

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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Honokahua Bay: A favorite bay of King Pi'ilani July, 2007

"The Bay at the Ritz" and "The Bay at Fleming Beach Park" are modern monikers for the largest bay of northwest Maui, Honokahua Bay. In ancient times this bay, north of Makāluapuna Point was the port for all northwest Maui.

Exploring the Name Honokahua

Mary Kawena Pukui translates Honokahua place name as "foundation bay." **Hono** is a suffix word that refers to the low land between two ridges. In the upland, a valley is usually called ke awāwa, and a valley with a running stream is called ke kahawai, but at the mouth of the valley, where the lowland forms a crescent at the shore and ridges end in points that jut into the sea, the term is hono. Therefore, some bays are rightly named hono and some are not.

Kahua is a word meaning "foundation" or an open place for camping or sports. It was often used as a term for an encampment of warriors. The broad flat slopes above Honokahua Bay might have been used for some of these activities. We know that in the battles of 1738, Alapa'i camped his Hawai'i Island troops at Honokahua, and some of the fighting occurred here. Many fallen warriors are buried at the Honokahua Preservation Site above the bay. In all of Ka'ānapali district, these foundation lands of Honokahua were probably the most suitable for Makahiki games.



Six Bays of King Pi'ilani

In northwest Maui, the district the ancients called Ka'ānapali there are six hono bays, which are legendary: from South to North, Honokōwai (bay drawing fresh water), Honokeana (cave bay), Honokahua, Honolua (two bays), Honokōhau (bay drawing dew), and Hononānā (aggressive bay). Collectively, these picturesque and productive bays are called **Na Hono A Pi'ilani**, The Bays of Pi'ilani. King Pi'ilani, who ruled Maui in the early 16th century, loved these bays and frequently came here with his court to relax, fish, and surf. It was a common practice of Hawaiian Kings to take a large retinue of family, advisors, and punahele (favored companions) to a special place, stay as long as the local provisions lasted and then move on to another spot.



The Lasting Legacy of King Pi'ilani

Beloved King Pi'ilani is famous for constructing the Alaloa, a footpath that encircled West Maui. This paved walkway, wide enough to accommodate eight warriors walking abreast, was lined with small boulders. Parts of the original Alaloa are visible in Honolua valley and above Route 30 as it crosses the Pali to Ma'alaea. In our Ka'anapali district and in Lahaina district, Lower Honoapi'ilani Road and parts of Route 30 (Honoapi'ilani Highway) near the beach approximately trace the route of the ancient Alaloa. King Pi'ilani's name and his love for these bays of Ka'anapali are commemorated in the names of these modern roads. After King Pi'ilani's death, his son Kihapi'ilani ruled Maui and extended the Alaloa to encircle East Maui as well.

In *The Love Remains*, Honokahua Bay was the hub of the fishing village and site of the Makahiki celebration. What came to light after the book was published is that Sarah Kani'aulono Davis, the last Hawaiian to rule Honokahua, was descended from King Pi'ilani through Kihapi'ilani. Sarah's mother, [Nakai Lima'alu'alu](#) of Hawai'i was from this famous ali'i blood line. Click on Nakai's name to see her family tree. This pedigree is based on mele from the Keko'olani family archives, compiled and preserved by Dean Pua Keko'olani, who descends from Sarah Kani'aulono Davis, and also from a line of royal Ku'auhau, Hawaiian genealogists. How fitting that Sarah was given rule of one of King Pi'ilani's Bays, and how precious that a present day descendant of Pi'ilani shares this truth with us.

Honokahua Bay Today

Three landmarks face Honokahua Bay, Honokahua Preservation Site, a sacred Hawaiian burial site, The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua, and D.T. Fleming Beach Park. The entire beach is public, as are all beaches in Hawai'i, and because ocean currents here can be dangerous, Life Guards are on duty every day. For a detailed description of this beach and Honokahua inshore waters provided by Hawai'i Life Guard Association, click here:

<http://oceansafety.soest.hawaii.edu/?i=maui&bch=fleming&shid=6>

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