

**“MAUNA KEA–
KA PIKO KAULANA O KA ‘ĀINA”**

(MAUNA KEA–THE FAMOUS SUMMIT OF THE LAND)

***A Collection of Native Traditions, Historical Accounts, and
Oral History Interviews for: Mauna Kea, the Lands of Ka‘ohe,
Humu‘ula and the ‘Āina Mauna on the Island of Hawai‘i***



Kumu Pono Associates LLC

*Historical & Archival Documentary Research · Oral History Interview Studies · Researching and Preparing Studies
from Hawaiian Language Documents · Māhele ‘Āina, Boundary Commission,
& Land History Records · Integrated Cultural Resources Management Planning ·
Preservation & Interpretive Program Development*

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Prepared for

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Cover Photos

Portion of HTS Plat Map 701, depicting Mauna Kea and the 'Āina Mauna.

No. 511. Kohatek (20 min 1-20-74). Courtesy of UH-Intitute for Astronomy.

Aerial View, Summit of Mauna Kea (1939). Photo No. 37382 A.C., in Collection of National Archives and Records Administration.

KPA-931. The Kalai'eha-Waiiau Trail, through Keanakāko'i.

KPA-3746. Altar at Keanakāko'i, Mauna Kea.

KPA-4224. Na'ena'e (Raillardia) of Ka-houpo-a-Kāne, Mauna Kea.

KPA-2567. Mauna Kea in the Morning, View from the Waiākea-Pi'ihonua uplands to the Summit.

KPA-3733. Ka-wai-hū-a-Kāne and Waiiau, Mauna Kea.

KPA-S076. Mauna Kea viewed from the Mauna Loa Shrine on Pu'u Alaula.

Cowboys atop Summit of Mauna Kea, 1938. Courtesy of Rally Greenwell.

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The interviewees, a number of whom have since passed on, include:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of Stephanie Nagata, on behalf of the University of Hawai'i-Office of Mauna Kea Management, *Kumu Pono Associates LLC* undertook research, compiled a detailed collection of archival-historical records, and conducted oral history interviews with *kūpuna* and elder *kama'āina*, pertaining to the *ahupua'a* (native land divisions) of Ka'ōhe, Humu'ula and neighboring *'āina mauna* (mountain lands) of Mauna Kea, on the island of Hawai'i. This work was undertaken as a part of ongoing archival and oral historical research conducted by *Kumu Pono Associates LLC*, since 1996, and builds upon the accounts published by Maly in 1997, 1999, 2002, and 2003. The study is multifaceted, and includes detailed verbatim accounts and descriptions of Mauna Kea, the larger Humu'ula-Ka'ōhe lands, and *'āina mauna*, covering the periods of Hawaiian antiquity and traditions, to first-hand accounts of travel on and around Mauna Kea, dating from the early 1820s to the 1960s.

One of the primary goals of this study has been to bring a significant collection of historical resource material, describing—native Hawaiian traditions, traditional and customary practices and beliefs; early descriptions of the landscape, land use, and access; changes in the environment; efforts at conservation of the mountain landscape; and the events leading to development of observatories on Mauna Kea—into one manuscript. Such a manuscript will provide readers with access to the diverse, and at times, difficult to locate, historical narratives that document the cultural landscape, and history of land use on Mauna Kea. It being believed that this information may in turn serve as a platform for informed discussions—in the field of cultural and historical resources—in planning for the future well-being of Mauna Kea as a cultural, natural, and scientific resource.

Because of the nature of the Hawaiian system of beliefs and land management, this study looks not only at the upper regions of Mauna Kea, but also at the lands which lie upon the slopes of Mauna Kea. In the traditional and historical setting, the people living on the lands which rested upon, or even viewed Mauna Kea, shared ties to the upper mountain regions as well. The historical records—including oral testimonies of elder *kama'āina* of the mountain lands—provide readers with detailed descriptions of traditional and customary practices; the nature of land use, and the types of features found on the mountain landscape; and early efforts in conservation on Mauna Kea and the adjoining *'āina mauna*. The descriptions of land use and subsistence practices range from antiquity to the 1970s, and represent the knowledge of generations of life upon the land.

It is important to note that in the summit region of Mauna Kea (from approximately 11,000 feet and above) and on the lower mountain slopes are found several features named for, or associated with Hawaiian gods and deity. These associations are indicators of Mauna Kea's place in the culture and history of Hawai'i as a sacred landscape. With each part contributing to the integrity of the whole cultural, historical, and spiritual setting.

Through the collection of historical-archival texts and oral history interviews, we have found that a wide range of traditional knowledge and practices, including, but not limited to the following, are described for Mauna Kea and the adjoining *'āina mauna*:

Mauna Kea—though simply translated as “White Mountain” since at least 1823, the name, Mauna Kea is also known in native traditions and prayers as Mauna a Wākea (Kea), “The Mountain of Wākea.” It is the first-born mountain son of Wākea and Papa, who were also progenitors of the Hawaiian race. Mauna Kea is symbolic of the *piko* (umbilical cord) of the island-child, Hawai'i, and that which connects the land to the heavens.

Pu'u o Kūkahau'ula^{*}, named for a form of the god Kū, where the *piko* of new-born children were taken to insure long life and safety. This practice is still participated in at the present time.

Waiau, named for the mountain goddess, Waiau (Ka piko o Waiau), and home of the *mo'o* (water-form) goddess Mo'o-i-nanea. Place where *piko* of newborn children were taken to ensure long life; and from which "*ka wai kapu o Kāne*" (the sacred water of Kāne) was collected. These practices are still participated in at the present time.

Pu'u Poli'ahu^{**} and **Pu'u Lilinoe**, named for, and the abode of goddesses of Mauna Kea.

In 1823, the first missionary party to visit the summit of Mauna Kea learned from the natives that it was "the abode of the gods," and none could be induced to travel to the summit (Goodrich in Ellis, 1963:292).

Heiau and *'ahu*—ceremonial sites, shrines, and places where *mele* (chants) and offerings were presented.

'Ahu—stone mounds as land markers.

Ana and *lua kā ko'i* (caves and quarries from which stone was harvested for making tools).

Ilina (burial features) extending from the summit to the lowlands. Specific mention is made in several important historical accounts—recorded by both native witnesses and non-Hawaiians—of the presence of burials in the *pu'u* and summit plateau of Mauna Kea. The remains of individuals who share ties to Mauna Kea are still taken to the various *pu'u* on Mauna Kea for interment.

Native trails—portions of which, on the ascent to the summit, and around the base of Mauna Kea, are overlaid by modern routes of access.

Shelters and habitation caves.

Resource collection sites.

Later features, dating from the middle 1800s, including pens—such as **Kulaka**, on Humu'ula above Pu'u Ō'ō; and **Aiakala**, in Ka'ohe, above the Pu'u Nanahu section of the mountain—walls and fence lines.

Stone and wooden houses.

Water collection and storage facilities;

Bird hunting blinds—in the form of single, double or tri-sided stone walls; former garden plots; and other ranch "support" features.

Another facet of this study, was a review of native lore associated with traditional knowledge of the heavens. While we have uncovered no specific archival references to native astronomy on Mauna Kea, the association of the gods and deities whose forms are seen in the heavens and whose names are commemorated at locations on Mauna Kea is significant. We have found, that as is the case in all areas of Hawaiian life, the traditions, customs and practices associated with the *'oihana kilokilo* (astronomy) and *kilo hōkū* (observing and discerning the nature of the stars) were deeply tied to the spiritual beliefs of the Hawaiian people. The stars are physical manifestations of the gods who created the heavens, earth, and humankind, or are body-forms granted to select individuals or beings of nature (Malo, 1951 and Beckwith, 1951). The combined writings of native and foreign historians on this subject—recorded between the 1830s to 1935—provide us with a list of more than 270 Hawaiian names for stars (not including alignments of stars which marked the heavens and pathways of traditional navigators).

* The name Pu'u o Kūkahau'ula is the traditional name of the summit cluster of cones on Mauna Kea, appearing in native accounts and cartographic resources until ca. 1932. The recent names, Pu'u Wekiu, Pu'u Hau'oki and Pu'u Haukea, have, unfortunately been used since the 1960s (since the development of astronomy on Mauna Kea), and have displaced the significant spiritual and cultural values and sense of place associated with the traditional name, Pu'u o Kūkahau'ula.

** The place name Poli'ahu, was recorded in native texts (cf. Kamakau, 1961 in this study), and as a part of Boundary Commission proceedings in 1873 (in this study); it was also widely documented as the name of the primary goddess of Mauna Kea. The specific usage of the place name "Puu Poliahu" (also referred to as Peak A), was apparently given to the present-day location in 1892, by W.D. Alexander, commemorating the goddess, Poli'ahu, (cf. Alexander and Preston, 1892-1893, in this study).

Also, of importance in discussions regarding modern astronomy on Mauna Kea, the narratives cited in this collection provide readers with first-hand accounts—from archival documents and oral history interviews—of the early days of astronomy on the mountain, including the thoughts and recommendations of the pioneer scientists, responsible agencies, and community members on the island of Hawai‘i, in regards to use and limitations of Mauna Kea. An example of the kind of information recorded by the early scientists and community on the island of Hawai‘i, between 1964 to 1980, was that development of telescope facilities on Mauna Kea should be carefully limited—by 1980, the recommended number being six observatories.

Historical Land Use on the Mountain Lands

As early as the 1820s, introduced cattle, sheep, goats, and wild dogs had made their way up to the mountain lands, and were bothersome to those who traveled the *‘āina mauna*. In 1834, Scottish naturalist, David Douglas was killed by a wild bullock at Keahua-ai (now called Douglas Pit or Kaluakauka), near the boundary of Humu‘ula and Laupāhoehoe. By 1850, the natural-cultural landscape of the *‘āina mauna* was being significantly altered by the roving herds of wild bullocks, sheep and other ungulates, and ranching interests were being formalized in the region. In 1857, the Crown and Government mountain lands of Humu‘ula and Ka‘ohe—including the summit of Mauna Kea—were leased to Francis Spencer and the Waimea Grazing and Agricultural Company, which established ranching stations and operations around the mountain lands. Portions of the land of Pi‘ihonua were leased to native bird hunters in the middle 1860s, and subsequently to native and foreign bullock hunters. As a result, Humu‘ula and the larger *‘āina mauna* have been intensively ranched for more than 150 years.

Because hunting, and subsequently ranching of bullocks, cattle and sheep were the primary historic activities on the mountain lands, areas once forested soon became open pasture land. While the first formal lease of Humu‘ula and Ka‘ohe was issued in 1857 (Keoni Ana to F. Spencer), it was Samuel Parker and Parker Ranch that held the longest lease on the Humu‘ula and Ka‘ohe mountain lands. In between 1900 to 2002, their leases extended around Mauna Kea to the Pu‘u Huluhulu vicinity, and for a period, the leases also included portions of the ‘Āina Hou lands. The Parker Ranch interests initially focused on sheep ranching in the Humu‘ula-Kalai‘eha section, but in 1964, the ranch terminated its sheep program. Cattle operations were maintained till the end of the Parker lease in August, 2002.

Today, limited ranching of cattle is continued on the lands extending from Humu‘ula to Hānaipoe, Pā‘auhau, and the Parker Ranch lands—the Humu‘ula section being worked under a permit by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, and leases from the State of Hawai‘i. While the Humu‘ula section is still partially grazed, some 6,000 acres between the Pu‘u ‘Ō‘ō and Pu‘uloa, have succumb to an infestation of the introduced gorse (first recorded on the land in 1892), which has had little maintenance since ca. 1980.

As early as 1831, portions of the land of Pi‘ihonua Uka and neighboring forest lands were being worked by Daniel Castle, and later, by the Castle and Hitchcock brothers for lumber milling and bullock hunting operations. Subsequently by the 1860s, native lessees were granted the right of hunting in the Pi‘ihonua uplands. Then in 1887, the *ahupua‘a* of Pi‘ihonua (everything from above Hilo Town to the upland boundary with Humu‘ula) was leased to John Timoteo Baker, who undertook ranching operations in Pi‘ihonua in the 1890s.

Prior to Baker’s lease, the Puu Oo Ranch Station had been established, with its buildings developed as a part of the Humuula Sheep Station Company; this due to an error in locating the boundary between Humu‘ula and Pi‘ihonua. In 1896, the boundary matter was settled, and Baker maintained cattle and livestock ranching operations in the area. Baker sold his lease to W.H. Shipman in 1899, which was followed by the sale of a 40 acre parcel—the Pu‘u Oo Ranch headquarters—in Patent Grant No. 8970, to W.H. Shipman. In 1902, Shipman secured leases on the lands of Pāpa‘ikou, Makahanaloa and other Hilo District lands, which were incorporated into the Pu‘u Oo ranching

operation. W.H. Shipman, Limited, sold its interest in the Pu'u 'Ō'ō parcel in the 1970s, and it remains in private ownership to the present day.

Early leases of the Ka'ōhe mountain lands date back to 1857 (Keoni Ana to F. Spencer), and the operations of Francis Spencer's Waimea Grazing and Agricultural Company. The lease took in all of the mountain lands (to the summit of Mauna Kea), across Ka'ōhe to its' Mauna Loa boundary. Activities were all tied to sheep and cattle ranching. Subsequently, in 1870, the lease was acquired by Parker Ranch, which held most of the Ka'ōhe mountain lands until their removal in 1905 for the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve, and later withdrawals as a part of the Pōhakuloa Military installation in 1956 (Governor's Executive Order No. 1719; and Presidential Executive Order No. 1167). Portions of the land of Ka'ōhe, generally those on the northern (Waimea) side of Mauna Kea, are still grazed by Parker Ranch. The land of Ka'ōhe IV (the Pōhakuloa section), were turned over to the United States Army, and have been used for military training operations since that time.

The summit of Mauna Kea, situated in the *ahupua'a* of Ka'ōhe, was noted as a site of importance for modern astronomical observations by the Pendulum Party of 1892. In 1964, the first modern observatory was built on top of Pu'u Poli'ahu. By 1965, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the University of Hawaii initiated their program "*to exploit the exciting potentialities of the Mauna Kea site for astronomical purposes*" (cf. Newell to Hiatt, Feb. 16, 1965, in this study). In 1967, the University of Hawaii Institute for Astronomy was founded, and in 1968, the Board of Land and Natural Resources leased the entire summit of Mauna Kea to the University by Lease No. S-4191. While the practice and activities associated with astronomy on Mauna Kea represent the shortest of the periods of history and land use described in this study, its forty-one years (at the time of this writing) in the summit region of Mauna Kea, also represent the period of most significant changes in the natural and cultural landscapes on the mountain.

Archival Resources of the Present Study

Records cited—many as verbatim transcripts, allowing readers to understand the full context of the accounts as meant by the original authors—include native accounts translated from Hawaiian language sources; the records of Kingdom and Government agencies; journals of historic visitors; records of the lessees and ranching operations on the mountain lands; and narratives from scientific expeditions to Mauna Kea through the 1960s. There are also cited, a number of the early letters by participants in the development of astronomy on Mauna Kea, dating from 1963 to 1980.

Archival-historical resources were located in the collections of the Hawai'i State Archives, Survey Division, Land Management Division, and Bureau of Conveyances; the Bishop Museum Archives; the Hawaiian Historical Society; University of Hawai'i-Hilo Mo'okini Library; private family collections; the Parker Ranch & *Paniolo Preservation Society* (PPS) collections; the National Archives and Records Administration, and NOAA Central Library; the Houghton Library-Harvard; the USGS Central Library, Denver; the Hawaiian Historical Society; the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library; the Hilo Public Library; the Archives of the Institute for Astronomy; and in the collection of *Kumu Pono Associates LLC*. The oral history interviews cited in this study represent selected interviews conducted by Maly between 1999 to 2005, and reflect the recollections of elder native Hawaiians and *kama'āina* of lands of the *'āina mauna*. The interviewees ranged in age from their 60s to 90s, and in their stories they describe life upon the land, practices associated with travel and work on the mountain lands, and the early days of astronomy on Mauna Kea.

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