



Aloha, and welcome to Kōloa, The Kōloa Heritage Trail. Your journey will whisk you through five million years of exploration highlighting the natural history, archaeology, culture and of Kaua'i and its people.

Special thanks to Anne Malley and Stella Burgess for their research and writing contributions.
Many sponsors and volunteers conceptualized and prepared this historic journey through Kōloa. Please feel free to make comments about the trail, or make a donation toward trail and monument maintenance.
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KŌLOA HERITAGE TRAIL
Ka ala hele waiwai hoʻoilina o Kōloa

PO'IPŪ / KŌLOA AREA

WALKER'S ROUTE
BICYCLIST'S ROUTE

The Kōloa District is the name of a modern political-judicial district encompassing the south shore of Kaua'i. In ancient times, the Kōloa District was part of a larger district called Kona. Then, Hawaiians used a system of resource management that divided districts into pie-shaped wedges called ahupua'a that ran from the mountain to the ocean. The Kōloa Heritage Trail travels through four ahupua'a. From east to west, they are: Mahāwalepu, Pa'a, Weliheli and Kōloa. There is frequent discussion about how Kōloa got its name. Meanings include long-jointed sugar cane, a native duck and a steep rock in the area. Certainly, the sugar cane industry put Kōloa on the map, creating the rise of immigrant labor resulting in the rich multicultural of Kōloa's people today. One meaning of the name Poipu is crashing, as in waves crashing. Start anywhere and please enjoy your heritage trail.

KŌLOA HERITAGE TRAIL
Ka ala hele waiwai hoʻoilina o Kōloa

FREE KŌLOA & PO'IPŪ MAP
Cultural, Historical & Geographical Sites



KŌLOA HERITAGE TRAIL

KA ALA HELE WAIWAI HO‘OILINA O KŌLOA

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL & GEOLOGICAL SITES



1 SPOUTING HORN PARK

Once, Hawaiians called this place pūhi, which means blowhole, or to blow. Waves eroded caves in the softer rocks of the shoreline. In places such as Spouting Horn, they gradually wore a hole through the topmost, resistant layer. Keep an eye on the waves. As they rush toward the shoreline, they plunge into the cave, or lava tube, where they're forced through a small opening and jet upwards as a fountain. When swells are large, this pūhi can generate a fountain 60 or more feet high.

One story about Spouting Horn tells of three huge mo'o, or lizards—two sisters and a brother, that traveled from Tahiti. The two sisters hauled up on the sands of Ni'ihau, Kaua'i's nearest neighbor island to the west, and remained there. Their brother, Leho, swam to Kaua'i and became fascinated with this pūhi. While exploring, Leho got stuck in the pūhi. Every time a wave rushes in, you can hear his growls and hisses as he gets soaked.

Another legend tells about a fierce female mo'o named Kaikapu who guarded the Kōloa shoreline. A young boy named Liko wanted to fish and harvest seaweed near the pūhi, but Kaikapu ate anyone who came near her! Liko sharpened a stick, thrust it into Kaikapu's mouth, and bravely swam up into the lava tube. Kaikapu followed and wedged herself in the pūhi forever.

She roars whenever the water rushes past her.

Can you guess how Spouting Horn got its English name? Clue: Seasonal migratory mammal.

2 PRINCE KŪHIO BIRTHPLACE & PARK

Hawai'i is the only state in the union to have had a monarchy. One of the rulers, Prince Jonah Kūhio Kalaniano'ole, was born in Kōloa on March 26, 1871 in a grass hut near Ho'i'ai Bay. He was the grandson of the last king of Kaua'i, King Kaumuali'i, and the son of Princess Kino'ike Kekaulike and High Chief David Kahalepouli P'i'okoi. After losing their mother at the young age, Prince Kūhio and his two brothers were adopted by their aunt, a wife of King Kalakaua, who reigned over the Hawaiian Kingdom. Kūhio and his brothers were raised as princes at 'Iolani Palace in Honolulu.

Prince Kūhio witnessed the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by the U.S. in 1893, took the side of the monarchy, and was found guilty of treason and made a political prisoner for a year. Later, he went on to become Hawai'i's delegate to the U.S. Congress for 19 consecutive years. His greatest achievement was seeing the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act passed. It dedicated 200,000 acres of island lands for awards as farm sites and house lots to persons with at least one-half Hawaiian ancestry. Much of the land has yet to be awarded.

The area surrounding the Prince's birthplace is Prince Kūhio Park, owned by the Royal Order of Kamehameha I. King Kamehameha V founded the Order to perpetuate the memory of Kamehameha the Great, also known as Kamehameha I, the first king to unite all of Hawai'i. Prince Kūhio revived the Order in the early 1900's.

Prince Kūhio's birthday, March 26, is a state holiday on which the Royal Order of Kamehameha I hosts a commemoration and celebration in the Prince's honor at the park. Perhaps Prince Kūhio viewed many of the same features we see today. Can you find the remains of a heiau, or temple? Fish pond? House platform? Game field? Lo'i kalo, or taro terraces?

3 HANAKA'ĀPE BAY & KŌLOA LANDING

Waikomo Stream, or entering water, carved a cave that today is called Kōloa Landing, an entry into Hanaka'ape Bay. Given the gentle inclination of the area, it is possible to imagine ancient voyagers hauling out their canoes here to seek a water source or explore further.

During the whaling industry boom—about 1820 to 1860—Kōloa Landing became the third largest whaling port in all of Hawai'i. Forty to 60 ships a year anchored to stock provisions of salt, firewood, native produce and live cattle and pigs that had to be hoisted aboard. Can you guess another name for this cove? Clue: nearby condominium.

Once the port of entry for all foreign goods coming into Kaua'i, Kōloa Landing sent off ships laden with Kaua'i-grown goods. Oranges, sweet potatoes—as many as 10,000 barrels a year—and more sailed to California during the Gold Rush days.

Sugar extended the life of Kōloa Landing into the 20th Century. A new company of 1835, later to become Kōloa Plantation, engineered a lease with King Kamehameha III, giving them the privilege of building a road to Kōloa Landing and free use of it. Their improvements over the years included a wharf, dock, derrick and a warehouse on a bluff above the landing, none of which remain. A plantation trail hauled milled sugar to Kōloa Landing to send to a refinery in California. In 1912, Kōloa Landing's heyday ended when more agreeable harbors became available. Kōloa Landing today is home to sea turtles, snorkelers and divers.

4 PA'U A LAKA (MOIR GARDENS)

The Moir family, builders of the elegant lava rock home that now houses Kiahuna Plantation's front office and restaurant, chose a Hawaiian name for their garden. They called it Pa'u a Laka, a traditional name for the area. It honors both Laka, the Hawaiian goddess of hula, and Kūka'ohi'aalaka, the rain god. Today, the area is called Kiahuna Plantation Resort, referring both to a nearby ancient temple, and to the sugar plantation era.

Hector McD. Moir was the last manager of Kōloa Plantation before it changed hands in 1948. He and his wife built their home in the early 1930s on a gift of land from their father. After clearing it, the only vegetation for miles around was sugar cane, three trees and an abundance of lava rock. A view from the Moir lanai once encompassed the ocean and Ha'upu Mountain and Ridge.

Ancient Hawaiians farmed in this rocky, arid area, channeling stream water in 'auwai, or ditches. Remnant 'auwai remain in the garden. In the 1930s, water for hobby gardening was scarce, so Mrs. Moir switched from tropical plants that required frequent watering to orchids, bromeliads and succulents. She and the Moir's only child, Eric McD "Ik" Moir, planted and watered the garden that you see today, featuring water lily-filled lava rock ponds, koi and a wide variety of cactus species.

At its height, Pa'u a Laka was open for guided tours led by the Moirs seven days a week. It was listed by the Brooklyn Botanical Garden as one of the 10 finest gardens of its kind in the world.

5 HAPA ROAD

On this site stood Kihahoua heiau, an ancient Hawaiian temple. This heiau was dedicated to four gods: Kane, one of the four major gods of Hawai'i; Ku-hai-moana and Ka-moho-ali'i, the shark god brothers of Pele, the Fire Goddess; and Huluhuki, a bird god thought to be one of the grandsons of Kane. Kihahoua symbolizes these four gods, their mana (life force) and their ha (breath) that sustains this special area. The nearby condominium resort, Kiahuna (a key to a sacred place) Plantation, derives its name from this heiau. Legend suggests that the second chief of Kōloa, Kīha-ke-oholupalapa (Kīha with the luxuriant hair), erected a walled temple here, which covered 90 feet by 130 feet and was terraced toward the south and west. Portions of the temple platform were still evident more than 20 years ago until wave action from hurricanes in 1982 and 1992 eroded the site. Although the temple no longer stands, according to ancient religion and to present day Hawaiians, the mana (life force) of the 'aina (land) still exists.

6 PO'IPTU BEACH PARK

Ancient Hawaiians surely found beach time just as pleasurable as we do. For them, the ocean, or kai, was also a fully-stocked, natural refrigerator. Much of the marine life ancient Hawaiians saw is still at Po'iPTU Beach. Colorful tropical fish such as the Convict tang, or Manini, travel in schools. Hawai'i's state fish—the Humu-humu-nuku-nuku-āpu'a—swims solo, resembling a Picasso painting with electric blue lips. Occasionally, a threatened Green sea turtle, or Honu, hovers into view. Eels glide along the ocean bottom and spiny sea urchins bore niches into rock and reef, eating algae caught on their spines.

From November through March, endangered migratory Humpback whales may be passing by—spouting, breaching the water or slapping their tails. Look to the horizon for telltale plumes of water resembling geysers.

Endangered native Hawaiian Monk seals regularly haul out onto the beach during the day to snooze, tired after a night spent diving and feeding. The law requires that people give this animal plenty of space on land and in the water! It is one of only two native Hawaiian mammals—the other is the Hawaiian Hoary bat. The bulk of the Monk seal population—about 1,400 or so—is in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Less than 20 swim around the waters of Kaua'i.

Hawaiians harvested nutritious seaweed for its flavor and minerals. They caught only the amount of fish they needed in certain seasons and always left juvenile fish alone. Can you guess some ways their kapu, or tabu system on fishing is similar to practices of fishermen today? Different? Clues: Net size, commercial fishing.

7 KEONELOA BAY

Keoneola, or long sand, is the name of this bay that has yielded many archaeological treasures. Digs unearthed thumbnailed-sized coral abraders used to file fishhooks made of dog or pig bone; limestone or basalt flakes used as the points of knives or chisels; and abraders made of pencil urchin.

Some of the oldest occupation sites on Kaua'i have been discovered here, dating from between 200 to 600 A.D. A fishing camp tells of people passing through, seeking temporary, seasonal shelter, but not remaining to raise families. Perhaps these early people lived on the North Shore, or the East Side of Kaua'i. They came to know these waters for their abundance of he'e, or octopus, and other tasty fish. Permanent habitation of this area came later, around 1200 A.D.

Hawaiians built an important heiau, or temple, near here—Kane'aukai. It was said to belong to a crab god named Kahai, who sometimes turned into a fish and swam into the sea. Another story about Kane'aukai tells of a being who could appear as a human or as a log of wood. Tired of drifting in the ocean as a log, one day Kane'aukai changed to his human form and came ashore. He met two old men chattering prayers to no particular god and fishing without catching anything. Kane'aukai told them when they let down their nets to call out, "Eia ka'i a me ka'i a Kane'aukai!" "Here is the food and fish, Kane'aukai!" Their luck turned, they told others to do the same, and all caught fish.

8 MAKAWEHĪ & PA'A DUNES

Natural history treasures are eroding out of the lithified, or hardened, sand dunes known as Makawehi, or calm face, and Pa'a, or hard rock. Fossilized plant roots, bird bones, crab claws and land snails may be found—but please, leave all treasures for future dune walkers! Can you guess how these once-living things became trapped in the ancient sand dunes? And why the sand became hard limestone? Clues: Reels, ice age and associated sea level fluctuations, calcium carbonate cement, natural life cycles.

The story of these fossilized sand dunes began over 125,000 years ago, during the last stages of volcanism on Kaua'i. Skeletons of shallow, nearshore, reef-forming corals—a colonial animal—and coralline red algae—a calcite-depositing plant—eroded to form sandy beaches. Prevailing northeast trade winds blew sand off the beaches, depositing it along the coast in high dunes. Sea birds, land crabs and snails lived and died there.

During the last Ice Age, sea levels lowered by as much as 360 feet, leaving the Makawehi dunes high and dry. Volcanic ash deposits from nearby cinder cones blanketed it. A coastal lowland forest grew, forming a thin layer of soil over the windblown sand. Rainwater percolating through the porous sand caused partial dissolution of some skeletal sand grains and subsequent precipitation of calcite crystals around other grains. The crystals locked together to slowly cement the sand into a hard limestone.

At the end of the Ice Age, continental glaciers melted, sea levels rose and waves eroded much of the Makawehi dune ridge, forming Keoneola, or long sands, Bay. Roughly 8,000 years ago, Pa'a Dunes began forming on top of Makawehi, and the dune-making cycle repeated itself. The lithified sand dunes of Makawehi and Pa'a stand as a record of a worldwide climatic change.

9 PU'UWANAWANA VOLCANIC CONE

Over 5 million years ago, Kaua'i was spewed up through the ocean by the eruption of one or more shield-type volcanoes. Eastern portions of the volcano collapsed while smaller eruptions continued to take place. Look around you. Every stage of volcanism is represented in this viewpoint. Can you guess which land features are the oldest? Youngest?

Find the east-west lying Ha'upu Ridge with rounded Ha'upu Mountain. It represents some of the oldest volcanism on the island. Po'iPTU is an arid, rocky region to the south of the ridge. Little rain falls here; more falls on the north, or Lihue side of Ha'upu. Can you guess why? Clues: Trade winds, Ha'upu Ridge.

Early Polynesian voyagers were the first agriculturists here. Today, descendants of Polynesians and later immigrants farm coffee, papaya, corn and other crops that grow in rich volcanic topsoil where once taro and sweet potatoes grew. This plan is a newer land formation than the mountains. Can you guess why? Clues: Collapse of eastern portion of volcano, accumulation of volcanic materials, weathering of volcanic rock.

Find nearby Pu'uanawana, a small, somewhat cone-shaped land formation topped with rock formations, formed when lava explosively erupted and was thrown into the air, then fell back down. There are four of these cones, or vents, in the viewpoint, created in the latest stages of volcanism when a fracture in the earth poured the lava that formed them. Can you find the other three? Clue: The last one is hidden from view and has a resort in it.

10 KŌLOA JODO MISSION

Once, early Hawaiians lived around Hapa Road, farming, fishing, worshipping and enjoying nature. Archaeologists have found many clues of their existence here from about 1200 A.D. on—heiau, or temples, and many habitation platforms clustered in the extended family compound, or kahale, style. Some lava tubes—formed when a roty lava flow cools on its surface, but pressure continues and the liquid center runs out—showed evidence that people once used them.

Sealed now for safety, these lava tubes were great play spaces for kids well into the mid 1900s. In more modern times, they rode their bicycles, explored and hid out in them. One Po'iPTU resident recalls their practice at St. Raphael's Catholic Church (located at the other end of Hapa Road) being disrupted by the thunderous echo of running cattle's hooves resounding through nearby tubes into the church.

A road resembling the 1.3-mile Hapa Road first appeared on a surveyor's map in

1891, more than 50 years after the sugar industry in Kōloa began. Many people used it, but for a period of time it became overgrown and access was closed for cattle to graze. Open to the community once again, Hapa Road will take you from sea level to 160 feet above in a 45-minute, one-way walk. Look for evidence of an old railroad bed from the days when trains used to carry harvested sugar cane from the fields to the mill. Each July, guided walks on historic Hapa Road are part of the Kōloa Plantation Days festival celebrating Kōloa's sugar heritage.

11 SUGAR MONUMENT

Newcomers to Kōloa brought a variety of belief systems. Ancient Hawaiians were animistic—they believed that things animate and inanimate possess an innate soul. Christian missionaries taught that Jesus Christ died for mankind's sins. Chinese followed the teachings of Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism. Japanese immigrants brought Buddhism. Founded over 2600 years ago in India, Buddhism spread worldwide, adapting to a variety of cultural traditions and practices. At once a religion, a philosophy, an ethical and democratic system, it is, above all, a way of life and an inner attitude toward the living of life.

The Buddhist temple was an integral part of the lives of the Japanese of Kōloa, providing a place to worship, study their language, learn martial arts and participate in social events. Even today, the entire community looks forward to O-Bon season in summer, when temples honor the memories of their dead with festival dances and lit memorial candles sent out to sea.

Of three Buddhist sects established in Kōloa, two remain: Kōloa Jodo Mission and Kōloa Hongwanji Mission, located next to the post office. Both built their temples in the same year—1910. The Hongwanji temple burned down in 1994, but the mission remains.

The Jodo Mission brought temple carpenters from Japan to build the interior of the larger of its two temples. Its ceiling is inlaid with wooden tiles, each a different blossom, hand-painted by a Japanese artist who gave them as a gift. The altar image is of Amida Buddha. Amida means eternal life and infinite light. Visitors may knock on the office door at the back of the larger temple for a tour.

12 YAMAMOTO STORE & KŌLOA HOTEL

Can one plant impact a town, a region and a nation? Sugar cane did.

At the entry to Old Kōloa Town stands a monument to the industry of sugar cane in Kōloa. Kōloa Plantation was the first in Hawai'i to successfully mill cane commercially for export. It set the precedent for free housing and medical benefits for its employees—Chinese, Japanese, German, Portuguese and Filipino immigrants whose rich multicultural indefinably stamped the face of Kōloa and all Hawai'i. Sugar was shipped through Kōloa Landing to California, where it was refined and distributed—major enterprises in themselves.

Ancient Polynesians, who evolved to become the Hawaiians of today, were the first to bring sugar cane to Hawai'i. They included it in their voyaging canoes as one of 30 or so plants they used for food, clothing, shelter, medicine and more. Hawaiians chewed it, adding a sweet flavor to the mouth while cleaning the teeth. They used its tassels in dart games, and laid them on hillsides to sled upon. Later, Chinese immigrants milled sugar cane in small quantities for local consumption.

In 1835, Kōloa Plantation seeded its first cane. Entrepreneurs believed that growing sugar cane could be profitable, and it was, beyond their wildest imaginations. It also brought enormous change to the Hawaiian Islands and of course, to Kaua'i and the Kōloa area. Can you guess what some of the major changes were? Clues: land, water, people, food, architecture.

At its peak in the early 1900s, the sugar industry saw 11 plantations on Kaua'i. Mergers, acquisitions, buyouts and closures over the years resulted in name and boundary changes. In September 1995, the sugar plantation that had its beginnings as Kōloa Plantation and ended as McBrlyde Sugar Co. brought in its last harvest. It was the end of an era for Kōloa. Coffee and papaya cropped up where once grew emerald fields of cane. Each July, Kōloa celebrates its sugar heritage with a week full of activities during Kōloa Plantation Days Celebration.

13 KŌLOA MISSIONARY CHURCH

Though Kōloa Plantation ran its own store for workers, located where First Hawaiian Bank is today, many other merchants also set up for plantation workers' wages. Small shops sold groceries, fish, meat and specialty foods appealing to a variety of ethnic groups. Looking through the grocery stores of Kōloa today, can you guess which specialty foods and seasonings are cultural preferences? Can you match a food with a culture?

Nestled on the bank of Waikomo Stream next to the sprawling Monkeypod tree is the Yamamoto Building, built by a Mr. Yamaka at the turn of the century. It started out as a plantation camp store selling a variety of goods before becoming a general store and service station. By the mid-1920s, ownership changed hands to become the property of the Yamamoto family who stocked fishing supplies, crack seed, coconut candy, whole dried abalone and other treats. Patrons of the Kōloa Theatre, which used to be across the street, bought their candy and soft drinks at Yamamoto's.

Today, Po'iPTU is a resort area with plenty of places to stay, but before the turn of the century, there were no hotels. Traveling salesmen, called drummers, arrived at Kōloa Landing carrying sample cases to drum up orders from plantations, stores and individuals. Acting troupes from Japan gave performances, or shibai, to entertain plantation workers. All needed a place to stay. By the end of the 1800s, Kōloa had a hotel directly behind the Yamamoto Building. Mr. Yamaka rented rooms and the Yamada family continued when they took over. One of the highlights of the hotel was the charcoal-heated o-furo, or bathtub, where guests enjoyed relaxing soaks. The o-furo was housed in a shed separate from the hotel. Can you guess why?

14 KŌLOA MISSIONARY CHURCH

Three churches on Po'iPTU Road all trace their roots to the same Christian denomination—Congregational—and all have affiliated with different denominations since. Missionaries from New England arrived in 1820, formally establishing Kōloa as their second mission station on Kaua'i in 1834. Meetings began in people's homes, moved to a grass hut and eventually to the site across the street where The Church at Kōloa stands today. Next to it is Kōloa Union Church.

In the early days, church was an all-day affair. Some parishioners traveled more than 20 miles by horse and buggy to attend services that were held in Hawaiian and English at The Church at Kōloa. Afterwards, they spread picnic lunches, caught up on news and relaxed together. An 1860 newspaper described The Church at Kōloa at that time as "standing on high ground and seen far out at sea, forming a landmark for ships approaching the port." Do you think the same could be said today?

Kōloa Missionary Church occupies the homestead of an early medical missionary on Kaua'i, Dr. James W. Smith, who arrived in 1842 and was the only physician on Kaua'i for over 40 years. He was ordained in 1854 and served as pastor of The Church at Kōloa. His son, Dr. Jared Smith, expanded the home and later it passed on to a grandson of Dr. J.W. Smith's, Dr. Alfred Herbert Waterhouse, who used it as a home and in 1933 added a clinic.

Two other Christian churches in Kōloa started after the Congregational missionaries arrived. St. Raphael Catholic Church is the oldest Catholic church on Kaua'i, begun in 1841, and the Salvation Army Church was built about 1906.