomach. At the right moment he gave the board and myself a mighty push, so that we caught the wave, and we were wafted landward.

The trick was to go from flat to kneeling, and then stand up, cleverly steering the board by shifting weight from one leg to the other. I went through this day after day, and only once in my entire stay in Hawaii did I manage to stand on that board.

I did buy a board and took it home, storing it in the basement of our place in North Hampton. In the autumn, the season of tallest waves, the young men of New Hampshire would be out there surfing in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. (Most of us found that water too cold for swimming even in July.)

That was not the end of my Hawaiian epic. Out in the bright sunshine, that came down both directly and then as a reflection from the water, my unprotected eyes were badly affected. For a while I couldn't see to read. But the eyes gradually recovered. I was glad not to have this memento of my stay in Hawaii.

We got around in an old VW (Volkswagen) that we bought at the outset of our stay. In it we did the circuit of the island of Oahu, and when leaving sold for slightly more than we had paid. Another confirmation of my principle of "It is always cheaper to buy than to rent" mentioned earlier.

One other memory of Hawaii: the cockroaches. They were everywhere. When walking about one often saw a house enveloped in a large transparent tent where the work of fumigation was under way. That would rid the occupant of cockroaches--for a limited time.

Beatrice did not like Hawaii -- in fact she hated it. For her it seemed terribly far from everything. Not quite as isolated as a colony on the moon, but the same idea. The evening TV news came in at 10:00 p.m., delayed by the time taken to fly the tape from the mainland.

So in due course we said good-bye to our friends the Demeny's, and left.

### **The University of Wisconsin, 1971**

The Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin was and is an attractive place for a social scientist. For me it was attractive because of the demographers there, led by Robert Hauser. I knew and admired Reynolds Farley and David Featherman. Beside his group there was James F. Grow in population genetics. I was invited to join, and was certainly interested. How far my expression of interest was a promise to join, I do not remember. What I do know is the Bob Hauser felt that it was indeed a promise, and when I went back on it to join Harvard, he felt betrayed. I now see that at the very least he was entitled to an apology and I don't remember offering such an apology.