

## A Brief Geography of the Maunalua Region

### Geographical Features

The Maunalua region in urban Southeast O'ahu, stretches from Kawaihoa to Kūpikipiki'ō (Koko Head to Black Point) and to the summit of the Ko'olau Mountains (see Map 1). The region encompasses Maunalua Bay and its adjacent ahupua'a. The region is approximately 28 square miles in size, with about 7 miles of shoreline and 6.5 square miles of ocean waters. At the east end of the Bay is a former 523-acre fishpond (Keahupua-O-Maunalua) and wetland that was converted in the 1970s into Hawai'i Kai's housing and private recreational salt-water marina. The region has a dozen distinct neighborhoods comprising a population of about 60,000 people.

### Maunalua Bay or Wai'alae Bay

Contemporary names for the bay are Maunalua Bay and Wai'alae Bay. The name Maunalua derives from the ahupua'a of Maunalua, located at the easternmost end of the Bay. *Mauna* ('mountain') and *lua* ('two') refers to two prominent peaks of the region: Koko Head and Koko Crater. The name Wai'alae means 'mudhen water' and it also refers to ahupua'a names on the western end of the Bay (Wai'alae Iki, Wai'alae Nui). When British Captain Portlock arrived in the Bay in June 1786 he dubbed it "King George Bay". However that name did not persist. Since the nineteenth century, the area of sea and landing area adjacent to the Keahupua-O-Maunalua fishpond has also been known as 'Koko'.

### Ahupua'a of Maunalua Bay Region

Map 2 shows the ahupua'a of the region. Ahupua'a typically included a land area (watershed or watersheds) and an appurtenant marine management zone that stretched from the beach to the reef. Some historical accounts refer to one or more of these local land divisions as *ili*.

#### *Maunalua Ahupua'a*

The history of the ahupua'a of Maunalua is perhaps the best-documented in the region. It is the largest ahupua'a, encompassing the valleys of Haha'ione, Kamilonui, Kamiloiki and Kalama, plus the coastal areas from Kuli'ou'ou to Sandy Beach. The ahupua'a of Maunalua was known for its large (523 acre) fishpond named Keahupua-O-Maunalua, with a fishpond wall or *kuapā* which originally spanned from Kuli'ou'ou headland to what is now Portlock. Keahupua-O-Maunalua was the largest fishpond on O'ahu. The pond was used primarily to raise mullet and was also home to a multitude of waterbirds. The coastal plains of Maunalua were a famous sweet-potato planting area referred to as Ke-kula-O-Kamauwai. During the Māhele, Maunalua was awarded to Victoria Kamāmalu, sister of Kamehameha IV and V, and granddaughter of Kamehameha I. In 1856, Kamāmalu leased all of Maunalua to cattle rancher William Webster for 30 years. Ten years later, upon the death of Kamāmalu in 1866, Maunalua was transferred to the Bernice Pauhi Bishop Estate. The area continued to be important for farming and fishing up until the 1950s. One of the oldest structures in Maunalua is the Lunalilo Home for elders of Hawaiian descent.

### *Kuli'ou'ou Ahupua'a*

*Kuli'ou'ou* means 'sounding knee drum', (kuli=knee; ouou=the sound of the drum when struck) referring to the pūniu or knee drum. Ancient inhabitants may have utilized the area for shelter and fishing for 1000 years or more prior to Western contact. Kuli'ou'ou was also the site of a large coastal wetlands and a pool named Elelupe where Kamehameha III was said to retire with his court in the summer. Kuli'ou'ou was also converted to cattle ranching beginning in the mid-late 1890s.

The formation of Paikō peninsula and lagoon via a naturally expanding sand-bar began around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This shifting landform was stabilized by the addition of houses and vegetation beginning in the 1930s. On the landward side of the lagoon surrounded by houses is an old fishpond. Paikō derives its name from Manuel Paikō (originally 'Pico' after a location in the Azores), a resident who acquired half of the ahupua'a of Kuli'ou'ou in the 1870s and engaged in commercial cattle raising.

### *Niu Ahupua'a*

Niu means "coconut." The ahupua'a of Niu was once part of a tract that was a summer home of Kamehameha I and later claimed during the Māhele (c.1848) by prior appointed konohiki Alexander Adams. Niu ahupua'a contains two large gulches which today are dry. Archaeological evidence indicates this was not always the case – that there were substantial springs or subsurface flow, and likely agricultural terraces. Fishing, and fishpond cultivation were also conducted here. Niu was also the site of extensive cattle operations beginning in the late 1800s. In the 1940s Kupapa Fishpond, a fishpond of several acres in size, was filled and the site used to build housing at what today is called Niu Iki Circle.

### *Wailupe Ahupua'a (includes 'Āina Haina)*

Wailupe means 'kite water' signifying the location of a large area of water. According to Pūku'i et al., (1974) kites were flown only in prescribed places and this was one of them. Wailupe stream floodplain was once very broad and there were multiple ponds, along the shoreline, among them a 41-acre fishpond. The ahupua'a of Wailupe also experienced a phase of ranching and dairy farming beginning in the 1880s, with John Perry managing hundreds of acres of pasturelands. 'Āina Haina was named for the Hind family who in the 1920s began operating the Hind-Clarke Dairy. The ponds and wetlands were filled for road building and housing tracts. The large fishpond was filled in 1945 to create Wailupe Peninsula housing development.

### *Wai'alae Iki*

The name Wai'alae means 'mudhen water' and Wai'alae Iki means 'small Wai'alae'. This area empties to a shoreline section of about one-quarter mile in length roughly spanning the center of the Wai'alae Country Club/Kahala Hotel grounds. An earlier name for the area is Wiliwilinui ('the large Wiliwili'). The name Wai'alae is also said to refer to an ancient stone-encased spring located just above the highway near the present-day Wai'alae golf course. This spring supplied water for the ali'i from olden times.

### *Wai'alaie Nui*

Wai'alaie Nui means 'large Wai'alaie'. Wai'alaie Nui includes Wai'alaie Nui gulch and Kapakahi Gulch, which converge and empty to the shoreline area between Kūpikipiki'ō and Kāhala. The streams of Wai'alaie once had constant flow (Sterling and Summers 1978) with large populations at both Wai'alaie Nui and Wai'alaie Iki engaged in farming and fishing. Once source notes that Kamāmalu had the fishing rights to the Wai'alaie area in the mid-late 1800s. Wai'alaie was known as the lands of the Kamehamehas. In the mid-late 1800s large tracts were leased and sold to be developed as cattle and dairy farms. The stock farms also included water buffalo, horses, and poultry.

### *Kūpikipiki'ō and Kāhala*

The waters of Wai'alaie Nui drain to a shoreline area spanning from Kūpikipiki'ō ('to rise; to stand up, agitated as water in a current of the sea') through lower Kāhala ('amberjack fish') and continuing to the first portion of the Wai'alaie Country Club. These were also Kamehameha lands, and therefore both may have been part of the Wai'alaie Nui holdings. When Hawai'i Island warrior Kamehameha made his push to invade O'ahu in 1795, his armada of 800 war canoes was said to have stretched from Kūpikipiki'ō (Black Point) to Koko (Hawai'i Kai). Kāhala may have acquired its name because it was the site of an ancient fishing village.

### Sources:

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