

WHERE DID THE SUGAR CANE GO?

TIM GREINER has had the opportunity to visit Hawaii a couple of times in recent years to attend medical conferences. This provided opportunities for him and his family to take in many of the unusual and appealing sights of our island state. In addition to the different flora and fauna found on the Hawaiian Islands, GREINER found the change of culture, particularly the shift from sugar cane production to cultivating tourists during the past eighty years interesting. GREINER explained that the old water aqueducts and canals that used to be used to move water from the rainy side of the islands to the drier areas for sugar cane irrigation are now used by tourists for mountain tubing recreation. Mountain tubers have to wear head lamps because there are many tunnels through which the water flows. GREINER noted that sugar cane production began in the early 1800's and increased to 1 million tons in 1932, and it has been decreasing since then. C&H Sugar (California and Hawaii) was once a strong cooperative producing raw sugar in Hawaii and refining it in California. It sold out in 1993. The growers of sugar cane that are still in Hawaii use large machinery to collect the cane from the fields, a process that used to be very labor intensive. Brazil is now the largest producer of sugar cane.