

# Legendary Places in Honolulu

By Rev. W. D. Westervelt.

Hono-lulu is a name made by the union of the two words Hono and lulu. Mr. Curtis J. Lyons says it means "Sheltered Hollow." Mr. George Ainoa, an old Hawaiian, says that "Hono" means "abundance" and "lulu" means "calm" or "peace" or "abundance of peace." The navigator who gave the definition "Fair Haven" was out of the way inasmuch as the name does not belong to a harbor, but to a district having "abundant calm."

Hono-lulu, however, was probably a name given to a very rich district of taro land and fish ponds near what is now known as the junction of Liliha and School streets, because its chief was Honolulu, one of the high chiefs of the time of Kakuhihewa, according to the legends. Kamakau, the Hawaiian historian, describes old Honolulu thus: "Hono-lulu was a small district, a pleasant land looking toward the west,—a fat land, with flowing streams and springs of water, abundant water for taro patches. Mists resting inland breathing softly on the flowers of the hala."

Kakuhihewa was a king of Oahu in the long, long ago and was so noted that for centuries the Island Oahu has been named after him—The Oahu of Kakuhihewa. He divided the island among his favorite chiefs and officers, who gave their names to the places received by them from the king. Thus what is now known as Honolulu was until the time of Kamehameha I almost always mentioned as "Kou," after the chief Kou, who was an "Iamuku," or "Marshall," under the king Kakuhihewa. "Kon" appears to have been a small district or, rather, a chief's group of houses and grounds, loosely defined as lying between Hotel street and the sea and between Nuuanu avenue and Alakea street.

Kapalama was the very tabu home of a chiefess of the time of this king, whose name was Kapalama.

Pu-o Waina, or Punchbowl, as the native name means, was a "hill of sacrifice" or "offering." Kamakau, a native historian of nearly fifty years ago, says: "Formerly there was an 'umu-ahi,' a fire oven, for burning men on this hill. Chiefs and common people were burned as sacrifices in that noted place. Men were brought for sacrifice from Kauai, Oahu, and Maui, but not from Hawaii. People could be burned in this place for violating the tabus of the tabu divine chiefs."

Part of an ancient chant concerning "Punchbowl" reads as follows: "O the raging tabu fire of Keaka, O the high ascending fire of the sacrifice! Tabu fire scattered ashes. Tabu fire spreading heat."

The great stone on the top of Punchbowl hill was "the place for burning men."

Ke-kal, o Bamala was the name of the surf which came in the outer entrance of the first Honolulu harbor. Mamala was a chiefess who loved to play Konane (Hawaiian checkers), drink awa, and ride the surf. Her first husband was the shark man Oaha, who later became a shark god, living outside the reefs of Walkiki and Koko Head. Her second husband was the chief of Hono-kau-pu, to whom the King gave the land east of the land of Kou. This land afterward bore the name of its chief, Hono-kau-pu. In this section of what is now called Ho-

no-lulu were several very interesting places.

Kewalo was the place where the Kauwa, a very low class of servants, were drowned by holding their heads under water, according to the law known as "Ke-kai-he-hee." Kewalo was also the nesting ground of the owl who was the cause of the battle between the owls and the King Kakuhihewa, wherein the owls from Kauai to Hawaii gathered together and defeated the forces of the king.

Ula-kua was the place where idols were made. This was near the lumber yards at the foot of the present Richards street.

Ke-kau-kukui was close to Ula-kua, and was the place where small konane (checker) boards were laid. These were flat stones with rows of little holes in which a game was played with black and white stones. Here Mamala and Oaha drank awa and played konane. Here also Kekunoo, father of Kamehameha V., built his home.

In "Hono-kau-pu" was one of the noted places for rolling the flat-sided stone disc known as the "maika" stone. This was not far from Richards and Queen streets, although the great "Ulu-maika" place for the gathering of the chiefs was in "Kou."

"Ka-ua-nono-ula," the "rain with the red rainbow," was the place in this district for the "wai-lua," or ghosts, to gather for their nightly games and sports. Under the shadows of the trees, near the present Hawaiian Board rooms at the junction of Alakea and Merchant streets, these ghosts made night a source of dread to all the people.

Another place in Honolulu for the gathering of ghosts was at the corner of King and Nuuanu.

Nuuanu Valley inland from Kou was full of interesting legendary places. The most interesting, however, is the little valley made by a mountain spur pushing its way out from the Kaili foothills into the larger valley, and bearing the name "Waalani," the wilderness home of the gods, and now the home of Honolulu's Country Club. This region belonged to the "ee-pa" people. These were almost the same as ill-shaped, deformed or injured gnomes of European fairy tales. And yet in this beautiful little valley which opened into Nuuanu Valley was the heiau Wal-lani built for Ka-hanai-ake Akua. "The chief brought up by the gods," long before the days of Kakuhihewa. It was said that the two divine caretakers of this chief were Kahano and Nawa, and that Kahano was the god who lay down on the ocean stretching out his hands until one rested on Kahiki (Tahiti) or some other foreign land) and the other rested on Oahu. Over his arms as a great bridge walked the "Menehune," or fairy people, to Oahu. They came to be servants for this young chief who was in the care of the gods. They built fish ponds and temples. They lived in Manoa Valley and on Punchbowl Hill. "Ku-leo-nui" (Ku with the loud voice) was their master. He could call them any evening. His voice was heard over all the island. They came at once and almost invariably finished each task before the rays of the rising sun drove them to their hidden resorts in forest or wilderness.

Wao-lahi heiau was the place where the noted legendary musical shell, "Kiha-pu," had its first home,—from which it was stolen by Kapuni and carried to its historic home in Waipio Valley, Hawaii. Below Wao-lani, cliff heights, the menehunes built the temple "Ka-he-iki" for the child nourished by the gods, and here the priest and prophet lived who founded the priest-clan called "Mo-o-kahuna," one of the most sacred clans of the ancient Hawaiians. Not far from this temple was the scene for the dramatic plea of an owl for her eggs when taken from Kewalo by a man who had found her nest. This is part of the story of the battle of the owls and the king.

Nearer the bank of the Nuuanu stream was the great breadfruit tree into which a woman took her husband by magic power when he was about to be slain and offered as sacrifice to the gods. This tree became one of the most powerful wooden gods of the Hawaiians, being preserved, I think, even to the times of Kamehameha I.

At the foot of Nuuanu Valley is "Pu-iwa," a place by the side of the Nuuanu stream. Here a father, Makoha, told his daughters to bury his body, that from it might come the "Wauke" trees, from which kapa-cloth has been pounded ever since.

From this place, the legend says the Wanke trees spread over all the islands.

In the bed over which the Nuuanu waters pour is the legendary stone called "The Canoe of the Dragon." This lies among the boulders in the stream not far from the old Kaumakapili Church premises.

In Nuuanu Valley was the fierce conflict between Kawelo, the strong man from Kauai, assisted by two friends, and a band of robbers. In this battle torn-up trees figured as mighty war-clubs.

These are legendary places which border Kou, the ancient Hono-lulu. Beside these are many more spots of great interest. In Kou itself was the noted Pakaka temple. This temple was standing on the western side of the foot of Fort street long after the fort was built, after which the street was named. It was just below the fort. Pakaka was owned by Kinau, the mother of Kamehameha V. It was a heiau built before the time of Kakuhihewa. In this temple the school of the priests of Oahu had its headquarters for centuries. The walls of the temple were adorned all around with heads of men offered in sacrifice.

Kou was probably the most noted "konane" place on Oahu. There was a famous large stone almost opposite the site of the temple. Here the chiefs gathered for many a game. Property and even lives were freely gambled away. The Spreckels building covers the site of this famous gambling resort.

One of the finest "Ulu-maika" places on the islands was the one belonging to Kou. This was a hard, smooth track about twelve feet wide extending from the corner on Merchant and Fort streets now occupied by the Bank of Hawaii along the seaward side of Merchant street to the place beyond Nuuanu avenue known as the old iron works at Ula-ko-heo.

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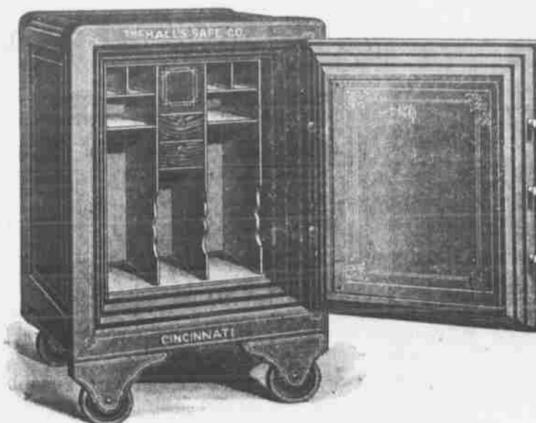
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