

HISTORY OF KO'OLAUPOKO

The first Polynesians arrived in Hawai'i sometime around the 5th century A.D., sailing thousands of miles across the vast Pacific Ocean, from the southwestern regions where Tahiti, New Zealand, and the Society Islands reside. They were seasoned, experienced sailors with a wealth of knowledge of the winds, the ocean currents and the heavens. With no form of written language, all of their experiences were remembered and passed on to the following generations orally, sometimes through songs (mele), dances (hula), or chants (oli). It is uncertain as to when these first peoples eventually settled on the windward side of O'ahu (east O'ahu), but archaeological evidence confirms their existence in the 13th century A.D.

The windward side of O'ahu is made up of two districts: Ko'olauloa (long Ko'olau) to the north, and Ko'olaupoko (short Ko'olau) to the south. These districts are bordered on the west by the entire ridge of the Ko'olau Mountain range. Within each district are several land divisions called ahupua'a, which extend from the mountain ridges to beyond the reefs offshore. The land was divided this way so that families could have access to the provisions of both the land (aina) and the sea (kai). Ko'olaupoko, that region which encompasses Kane'ohē Bay, is divided into nine ahupua'a, with Kualoa being the northernmost (and smallest), and Kane'ohē being the southernmost (and largest). From north to south the nine ahupua'a are Kualoa, Hakipu'u, Waikane, Waiahole, Ka'alaea, Waihe'e, Kahalu'u, He'eia, and Kane'ohē. Each ahupua'a includes the water portion of the bay, which extends seaward to the barrier reef boundary.

Ko'olaupoko supported one of the largest populations in the islands prior to the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1778, as there were an estimated 10,000+ people residing there. They created a society and a system that enabled the land and the sea to meet and provide all their needs. Facts show that streams were diverted to form 'auwai (irrigation ditches) for taro cultivation, and at least 30 loko i'a (fishponds) along the bay were constructed to provide stocks of fish when ocean fishing was poor. According to records, Ko'olaupoko may have been O'ahu's most agriculturally productive region at the time, yielding enormous quantities of kalo (taro), 'uala (sweet potato), 'ulu (breadfruit), and mai'a (banana). This may have been due to the availability of large quantities of fresh water from constantly-flowing springs located high in the mountains. This made the land highly prized and very productive.

The earliest historical recollections have it that Kahahana was the first ruler of the island of O'ahu, and it is said that he "sometimes lived in Kane'ohē." Kahahana was then defeated by Kahekili in 1783, and it is recorded that Kahekili claimed residences for he and his famous warriors in Ko'olaupoko, at Kailua, Kane'ohē, and He'eia. Then in 1795 Kamehameha the Great conquered O'ahu, and as a result of Ko'olaupoko's beauty and riches, he chose to keep the ahupua'a of Kane'ohē and He'eia as his personal property, while apportioning the other parts of O'ahu to his warrior chiefs and counselors. As Kamehameha I grew old and passed on, most of the ahupua'a of Kane'ohē and all of Kahalu'u and Kualoa were then inherited by his sons, Liholiho (Kamehameha II) and Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III). Liholiho's reign as king of Hawai'i was brief, for he passed away in 1824 at the young age of 27 from an illness. It was during Liholiho's reign though, that the first foreigners acquired lands in the Ko'olaupoko district. In 1821, a Spaniard by the name of Don Francisco DePaula Marin was awarded some of the lands of the Kane'ohē ahupua'a by King Liholiho personally. (Marin was a loyal servant and advisor to Kamehameha I, II, and III.) When Kauikeaouli became the next king, he appointed Luini Liliha as governess of O'ahu, but her role as governess of the entire island lasted only about a year. (She was involved in a coup attempt which failed.) Her removal from office was only a partial one though, as

records show that Liliha maintained her role as governess over the Ko`olaupoko district until the mid 1830's. Liliha needed an assistant to help her with the administration of Ko`olaupoko for Kamehameha III, so she appointed Kaiakoili to be the konohiki (supervisor) of the entire Ko`olaupoko district.

As time passed and Kauikeaouli died (1854), his wife Queen Kalama became the heir over much of the lands of He`eia and Kane`ohe. In Dennis M. Devaney's book Kane`ohe – A History of Change, records showed that "Queen Hakaleleponi Kapakuhaili Kalama and high chief Abner Paki (Bernice Pauahi's father) were awarded the largest portions of these 2 ahupua`a. Queen Kalama received title to 9500 acres, and Abner Paki received 3737 acres (which included the He`eia portion of Mokapu Peninsula)."

Regarding other early foreigners and their acquisition of land in Ko`olaupoko, records show that the Reverend Benjamin Parker and his family, under the protection of the high chiefess Liliha, settled in Kane`ohe in 1834 to open up the Kane`ohe Mission Station. And in 1848, the Great Mahele (land division) took place, where the King divided the kingdom's lands into parcels to be owned by the crown, the government, and the high chiefs. Don Marin's son, Paul Francis Manini, was able to purchase some of this land from his father during this time as well. The period of the Great Mahele was instrumental for the commoners too, as several hundred Hawaiians all received a land parcel not larger than 10 acres each.

Agricultural growth in Ko`olaupoko: Sugarcane was introduced to Ko`olaupoko in 1865, when the Kingdom's minister of finance and foreign affairs, Charles Coffin Harris, partnered with Queen Kalama to begin a partnership known as the Kane`ohe Sugar Company. After Queen Kalama passed away in 1870, Mr. Harris purchased the land from her estate to continue the sugar production, which, by 1880, was yielding as much as 500 tons of sugar annually. At about this time, the He`eia Agricultural Company (H.A.C.) was also cultivating about 250 acres of sugarcane, and had hired more than 140 laborers (mostly Asian immigrants) to work the fields and the sugar mill. To transport the sugar, H.A.C. built a pier in Kane`ohe Bay (He`eia Kea pier) so that rail cars could take the sugar out to ocean vessels for transportation to Honolulu harbor. The ocean steamer "J.A. Cummins", owned by John Adams Cummins of the Waimanalo Sugar Plantation Company, made trips twice a week between He`eia and Honolulu, exporting sugar and returning with supplies and goods. John Adams Cummins (1835 – 1913) was a friend and confidant of King David Kalakaua.

After almost four decades of a thriving sugar industry in Ko`olaupoko, the tide eventually turned bad and saw the closures of all five sugar plantations by 1903. The closures were due to poor soil, uneven lands, and the start-up of sugar plantations in `Ewa, which were seeing much higher yields.

As sugar was on its way out in Ko`olaupoko, rice crops began to emerge as the next thriving industry. The demand for rice in Hawai`i increased as the number of Asian sugar workers migrating to the islands from Japan and China increased. In the upland areas of Kane`ohe and He`eia, Chinese farmers converted terraces and abandoned taro patches (lo`i) to rice paddies. They also used a vast network of `auwai (irrigation ditches) to turn previously unused marshlands and valleys into thriving ricefields. From the 1880's to the 1920's, Waihe`e, Waiahole, Waikane, Kahalu`u, He`eia, and Kane`ohe all had intensive rice fields, along with several rice mills. Two rice mills were built in Kane`ohe, one next to the Waikalua River and the other one next to Kane`ohe Stream. The water from the river was used to turn the water wheel, which ground the rice for the workers and farmers. It was recorded that the introduction of rice birds and rice borers, along with the growth of the California rice industry in the early 1900's together combined to end the rice industry in Hawai`i.

Another agricultural crop, pineapples, emerged throughout Ko`olaupoko in the early 1900's as sugar and rice steadily declined. From 1901 to 1925 lands in several ahupua`a previously unused for agriculture were now being covered up with pineapple fields, especially the hillsides and upslopes. It was estimated that approximately 2500 acres of land throughout the Ko`olaupoko region was converted to pineapple cultivation. A pineapple cannery along with numerous old-style plantation houses popped up in 1911, and became known as "Libbyville" (named after its owners, Libby, McNeill, and Libby). The pineapple industry in Ko`olaupoko did not prosper as well as those on the `Ewa plains of central O`ahu though, and the result was the closure of the cannery in 1923. Accounts have it that the pineapple fields were attacked by various diseases, and some old Hawaiian residents claimed that the diseases occurred as a direct result of the destruction of at least five sacred sites (heiau) in the area, one of them being the well-known Kukuio Kane heiau, (once located in today's Haiku Plantations subdivision).

After the closure of the cannery, the pineapple fields were left to grow over and was then converted to grazing pasture land for cattle. As the cattle grazed, much of the ground cover was destroyed, which led to soil erosion and the accumulation of sediment in the Bay. By the mid 1920's, large landholdings were converted to ranch land, such as the Judd Family's Kualoa Ranch, the McFarlane Family's Dairy in Ahuimanu, and the ranch lands of the Kane`ohe Ranch Company, which was originally a part of 20,000 acres belonging to Queen Kalama. Tutu kanes and tutu wahines who were around at the turn of the 20th century talked of a time when the entire shoreline of Kane`ohe Bay was once pristine white sand and functional fishponds. But the destruction of vegetation and the increase in economic development led to the demise of this beautiful piece of coastline.

The ranch lands and its use for feeding cattle were only the beginning of the erosion process in the region though, as evidence showed that the bulk of soil run-off was attributed to a growing population and the need for residential development. Using land for homes in Ko`olaupoko was on a slow but steady incline during the early 1900's, as families trickled over from the mainland and other parts of O`ahu. But a tremendous surge occurred in the late 1950's, as roads leading into the area from Honolulu were greatly improved. The original Pali Trail, which was treacherous and hazardous in various places, was improved several times and finally made safe for horses and wagons in 1861. By the early 1900's automobiles were coming over the Pali for Sunday outings, and by May 1957 the first of two tunnels on the Pali Road from Nu`uanu Valley were opened. Also in 1957, bids for an additional trans-Ko`olau freeway were solicited and the construction of the Likelike Highway (named after Miriam Kapili Likelike, sister of King David Kalakaua) began. Completion of the Wilson Tunnel and the new Likelike Highway came in November 1960, which resulted in much more people visiting and moving to the windward side of O`ahu. The new roads and tunnels allowed motorists to travel along much safer routes too, which meant less accidents and faster travel times.

Destruction of the land from growth and development: As if the erosion and soil run-off were bad enough, the improved roads and insurgence of a growing population brought additional woes to Ko`olaupoko: the destruction of ancient fishponds. Of the 30 original loko `i`a (fishponds) in Kane`ohe Bay, only 12 remain today. The need for land took precedent, so tons of fill material was dredged from the bay and used to fill many of these loko `i`a. Even as recent as 1960, several loko `i`a along the shores of Kane`ohe Bay suffered destruction in order to make room for residential development. Of importance though, are reports which state that although some dredging of Kane`ohe Bay was used for the development of residential space, the bulk of all reef material dredged up was used for the construction of the Naval Station at Mokapu

Peninsula. The Bishop Museum's report of a study done in 1976 concluded: "When all of the data are examined probably the most devastating event in the history of Kane`ohe Bay was the dredging of the reefs between 1939 and 1950." The dredging and development of the Naval Station was due, of course, to the Japanese infiltrations taking place throughout the Pacific at this time. The secretary of the Navy concluded that a naval station must be built on Mokapu Peninsula, so construction began in late 1938.

Throughout the 2nd World War period, the presence of coastline artillery weapons were emplaced at various points around Ko`olaupoko for defensive measures. One was at the boundary line between Kane`ohe and Kailua's ahupua`a, another one was placed on the slopes of Pu`u Papa`a in Kailua, others were at Kualoa Point and on the slopes of Pu`u Kanehaolani in Kualoa, and still others were built at several locations on the Mokapu Peninsula. A temporary railway was laid down on the shoreline of the entire peninsula so that railroad cannons could be moved back and forth wherever it was needed. In addition to the gun batteries, four powerful searchlights were put in place to light up the night sky over the bay. It is said that residents of Ko`olaupoko grew accustomed to these searchlights, which turned nighttime into day.

After the war, more changes took place as the once-rural town of Kane`ohe transitioned from an agricultural community to a bustling suburb of Honolulu. James B. Castle High and Intermediate Schools were the first public schools to appear in Ko`olaupoko, when ground was broken in 1949 and the school was completed in 1951. Also in 1949, the Kane`ohe Naval Air Station was downgraded to "Caretaker" status and military personnel were reduced to a few security troops. In 1952 the First Marine Brigade took possession of the base from the Navy, and it was activated as Marine Corps Air Station Kane`ohe.

As is customary with any region's growth, the need for schools became a primary concern. Following Castle's schools in the Kane`ohe district, He`eia Elementary School opened its doors in 1960. Next came Kapunahala Elementary School in 1962, and when the grounds of the old naval radio station in He`eia were acquired by the State, King Intermediate and High School was built there and opened its doors in 1965. Finally in 1967 Puohala Elementary School was built and opened its doors in the area near the new BayView Par-3 Golf Course.

Ko`olaupoko's first shopping center, Windward City Shopping Center, broke ground and opened its doors in 1961, with Foodland as the main concessionaire. Next came the Kane`ohe Bay Shopping Center, which began serving the public in 1972. And finally the construction of Windward Mall began in late 1979, contributing to major changes in the old town of Kane`ohe and the disappearance of many small "mom and pop" stores lining both sides of Kamehameha Highway.

Finally, the annual autumn Kane`ohe event of crabbing and clamdigging in the shallows of Kane`ohe Bay came to a halt in 1969 because of pollution in the bay. It was written in a newspaper article that, "Never again would observers witness the sight of hundreds of enthusiastic clamdiggers and crabbers mucking around in the shallows."

Appendix D: Historical Data related to Ko'olaupoko

Bibliography:

Devaney, Dennis M., et al, *Kane`ohe – A History of Change*, Bess Press Inc., 2nd Edition, January 1982.

Dorrance, William H., *The History of Kaneohe – Part 1 (Before 1778 to 1850)*, published in the *Windward Oahu News*, May 1993.

Dorrance, William H., *The History of Kaneohe – Part 2 (1850 to the 1920's)*, published in the *Windward Oahu News*, June 1993.

Dorrance, William H., *The History of Kaneohe – Part 3 (1913 to 1945)*, published in the *Windward Oahu News*, July 1993.

Dorrance, William H., *Post-War Kaneohe (1949 to Present)*, published in the *Windward Oahu News*, October 1993.

Friends of Kane`ohe Library, "Kane`ohe A Glimpse of the Past," a pamphlet publication (not dated).