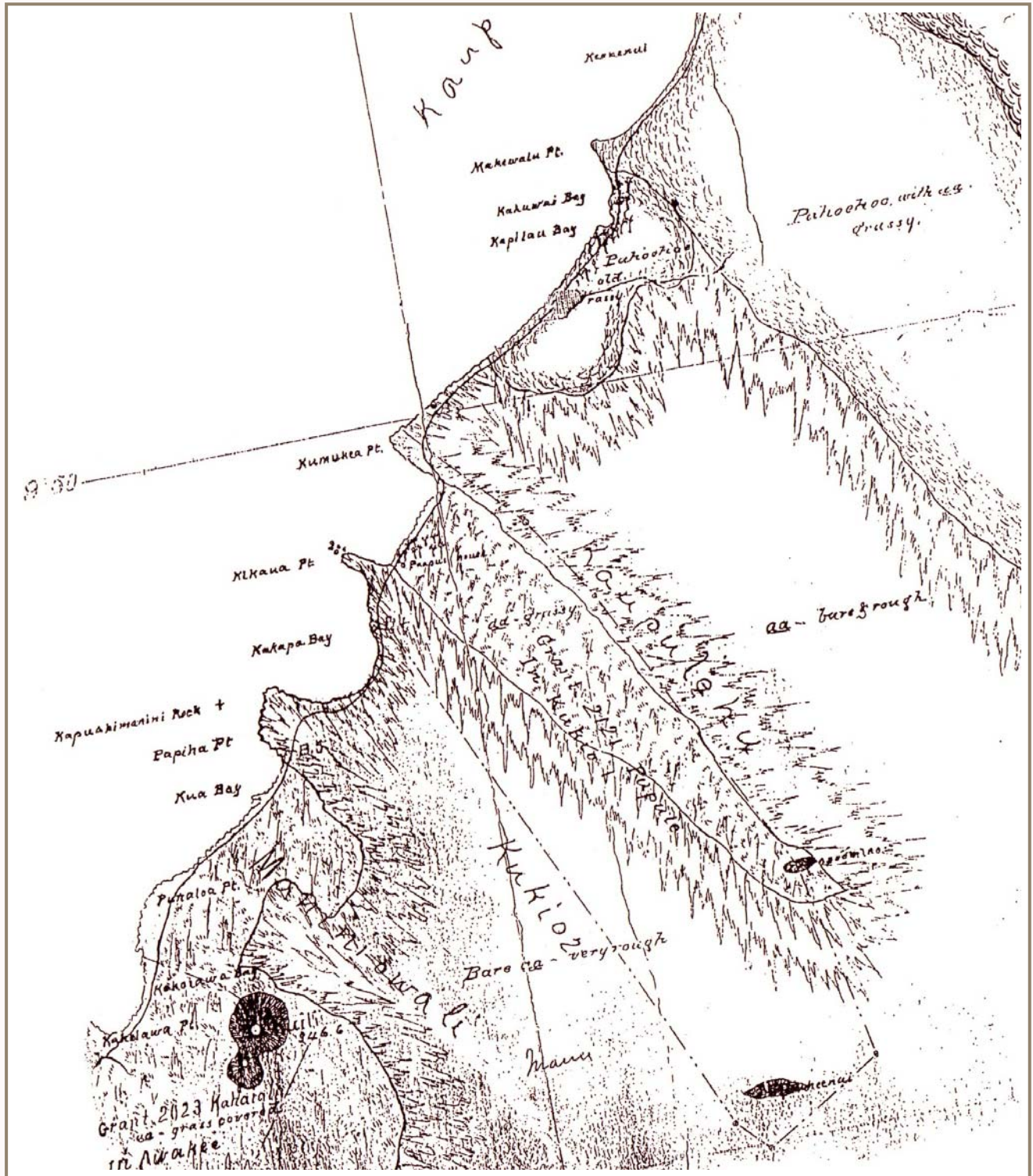


NĀ KŪKĪ'O MA KA 'ĀINA KAHA: A COLLECTION OF TRADITIONAL AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF KŪKĪ'O AT KEKAHA, NORTH KONA



Kumu Pono Associates LLC

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AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF
KŪKI‘O AT KEKAHA, NORTH KONA
(TMK 7-2-04:5)**

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DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of Steven S.C. Lim, Esquire, cultural resources specialist, Kepā Maly (*Kumu Pono Associates*), prepared a study of archival documents and historical literature for the land of Kūki'ō nui (Kūki'ō 1st), and neighboring lands of the Kekaha region, North Kona District, Island of Hawai'i (TMK 7-2-04). Maly also conducted several oral history interviews and cites selected historical interviews as a part of the present study (oral history documentation is cited as a separate volume in *Appendix A* of this study). Unlike many studies undertaken in the State of Hawai'i, this study was not conducted as a part of a land use permitting process. It was undertaken as a result of the land owner's (developer's) interest in better understanding the history of the land, and their desire to develop a culturally sensitive interpretive/educational program for the people who will visit and/or reside at Kūki'ō in the future.

This study focuses on Kūki'ō and the larger Kekaha Region of which Kūki'ō is a part, and incorporates research and oral history interviews undertaken by Maly since the early 1990s to the present date. Documentation cited in this study was researched in both private and public collections, and includes — nineteenth century records of the Hawaiian Kingdom (such as government records of land tenure, roadways, public lands and public facilities); and native and foreign accounts authored in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (many of which have not received broad exposure in the past). H. Kihalani Springer also contributed the use of several historical photographs from the Kukui'ohiwai collection, to this study. The photographs are a significant contribution which provide visual reference to documentation recorded in the oral history interviews.

Historical Overview

The native accounts cited in this study provide readers with an understanding of traditional and customary practices and land use of the native families of Kūki'ō. The traditions share with readers how places were named, the kinds of activities which were associated with those places, and the intimate relationship shared by the families of the land with their natural environment. While not all questions are, or can be answered regarding the history and sites of Kūki'ō, through the native accounts, we can appreciate the various aspects of the landscape. It will be seen that some of the documentation is site specific (recorded for the immediate study area), while the larger body of documentation provides *ahupua'a*-specific documentation of sites, practices, and customs associated with the families and lands of Kūki'ō and the larger Kekaha region.

One of the important histories collected from a native resident of the Kūki'ō vicinity in the 1880s, tells us that Kamehameha I built (or rebuilt) a *heiau* (temple) on the shore of Kakapa Point, overlooking Kakapa Bay (in Kūki'ō iki, south of the present study area). From this small account (one line recorded by a Kingdom surveyor), we can perhaps begin to understand something of the diversity of sites in this once remote coastal area of the district of Kekaha. A variety of sites ranging from temporary shelters to high status residences, as well trails, planting areas, *ilina* (interments), enclosures, a sophisticated system of pond division walls, and ceremonial sites, have been recorded in Kūki'ō (cf. Walker and Rosendahl 1985, and Goodfellow, Jensen and Bower 1992). Additionally, the pond and

ocean fisheries of Kūki'ō were rich and highly valued. From these cultural and natural resources, we see that long-term residency occurred at Kūki'ō. It is likely that the native tenants who resided year-round at Kūki'ō, were always prepared to refurbish the residence of their *konohiki* (overlord) and *ali'i nui* (high chief) for such occasions as the visit of their king. Whether for fishing and surfing, or in ceremonial and ritual observances, Kūki'ō, with its sheltered and watered bays, was one of the choice areas of Kekaha for royal retreat.

In the historical accounts of Kūki'ō, readers learn of transitions in residency, and efforts of the native families of the land to maintain their connection with their ancestral seaside home. By the late nineteenth century and in the early 1900s, residency had dwindled, and was generally limited to one family with additional seasonal visitation over extended periods. The native system of land use, resource stewardship, and collection of resources in which families traveled between the coastal settlements and the upland agricultural fields and residences, changed to a new economic system which focused on ranching and the transfer of currency. Access to once important areas from the shore to uplands was restricted, and the families of the land dispersed to other locations where a few more people could gather together. By the early 1900s, the shores of Kūki'ō became a vacation retreat for the owners (some of whom shared common ancestors with the native residents of Kūki'ō), their friends and extended family, and ranch employees. Finally, the *kula* (plains) and coastal lands of Kūki'ō were sold in 1968. At this time, the new owners are working a way of incorporating the history and important aspects of the cultural and natural landscape into their plans for continued use of Kūki'ō.

Kama'āina Observations and Recommendations

The *kama'āina* (native children of the land – descendants of the native families of Kūki'ō) who participated in recent interviews as a part of this study, shared important personal and historical recollections, documentation on cultural-historical sites, and thoughts on care of both the natural and cultural resources of Kūki'ō. These thoughts include, but are not limited to the following paraphrased observations (for detailed accounts, see the interview transcripts in *Appendix A*):

- The *ilina* (ancestral burials) and traditional sites of the land are important to the native families. Care must be given to the sites associated with the *ilina*, and family members should be involved in long-term protection planning efforts.
- The *pā niu* (coconut grove) fronting Uluweuweu Bay, was an important natural resource to the families of the land. It was carefully tended, and protected from the ocean by an old wall (*pale kai*) on the beach side.
- Also within the *pā niu*, near the *loko wai* (ponds) were the *loulou* (*Pritchardia* palms) and *ulu hala* (pandanus groves) which were carefully tended and regularly harvested for weaving and thatching uses by the *kama'āina*. All of these plants (the *niu*, *loulou*, and *hala*) are very important to the families, and it is urged that an active program of stewardship and propagation be undertaken.
- The *loko wai* (ponds), including the *ki'o pua* and *ki'o 'ōpae 'ula* (fish-fry and shrimp ponds) were an integral part of the life and well being of the families who dwelt at Kūki'ō. The ponds were cared for, cleaned, deepened in places, and division walls made in them to promote water circulation and fish propagation. Individuals who work on the

ponds and neighboring features should consult with *kama'āina* of Kūki'o to ensure that the resources are properly cared for and restored.

- The family members concur with selective interpretation and careful, monitored site visitation to those sites at which visitation is appropriate. In general, it is suggested that site stabilization be done. While discussions of “restoration” were cautious, due to the fact that the knowledge of specific site functions and form, is limited. Also, it is urged that the carrying capacities of the cultural and natural resources be carefully monitored. There may be times when visitation or wide spread resource collection or use is inappropriate.

Me ka mahalo –

E nā kūpuna, nā mākuā, nā keiki o ka 'āina, a me nā hoaloha, iā 'oukou pākāhi a pau — Mahalo nui i ko 'oukou lokomaika'i a me ka ho'olauna pū 'ana me ka 'oukou ho'omana'o 'ana a me ka mana'o kuhikuhi 'ana no kēia mo'olelo 'āina no Kūki'o ma ka 'āina kaha. Iā 'oukou (ma ka helu pī'āpā):

Karin Haleamau, Kinoulū Kahananui, David a me Robert Keākealani (a me ka 'ohana), Caroline Kiniha'a Keākealani-Pereira, Tessa Magoon-Dye, Joseph Pu'ipu'i Maka'ai, Robert Ka'iwa Punihaole (me ka 'ohana), Kihalani Springer; a me ka nui o nā kūpuna i hala aku nei, akā ke mau nei nō ma ka mana'o a me ka pu'uwai —

Mahalo a nui!

A ke nonoi ha'aha'a aku nei au iā 'oukou – O ka mea maika'i mālama, o ka mea maika'i 'ole, kāpae 'ia.

Me ka ha'aha'a a me ke aloha – Kepā Maly

A'ohē hana nui ke alu 'ia (It is no great task when done together by all)

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