ANCIENT WAIALUA was the oracle center of O'ahu. With its extensive cultivated fields of *kalo* (taro), it was also considered the “*poi* bowl” of the island. Nothing much remains to remind us of its metaphysical glory and economic importance, but stories of its importance in history still survive.

The *moku*, or district, of Waialua is a large area of approximately 78 square miles and includes fourteen *ahu'pua'a* (subdistricts) from Ka'ena to Kawaiola. In 1887, the *ahu'pua'a* of Waimea was annexed to Waialua.

From the first Western view by Captain Clerke in 1779, Waialua was seen as a land with rich fertile soil. The oral traditions also tell of excellent fishing grounds and large fish ponds, and traditional literature tells of the beauty that surrounded Waialua. The chants created the mystic beauty that gave Hawaiians a special feeling for the environment: their *one hānau* (birthplace), the ‘āina (land) that connects them to the near and distant past.

A Timeless Land

The earliest known recorded view of the northwest coast of O'ahu was written by Captain Charles Clerke, a member of the crew that sailed with Captain James Cook during his voyage of discovery. After the fateful death of Cook at Kealakekua on Hawai'i island, the

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remaining crew of the ship *Resolution*, with Clerke in command, sailed toward O'ahu during the afternoon of Wednesday, February 24, 1779. On Saturday, the northeastern end of the island of O'ahu came into view. Sailing around the extreme northern point of the island (Kahuku), the ship entered Waimea Bay just to the west. Clerke remarked:

I stood into a Bay to the W[est]ward of this point the Eastern Shore of which was far the most beautifull Country we have yet seen among these Isles, here was a fine expanse of Low Land bounteously cloath'd with Verdure, on which were situate many large Villages and extensive plantations; at the Water side it terminated in a fine sloping, sand Beach. . . . This Bay, its Geographical situation consider'd is by no means a bad Roadsted, being shelterd from the NEbN SE[erly] to SWbW with a good depth of Water and a fine firm sandy Bottom, it lays on the NW side of this island of Wouahoo . . . surrounded by a fine pleasant fertile Country.

After a lavish show of the most genuine hospitality from the inhabitants, Clerke remarked further “that I in the least doubted their supply of Hogs &c, they certainly must abound in all these good things from the apparent great fertility of their Country, indeed both Pork & roots are to be got almost any where among this Cluster of Isles.” Hawaiians from the *ahu*puʻa of Waimea were perhaps the first inhabitants on O'ahu to have verbal contact with foreigners.

James King, a lieutenant with Captain Cook on the *Resolution* and later commander of the ship *Discovery* after August 1779, also wrote his impressions of this northwest end of O'ahu. His journal entry reads:

Sunday Feb' 28. After Noon bore away round the N[orth] end of the Island & running within a mile of the Shore, carrying regular Sounding . . . as we came nearer the Shore. The Appearance of so fine a river running thro: a deep Valley made us drop Anchor . . . . I walkd a little farther & observed it to be the produce of 2 branches, or small streams or rivers, that came down 2 Valleys, to the right of a remark-able & romantick [sic] bluff head, about 1/2 mile from the Sea. At the bottom of this flat swampy place, the bank of this river as well as the face of this NW [Northwest] part of Woahoo [O'ahu] was a beauti-
ful as any Island we have seen, & appear'd very well Cultivated & Popular; . . . 4

Later, King wrote that the vista of this northwest side of O'ahu “was by far the most beautiful country of any in the Group. . . . the Valleys look'd exceedingly pleasant . . . charmed with the narrow border full of villages, & the Moderate hills that rose behind them. . . .”

From these early observations, we can conjecture that this northwest side of O'ahu was covered with lush vegetation, well-cultivated and heavily populated.

This was further confirmed by later sources. John Papa Ii, a Hawaiian scholar, wrote that the moku of Waialua had a large population. “The land was rich, and there were many trees in olden times,” he wrote.6 John Whitman, a visitor to Hawai‘i in 1813, described Waialua as “a large District on the N.E. [Northeast] extremity of the Island embracing a large quantity of taro land, many excellent fishing grounds and several large fish ponds, one of which deserves particular notice for its size and the labour bestowed in building the wall which encloses it.”7 He described the fishpond (‘Uko‘a) as “about one mile in length and extends from the southern part of a small bay to a point of land jutting out about one mile into the sea.” This certainly indicated that its size supported a large population. Whitman continued, “Walking over the wall we passed several gates of strong wicker work through which the water had free passage. Here we observed thousands of fish some of which were apparently three feet long.”

In 1832, the missionary Ephraim Walter Clark reported to the Reverend Rufus Anderson, secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), that, “Waialua on the eastern part of the island is a populous region. A mission can be located at a central point in this vicinity, [and] by preaching at different places that are within 5 or 6 miles of each other & of easy access, [we] would probably have 3,000 or 4,000 bearers [followers].”9

From the traditional Hawaiian literature, however, a more poetic view of the place emerges. As we follow Hi‘iaka, the sister of the goddess Pele, during her journey to the island of Kaua‘i, she climbs the rocky bluff, Kehauohapuu, near Waimea Stream, listens to the sound
of the sea, notices the *uki* (sedge) plant, and admires the beauty of Waialua. She chants:

O Waialua, kai leo nui:
   Ua lono ka uka o Lihu'e;
   Ke wa la Wahi-awa, e.
   Kuli wale, kuli wale i ka leo;
   He leo no ke kai, e.
   O Waialua, la'i ehá, e!
   Ehá ka malino lalo o Waialua.

Waialua, place where the sea is loud
Heard in the uplands of Lihue,
The voice that reaches to Wahiawa
A voice that is deafening to the ears,
The voice of the ocean.
Waialua, filled with tranquility
That pass serenely over Waialua below.

At a place near Lauhulu, she praises the mountain Ka'ala, which overlooks Waialua. Hi'iaka chants:

O Ka-ala, kuahiwi mauna kehau,
   Ke opú mai la, la, i Ka-maóha;
   Poluea iho la ilalo o Hale-auau;
   Ke kini ke kehau anu o Ka-lena.

Kaala, surrounded with a cool mist
Drifts to the plain of Maóha.
Dizzy in gazing at Haleauau below
The multitudes are cooled by the dew of Kalena.

Oftentimes, the rhythmic sound of voices chanting in unison was compared to the rise and fall of the large waves at Waialua or to the beat of the *kū lā'au* (stick dancing) in time. "Ke kai O Waialua," was used as a teaching exercise in the schools:

A ea mai ke kai o Waialua,
   Wawa no 'olelo 'oko'a i pali,
   Nunu me he ihu o ka pua'a hae la,
‘Ako ka lau o ka nalu pi‘i ka pali,
Ku pali Kaiaka i ka ‘ino,
‘Ino ka lae o Kukuilau‘ania,
He Maka-nui.
Makani me he ao la ka leo o ke kai,
Kuli pa‘ia wawa ka uka a Lihu‘e,
O me he ‘oka‘a la i ke kula,
Ke kula hahi a ke kai e halulu nei,
Halulu ma ke Ko‘olau,
Ho‘olono ‘Ewa,
‘A‘ole i ‘ike i ka po ana a ka nalu,
Kuhihewa wale no Wahiawa - e.

Let the sea of Waialua rise,
Let the roar echo over the hills,
Rumble like the grunt of the wild pig.
Let the rising wave break the leaf from the cliff.
Kaiaka cliff stands above the storm,
Stormy is the cape of Kukuilau‘ania,
Windy indeed it is!
The voice of the sea rises upon the wind
Deafening those in the uplands of Lihu‘e,
As it is borne over the plain,
The rumbling of the sea treading upon the plain.
Rumbling over Ko‘olau,
‘Ewa hearkens,
She has not seen the rising of the waves,
And mistakes it for Wahiawa.14

In other instances, the chants describe not only the beauty of the land but also the importance and use of the named places. As an example, in the chant for Kuali‘i, one of the celebrated mōi (king) of O‘ahu, several well-known places on this northwest side of O‘ahu are described based on known physical characteristics.

He lae Kaena,
He hala o Kahuku,
He kuamauna hono i kehau Kaala,
Noho mai ana Waialua i lalo -e-
O Waialua ia
O Mokuleia, Kahala, ka ipu,
Ka loko ia mano lalawalu
Hui lalakea o Kaena -e-
Mano hele lalo o Kauai -e-

Kaena, the point,
Kahuku, encircled with hala
Kaala, covered with dew
There below lies Waialua,
That is Waialua.
Mokuleia with its dish of Kahala;
A fish-pond, like cooked shark,
Kaena, tail of the hammer-head shark
The shark that travels below Kauai.¹⁵

The chants above created a mystic beauty of Waialua, confirming the special feeling for the environment among Hawaiians: their *one hānau* (birthplace), their *kula iwi* (land of their bones or ancestors).

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The place names are not only significant but also make a direct connection to the near and distant past. In many cases, the chants "define or describe the unique character of a place as a whole. The various elements of a place—its winds, plants, sea colors and so on . . . as well as its customs, history, legends and religious spirit." As noted in the chants of Hi‘iaka on her journey to Kaua‘i and the historical epic of Kuali‘i, many places are named after an event that occurred there. In many cases, the events need not be of "religious or psychic phenomena."

**WAIALUA: A NAME OF MANY ORIGINS**

The naming of Waialua has several derivations. In one tradition, Waialua was named for Waia, son of Haloa and Hinamauoulu‘ai and grandson of Wakea. Waia was known to be a very cruel ali‘i (chief) with a corrupt government. Nothing good was said of him. He disregarded his father's instructions, which were to pray to the gods, take care of the ‘aina and maka‘ainana (commoner) so the Kingdom would prosper. Some of his actions were not pleasant either. For example, when he saw a beautiful woman with attractive legs, he would have them cut off, or if he saw anyone with a beautiful tattoo, he would have that person killed.

In the legend of Hi‘iaka, the well-known Waia was said to have lived in Waialua as the ali‘i. "He utters no prayers, he employs no priests, he has no diviner, he knows not how to govern," said the people. Because they suffered so much, the place was named for him, Waialua—doubly disgraced as the word Waia had come to mean disgraceful behavior. The term lua is defined in the Hawaiian dictionary as meaning "two, second, secondary, twice, deuce, double, doubly." Thus, the word traditionally defines the name Waialua.

Other sources refer to lua as meaning the two rivers, Kaukonahua and Poamoho, that flow into Kaiaka Bay. The haole (foreigner) visitor, Gilbert Mathison, in 1822, gave one variation of the name Waialua. In his journal, he wrote:

> Having enjoyed a most agreeable sail by moonlight, we this morning entered a small bay called Why-arouah, on the N.E. [northeast] side of the island, formed by two reefs of rocks which run out parallel a con-
siderable way into the sea [Kaiaka Bay], and between which two small rivers discharge themselves. Hence, the name Why-arouah: Why in the country language signifying water, and arouah the numeral two.  

Perhaps the natural definition of the name would be two waters as described in this version: “Waialua! Twin Rivers! Where two happy streams, companions since childhood now end their lives together in the sea.” Later contemporary sources indicated that Waialua was named after the lo‘i (irrigated terrace) near Kaukonahua Stream and close to the former Halstead residence and sugar mill. Today, the smokestack of the mill can still be seen.

The more poetic “Ka ‘ehu kai o Pua‘ena” (the sea sprays of Pua‘ena) was another name for Waialua that described its physical nature. Pua‘ena, the eastern point of Waialua harbor, was often veiled with a misty appearance because of the sea sprays from the pounding surf at that place. The expression “Waialua, ‘aina kū palua i ka la‘i (Waialua, land that stands doubly becalmed) was said in praise and admiration for the place where the weather was usually pleasant and a tranquil lifestyle existed among the people.”

Waialua was also remembered as the place where the body of the O‘ahu chief Elani was left to decompose. When Kahekili, the Maui mō‘i and his warriors invaded O‘ahu, he left his chief Hu‘eu alone at Ka‘owakawaka, Kawailoa, Waialua. The O‘ahu chiefs planned to murder the warriors from Maui, most of whom were living in ’Ewa. After being forewarned of the impending plot, the Maui invaders fled to Waikiki and escaped, except for Hu‘eu. He was killed while his guards were asleep. Elani, a suspect in the failed revolt against Kahekili, was found and his body disposed of:

At the death of Elani, who was greatly beloved by his people, his body was placed on a ledge of rocks near Puaena Point, where it was allowed to decompose. The place became known as Kahakakau Kanaka [the ledge (where) the man was placed]. As the odor came to the sands at Haleiwa, they became known as Maeaea [smelly]; the point on the other side became known as Kupava [Kapaoa? overwhelming smell]. . . . [I]f there was no one to care for the body of a commoner after his death, the corpse was placed on these rocks. The fluids from the decaying body would seep into the sea and attract sharks, which the people killed.
The landscape of Waialua with its legends, chants, places, and names confirmed that a direct relationship existed between the land and its caretakers. The place names not only describe the emotional state or important events that took place, but also *aloha ʻāina*, that is, “love for the land and the people of the land.” These place names strengthened the tie to family as well as to place. In many ways, names were links with the past.

For the people of Waialua, it was their duty to *aloha ʻāina* and *mālama ʻāina*, that is, to love and take care of the land. This follows the pattern of traditional Hawaiian society in which the duty of the children was respect for the elder. In this case, the elder was the timeless land itself. In reciprocating, the elder would *hānai*, or adopt the younger ones to care for, feed, and protect. This was the imaginary boundary that defined the close relationship between *lāhui kanaka* (nation, people, tribe, mankind, humanity) and the ʻāina.

**The Landscape in Time**

Just as the first view of the northwest side of Oʻahu was a memorable one to the sailors on the *Resolution* and *Discovery* in 1779, the same was true for later writers. Journals and letters give the impression that this northwest side of the island held a breathtaking view with an abundance of trees, plants, high mountains, and deep valleys. Levi Chamberlain, an American missionary on an annual tour of Oʻahu in 1826, wrote:

> At 11 o’ck [sic] we set out and walked along a path leading over an extended plain covered with high grass. After walking about 3 miles we took a path leading over a marshy tract to the mountains which we were designing to cross in order that we might avoid a bad piece of travelling along the western shore. The mountains here run in nearly a N.W. and N.E. direction being somewhat circular. We ascended by a rough & difficult path, shrubs, long grass, wild plants and bushes sprung up grew luxuriantly among the rocks being plentifully moistened by little streams which trickled down the steep sides of the mountains. After ascending several hundred feet, we came to a beautiful little run of water conducted by sprouts furnishing sufficient moisture for a number of taro patches below. I was told that the water never fails and the district into which it passes is called Kawaihapai (Water
Poetically Chamberlain wrote a picturesque view of Waialua:

The prospect from the acclivity is very fine. The whole district of Waialua is spread out before the eye with its clustering settlements, straggling houses, scattering trees, cultivated plats & growing in broad perspectives the wide extending ocean tossing its restless waves and throwing in its white foaming billows fringing the shores all along the whole extent of the district. The scenery on the other hand is no less beautiful and grand, the mountains are seen rising with various elevations, some piercing the clouds which envelope their summits, some covered with wood, others green with shrubs and grass, among the ridges are seen deep ravines, prominent fronts, inaccessible cliffs, weather beaten moss covered steeps.

William Gulick, a missionary descendant, recalls his youthful days at Mokuleʻia. While on a train excursion around Oʻahu as a guest of Benjamin Dillingham, he wrote:

When we turned the point of Kaena and moved directly eastward toward Kawaihapai, my heart leaped as there suddenly burst upon my view the glorious old mountains of Mokuleia deeply cut by the numerous valleys that pierce their hearts that open out upon the spreading plains on which on horseback I spent so much of my youthful years . . . ranging up and down that glorious stretch of land bounded by the cloud-capped hills on one side and the bursting breakers of the great sea on the other. Alas! the pen cannot describe the glories of these wonderful scenes—the inspiration of the high hills and the solemn awe of the ceaseless breaking of the ocean rollers upon the extended coast.

In a letter to the editor of the Hawaiian newspaper, Nupepa Kuokoa, November 17, 1899, the writer told about his experience while traveling on the train from Honolulu to Kaʻena:

Ke hoomaka nee noka lae o Kaena . . . He mau pali nihoniho kuhoho keia, he a-a, uuku loa kahi palalahala e ku ai na hale. Ke nee nana iho i ke kai ke ana koke ae nei malalo o makou; o na pali hoi ke
ku pololei nei e komo ana iloko o na umalu pali. O ka lae keia o Kaena, ka home noho o ke kuhikuhi punone kaulana (Kaanaana), ka mea i wanana mua i ka ouli o Hawaii nei. Ke pii ae la, ke emi iho ia, ke nalowale loa aku la. Elua ia, he manini, he oili-lepa, (oili iono ka lepa oka haole.) Ma keia wanana mua loa a keia kanaka, ua hikimai ka oiaio a ke ike maka nei kakou. Manini, he ia kapalapala elele a keokeo; Oili-lepa, kikokiko a lenalena. He mau ia ino keia me ke kilokilo a na kahaua pooloeca o Hawaii i ka wa kahiko.

We began to move slowly toward Ka'ena Point. . . . There are jagged cliffs, rocks and very narrow spaces for houses to stand on. We were so close to the calm sea below us. The cliffs rose straight up and were hidden in the shadows of the other cliffs.

This is Ka'ena Point, home of the famous reader of omens [Ka'ana'ana], who was the first to prophesy of what was to happen to Hawa'i. Some will rise and others will diminish until they completely disappear. There are [two fish], the manini [reef surgeonfish] and o'ililepa [squaretail filefish] (The flag of the foreigner will surely rise). This very first prophecy was said by this man, it is true as we now see it. The manini has black and white stripes; and the o'ililepa is spotted and yellow. These are bad fish according to the prophets and the expert leaders of the priestly class in the old days.35

The importance of Hawaiian place names and the historical background relevant to personal history continued up to 1900. This writer recalls events that took place at Ka'ena. The writer continued to describe what he saw after the train made its way around Ka'ena Point and started toward the eastern side of Ka'ena. He wrote:

Huli ma keia aoao o ka lae, e ike mua ana oe i ehukai o Puaena. O Kawaihapai mamua o makou, kahi o ka wai kaulana i ke kumu ole, he kumu no na mai no o ka pali pohaku mehe waipuna la. O ke kula o Mokuleia mamua o makou, ke kula i olelo ia ma na mele lehulehu. Me he moena pawehe ia ke kula o Mokuleia. Ua pau pawehe ana, ua ulu ia e ke ko me ka ka raiki, . . .

Turning to the [other] side of the point, you would first see the sea spray of Puaena. Kawaihapai appears before us; the place of the famous water without source. However, there is a source that comes up on the rocky hill like a spring.
The plain of Mokuleia appeared before us, a plain that was spoken of by many in song, “like a patterned mat is the plain of Mokule‘ia.” The patterns are gone. Sugar cane and rice are growing now. . . .

In 1826, Levi Chamberlain also wrote in his journal of what he saw after turning the point at Ka‘ena. He wrote:

Having turned the west point of the island, we had an immediate change of atmosphere. The trade winds blew fresh and pretty much in our faces, and we were enabled to quicken our pace. We passed Nene-lea a settlement of fishermen and a convenient place for hauling up their canoe.

The Hawaiian historian John Papa ʻĪi wrote about the trails and the coolness from the breezes that swept in from the ocean. “When travelers arrived in Kaena in the morning, they escaped the heat, for they were cooled by the Moae breeze,” he wrote. After resting at Waiakeaia, the travelers would continue “along the level places of Kawaihapai and Mokuleia, thence across the mouth of the Kaiaka River and over the sand to the plains of Paalaa and Kawaiola to Kamani, a village with a pond [Lokoea], the boundary walls of which separated it from the Anahulu River.”

From these early accounts, we have a very descriptive view of this northwest side of the island of O‘ahu as a flat plain, but one with exceptional beauty because of the lush vegetation, cloud-covered mountains, and deep valleys with clear cool streams. Without the traditional Hawaiian chants and keen observations of the early visitors to Hawai‘i, such as Chamberlain, we, today, would not have a visual perception of the Waialua landscape. The chants and written accounts in many cases confirm the oral history of place names.

Notes
3 Beaglehole, *Journals* 573.
4 Beaglehole, *Journals* 585. In footnote 1, Beaglehole explains that King may have been in error in using the word *popular* instead of the word *populous*.
5 Beaglehole, *Journals* 610.


9 Ephraim W. Clark, letter to Rufus Anderson, 1832. HMCS.


11 The Hawaiian text is from Emerson, *Pele and Hiiaka* 99; the translation is mine.

12 Hawaiian text from Emerson, *Pele and Hiiaka* 100; my translation.

13 Samuel Manaiaakalani Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Kamakehā Schools, 1961) 423. The kā lā’a’u were two sticks, one in each hand, used in dancing and kept the rhythm for the chant.

14 Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* 423. The English translation of this chant is that of Mary Kawena Pukui.


17 Charlot, *Chanting the Universe* 58.


21 Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities* 245.


24 Gilbert F. Mathison, *Narrative of a Visit to Brazil, Chile, Peru and the Sandwich Islands During the Year 1821 & 1822* (London: S. & R. Bentley, 1825) 392.


27 Fornander, *Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore* 616.


32 Levi Chamberlain Journal, 7 Feb. 1828. HMCS.
33 Levi Chamberlain, Missionary Letters, Mar. 1824. HMCS.
34 Letter, William Gulick to American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 22 Jan. 1826. HMCS.
38 Ii, *Fragments of Hawaiian History* 98.