

# Within The Sound of Kapalua Bay

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An online magazine dedicated to the Hawaiian history of Honokahua Maui, the ancient land division that became Kapalua Resort



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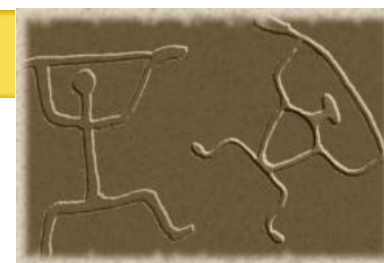
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## Fallen Warriors at Honokahua:

November , 2007

### *Two Brothers' Battle for Maui in 1738*



The most prominent mention of Honokahua in primary source Hawaiian history books is in Samuel Kamakau's account of Maui civil war battles in 1738, when, after the death of King Kekaulike, Mo'i of Maui, rule of Maui was contested by his two sons. In fact, the battle staged at Honokahua, resulted in hundreds of dead warriors from Maui, Hawai'i and O'ahu, which are interred in the Honokahua Preservation Site in front of the Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua. This is the story of two brothers' battle for rule of Maui. Were the dying wishes of their father manifested?

Ancient Hawaiian koa warfare consisted of small projectiles, such as sling stones and javelin-type spears, plus hand to hand combat with knives, daggers, clubs, and slicing weapons made from stone, wood, bone, and shell. Specialized lua warriors could overpower enemies with bone-breaking wrestling when weapons failed. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that foreigners brought firearms to Hawai'i.

### *Decades of Civil War*

1738 was over fifty years before Kamehameha the Great united the Hawaiian Kingdom and declared a lasting peace, and Hawaii was in the midst of a century of civil war which devastated population and natural resources of every island. Chiefs appointed as stewards of the land became warlords, feuding and contesting one another for ever-dwindling spoils. A common practice that often led to skirmishes was the ruling chiefs' habit of appointing one heir to the care of family gods and war gods, but appointing another to operational rule of land, resources, and commoners. It was reasonable to make one heir Kahuna or priest and another Ali'i 'ai Moku or Ruling Chief, and thereby consolidate all power under one family, but the obvious attraction of patent rule caused problems. According to this custom, on his deathbed in 1738, King Kekaulike, the Mo'i of Maui, named his young son Kamehamehanui ruling Mo'i or King of Maui. [Kamehamehanui is not the famous Kamehameha the Great (c1758 – 1819), but his uncle]

### *King Kekaulike's Sons Face Off*

Unfortunately, King Kekaulike's older son, Ka Uhi 'Ai Moku a Kama, (whose name contains the expression meaning ruling chief), thought little of his spiritual inheritance. During the construction of Wailehua Heiau

at Mākilo, Lāhainā, Ka Uhi's priest Pina'au suggested, "Le *Strategic Battle Perspective* for the stong is to establish themselves upon the land. Go |

this counsel, Ka Uhi soon took up arms against his brother. 1. Alapa'i takes Lāhainā, Ka Uhi retreats to rule of Maui. The battle began in Lāhainā. the West Maui Mountains

### *Uncle Alapa'i of Hawai'i Tries to Intervene*

Alapa'inui, a famous warrior and high chief of Hawai'i Isla. 3. Pele'ioholani meets Alapa'i at Honokowai to Maui to intercede and negotiate a truce. His wise plan v4. Alapa'i retreats to Kekaha with him, and leave Ka Uhi to rule Maui. If Ka Uhi had no5. Alapa'i strikes back at Honokahua listened to his uncle's plan with gratitude, since it gave hin6. Pele'ioholani pursues to Ukumehame military prowess of his uncle, listened to wicked counsel fr7. Ka Uhi taken by Alaka'i and drowned not come for peace, but wanted to take Maui for himself. 78. Pursuit to the last confrontation at Pu'unene brother in peace and listening to their offer, Ka Uhi attack them to fleeing back to Hawai'i.

red = Alapa'i and Kamehamehanui Forces

black= Pele'ioholani and Kauhi'aimokuakama Forces

triangle = encampment

There is a saying in Hawaiian that double waved line = engagement

one is wise to heed the call of ε

be a second chance, a second offer, or a second try. This was the case

with Alapa'i, KaUhi's elder; once rebuffed and disrespected, Alapa'i

did not offer compromise a second time.

### *Ka Uhi Trapped in the West Maui Mountians*

Soon Alapa'i and Kamehamehanui sailed back to Maui with a large flotilla of war canoes that landed on all the beaches from Ukumehame to Lāhainā. Warriors and stormed Lāhainā, causing Ka Uhi and his men to flee up Kahoma and Kaua'ula streams into the ravines of the West Maui Mountains. Alapa'i's men sought to flesh them out by destroying Lāhainā's irrigation systems and taro farms. Trapped in the mountains and outnumbered, Ka Uhi sent a secret envoy to O'ahu to entreat and beg military assistance from another uncle, the great military chief Pele'ioholani, and arch enemy of Alapa'i.

### *Uncle Pele'ioholani comes to Ka Uhi's Aid*

Finding no greater pleasure than to challenge his rival Alapa'i and perhaps gain rule of Maui into the bargain, Pele'ioholani, with 640 of his choicest koa warriors, sailed to West Maui. He knew that Lāhainā would be a hard fight; Alapa'i had had destroyed the farms and fresh water sources of Lāhainā, and now had over 8,000 men from six districts of Hawai'i guarding access to land and sea from Olowalu to Honokowai. Therefore, he sailed north and set up camp at Honokahua and Honolua, where water and food were plentiful. In addition, these protected bays were defensible, and any raid from the south could be seen at a great distance from the ridge above Hāwea Point. His expert strategy was to divert Alapa'i's troops, thereby giving Ka Uhi's forces a chance to fight their way back down to Lāhainā. The uphill advantage plus Pele'ioholani's men pushing from the beach left the possibility of squashing Alapa'i in the middle.

### *Attack at Honokowai; Retaliation at Honokahua*

Pele'ioholani first struck a small division of Alapa'i's men guarding Honokowai stream, where the battle resulted in heavy losses on both sides. Alapa'i retreated to Kekaha (now Black Rock), regrouped and attacked Pele'ioholani's camp in Honokahua, a bold move. Hundreds of O'ahu and Hawaii warriors fell at Honokahua, and were buried in the sand dunes. A majority of the individuals interred at the Honokahua Preservation Site in front of the Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua are Alapa'i's and Pele'ioholani's warriors slain in the 1738 battle at Honokahua.

### *Pele'ioholani Pursues Alapa'i South to Pu'unene \**

Pele'ioholani was not ready to lay down arms. His canoes pushed south and pursued Alapa'i past Lāhainā, to Ukumehame, and around the pali to Ma'alaea, and all the way to the East Maui isthmus plains of Pu

'unene. During the pursuit, a small band of Alapa'i's men ambushed and captured Ka Uhi's canoe. By order of Alapa'i, Ka Uhi was drowned and the insult to Alapa'i was paid in full with Ka Uhi's life. However, as with many wars, although much blood was spilled on both sides, and the warriors still desired to press in. By the time the two sides were spent in Pu'unene, another 800 valiant men to died. Then the two great commanders, Alapa'i and Pele'ioholani, left standing in the blood of their men, faced one another with no more reason to fight, and every reason to lay down their weapons. They gave up the fight, not in consolation, but in grief.

King Kekaulike wisely chose his younger son for rule, and his wish, though contested, was made manifest. Was his mana at work? Were the gods in this battle, or was it just that Ka Uhi's envy come to back to destroy him? In any case, this victory by the forces of Hawaii now set up Kamehamehanui as the King of Maui, an ancestor of a great warrior of Hawaii who would bear his name and come to rule all of Hawaii, Kamehameha the Great.

Even now, a hundred and seventy years later, bones of the fallen warriors of 1738 are still found in the sandy soil at Pu'unene, and Honokahua.

**\*Note:** The Map above was created based on accounts by Fornander and Kamakau which give different names for the site of the last battle. Fornander places the final confrontation in Lāhainā at Kekaha, but Kamakau's version says, "Pu'unene." In a recent study of old West Maui Maps, historian Jill Engledow, author of *Island Life 101: A Newcomer's Guide to Hawai'i* discovered a West Maui location near Kehaha, called Pu'unene. Therefore, both primary sources are in fact correct, and the 8th step of the war, after Ka Uhi was killed, was movement of troops to West Maui's Pu'unene section of Ka'anapali for the last stand.

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"Fallen Warriors of Honokahua" ©Katherine Kama'ema'e Smith 2007

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