

Within The Sound of Kapalua Bay

Copyright 2007 Honu Publications

HOME AUTHOR EVENTS 'Olelo Hawai'i ORDERS Book BLOG Contact Us EZINE

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

Archives

[Hawea Point](#)

The Ahupua'a of Honokahua

June 2007

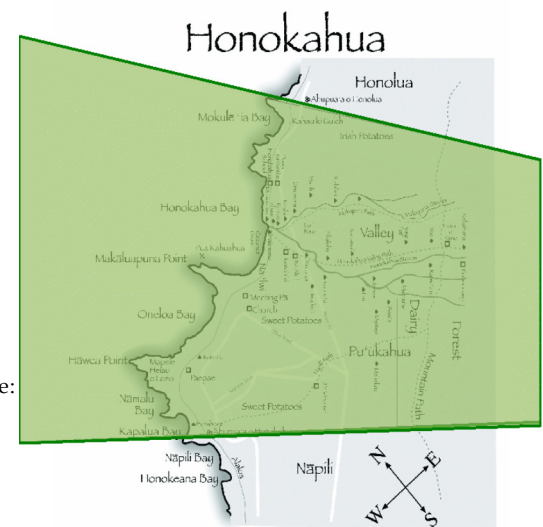
Honokahua is the name of the ancient land division where much of Kapalua Resort now stands. Honokahua is not just a vacation destination, but a land habited by Hawaiians since 800A.D. In ancient Hawai'i, each island was divided into several moku or districts, each under the rule of Ali'i 'Ai Moku, high chiefs who were the trusted companions of the Mō'i or king of each island. These Ali'i Ai Moku played roles not unlike our state governors. Each moku was further divided into many land divisions called ahupua'a, and each was ruled by an Ali'i 'Ai Ahupua'a, a chief responsible for the livelihood of the commoners and accountable for producing and gathering the provender of the land for his district Ali'i 'Ai Moku and island King.

An ahupua'a was a wedge-shaped slice of the island, extending from the summit of the island's highest peak, and spreading downhill to the sea beyond the shore, thus insuring each chief and his people all the necessities of life: hardwood and herbs of the high forest, vegetables from the arable lower slopes, fresh water from mountain streams, and fish and shellfish from adjacent fishing grounds.

Honokahua stretched from the summit of Pu'u Kukui to the shoreline between what is now the Bay Club Restaurant on the south to the edge of Mokulē'ia Bay, past the Plantation Estates. Honokahua had two running streams, Honokahua and Mokupe'a, broad slopes where the main crop was sweet potato, and Honokahua Bay, which served as the port the Ka'anapali Moku.

In ancient times, the paved Alaloa footpath constructed by King Pi'ilani and son King Kihapi'ilani, circumvented Maui. Along the Alaloa, the boundary of each ahupua'a land division was marked by a pile of boulders called the "ahu" shrine. Today, the lower road approximates the track of the Alaloa. The ahu marking the end of Napili and the beginning of Honokahua would have been on the rise north of the entrance to the Bay Club. During the harvest season, the ahu was adorned with a rough-hewn wooden pig's head painted with red ochre honoring the pig demigod, Kamapua'a.

Honokahua and Mokupe'a joined in a "halawai" roughly equivalent to "bottom land", where taro was cultivated. . Ultimately, the stream estuary ran into the sea near the north end of Fleming Beach Park. The streambeds are dry now because the water is diverted for agriculture, but after a storm, Honokahua and Mokupe'a streams run again, cutting a channel to the sea.



united the Hawaiian Kingdom, Kamehameha gave rule of Honokahua to his warrior chief Hū'eu, Isaac Davis. Isaac Davis was one of two British seamen captured by Kamehameha I in 1790, who later manned the cannon called "Lopaka" at the Battle of Kepaniwai at ʻĪao Valley. Both Davis and Young were welcomed into Kamehameha's Kingdom first as warriors and later as high chiefs. They also took royal Hawaiian wives. Their roles as governors and administrators of foreign trade had a profound effect on Kamehameha I and the westernization of Hawai'i.

High chiefs often hired trusted land managers called konohiki to oversee the lands they ruled. After Isaac Davis died in 1810, John Young hired konohiki to rule Honokahua until Davis's children could be assume rule. At Young's death in 1835, Honokahua was formally "willed" to Sarah "Kale" Davis, Isaac Davis's oldest daughter, whose mother was Nākai Nalimaālua, a chiefess of Hawai'i who descended from King Pi'ilani of Maui.

ropes and fishing nets, bananas, coconut, ʻulu (breadfruit), arrowroot, ʻawa (kava kava), kukui, mountain apple, and medicinal herbs. The Hawaiians bred hogs, chickens, and dogs as sources of protein and hunted wild birds. They also fished shellfish, net fish, and game fish.

Most of the old place names of northwest Maui have been preserved: Waihe'e, Kahakuloa, Honokōhau, Honolua, Honokahua, Nāpili, Māhinahina, Alaeloa, Mailepai, Kahana, and Honokōwai. Collectively, these ahupua'a made up the moku district called Kā'anapali, "divided cliffs," which included all the land from Keka'a (Black Rock) to Waiehu. In the early part of this century, the Kā'anapali name was lost when the moku was merged with Lahaina Moku.

Today the Kā'anapali name is used only for the Amfac Resort in Lahaina.

It is not known which of King Kahekili's chiefs ruled Honokahua before Kamehameha took Maui, but after he united the Hawaiian Kingdom, Kamehameha gave rule of Honokahua to his warrior chief Hū'eu, Isaac Davis. Isaac Davis was one of two British seamen captured by Kamehameha I in 1790, who later manned the cannon called "Lopaka" at the Battle of Kepaniwai at ʻĪao Valley. Both Davis and Young were welcomed into Kamehameha's Kingdom first as warriors and later as high chiefs. They also took royal Hawaiian wives. Their roles as governors and administrators of foreign trade had a profound effect on Kamehameha I and the westernization of Hawai'i. High chiefs often hired trusted land managers called konohiki to oversee the lands they ruled. After Isaac Davis died in

In written testimony before the 1847 Land Commission, George Hū'eu Davis, Kale's half brother, stated that while he was living on Hawai'i, his sisters [Kale and Peke] "preferred to live on Maui." Later in 1855, Kamehameha IV Alexander Liholiho granted Kale Davis a Royal Patent of Confirmation for Honokahua.

At Kale's death in 1867, she willed her land to her six dear children "ku'u keiki", some of whom were living at Honokahua. Over the next 25 years, the land was sold to various persons, one of whom was Henry Perrine Baldwin, youngest son of Dr. Dwight Baldwin.

In 1894, Baldwin bought the last 3/10 share

of Honokahua from Kale's grandson, William Halstead, and his wife, Lameka. The ahupua'a was once again under the management of one person, and Baldwin made it a part of his new Honolua Ranch cattle operation.

Despite centuries of farming and grazing, there are a few archeological features still visible at Honokahua. The protected burial grounds are visible from the walkway in front of the Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua. Entrance to these sacred grounds is forbidden. A grinding stone used by ancient Hawaiians for honing tools and weapons may be seen on the Ritz lawn.

The Paepae fishing lookout is on the property of the Ridge Villas at Kapalua, and easily accessible by asking at the Ridge homeowners' office.

Honokahua is not just a vacation destination. It is ancestral Hawaiian land, populated since 800AD. Tread carefully and listen. The presence of the ancestors whispers in the wind.

* * *