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August 2, 2019 by **Peter T Young**

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Hōlualoa Royal Center

In the centuries prior to 1778, seven large and densely-populated Royal Centers were located along the shoreline between Kailua and Hōnaunau on the Island of Hawai'i.

The compounds were areas selected by the ali'i for their residences; ali'i often moved between several residences throughout the year. The Royal Centers were selected for the abundance of resources and recreation opportunities, with good surfing and canoe-landi sites being favored.

Chiefly residences are known to have changed over time and an ali'i would expand or modify a residential complex to meet his or her needs and desires.

Traditional histories record the lands at Hōlualoa as a chiefly residence and Royal Center.

Three major occupation sequences have been identified based on the association with various ali'i: AD 1300 (Keolonāhihi), AD 1600 (Keakamahana and Keākealaniwahine) and A 1780 (Kamehameha I) – it appears very likely that the Hōlualoa Royal Center grew and changed over time.

Hōlualoa offered a wealth of agricultural products from the Kona Field system, offshore marine resources and the surf site off Kamoā Point in Hōlualoa Bay.

The Hōlualoa Royal Center was split into two archaeological complexes, Kamoā Point/Keolonāhihi Complex and Keākealaniwahine Residential Complex.

The Hōlualoa Royal Center contained a total of several heiau structures that were constructed and dedicated for a range of religious functions that are representative of Hawaiian cultural traditions and practices.

The functions of these heiau include surfing (Hale 'A'ama), warrior training (Kanekeheilan Heiau), medicine and healing (Hualani Heiau), fertility (Mo'ipe Heiau) and preparation of a heiau for burial (Burial Heiau and Haleokekupa).

Oral traditions suggest that the Hōlualoa Royal Center was constructed as early as A.D. 1300 by the Chiefess Keolonāhihi and her husband, Aka.

Keolonāhihi was either the daughter or niece of Pā'ao. Pā'ao brought the Kū religion, along with a highly stratified social system, to Hawai'i from Tahiti, circa AD 1300.

These sites included the women's features (Keolonāhihi Heiau, Hale Pe'a and Palama), the sports heiau (Kanekeheilan) and the grandstand at Kamoā Point to view the surfing and canoeing events in Hōlualoa Bay.

Keākealaniwahine's Residence, the 16-acre mauka parcel with its 28 recorded archaeological sites – this complex contains many religious sites, including three heiau.

Much of the site's history relates to the occupation of the Royal Center by Chiefess Keakamahana and her daughter, Chiefess Keākealaniwahine, in the 17th Century. These two women were the highest-ranking Ali'i of their dynastic line and generation – tradition histories suggest they expanded the compound mauka.

The residence of Keakamahana and Keākealaniwahine is believed to be the large walled enclosure on the mauka side of Ali'i Drive.

Later, Kamehameha lived with his mother Kekuiapoiwa II and his guardians, Keaka and Luluka, at Pu'u in Hōlualoa during the rule of Kalani'ōpu'u.

At Hōlualoa, Kamehameha learned to excel in board and canoe surfing (circa 1760s to early 1770s.) "Lyman's" at Hōlualoa Bay remains a popular surf spot, today.

Later, Kalani‘ōpu‘u took Kamehameha to Ka‘u and there is no evidence that Kamehameha maintained a residence at Hōlualoa during his reign.

Kamehameha used the Keolonāhihi complex for religious purposes; after his rise to power he stored his war god, Kūka‘ilimoku, at Hale O Kaili in the Hōlualoa Royal Center.

While I was at DLNR, we submitted nomination (and received) designation of the Hōlualoa Historic District and expanded the site through the purchase of an adjoining property.

In addition, we were involved in discussions that ultimately led to the BLNR approval of a Curator Agreement for the Keolonāhihi Complex with the Betty Kanuha Foundation.

The Hōlualoa Royal Center was one of the important Points of Interest in the Royal Footsteps Along the Kona Coast Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan that we prepared.

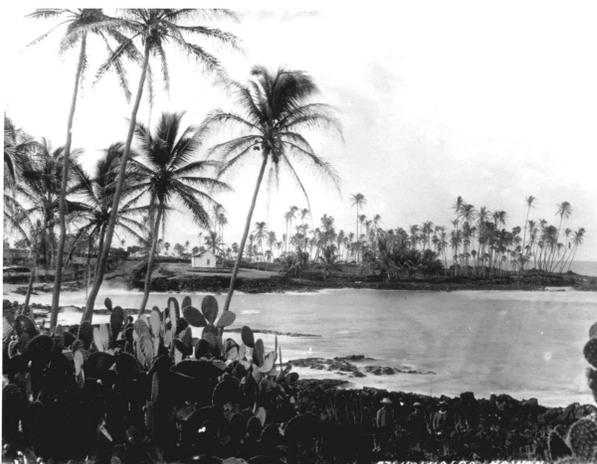
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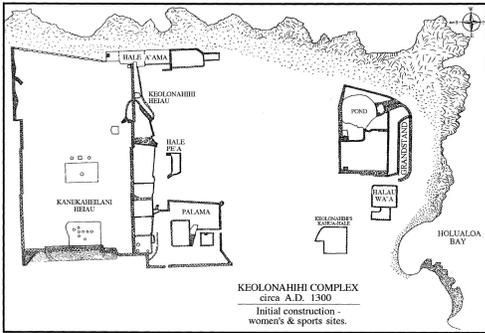
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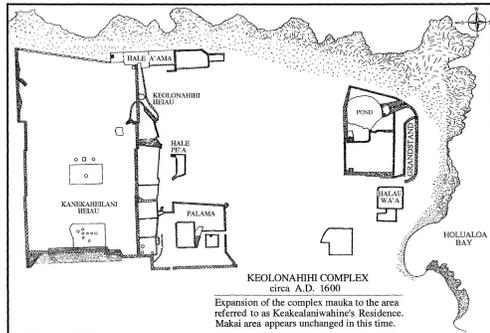
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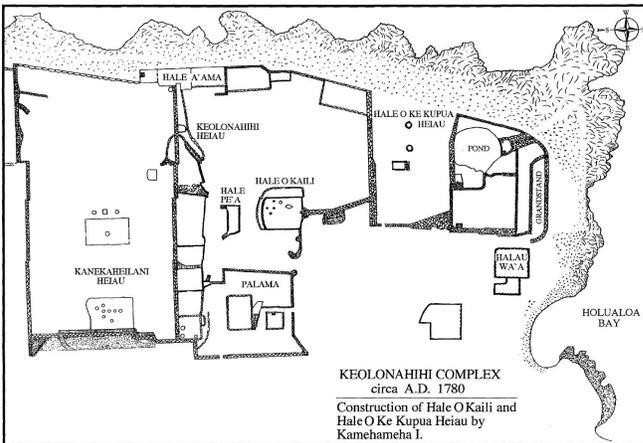




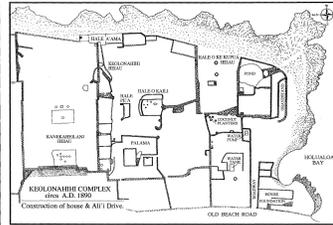
KEOLONAHIHI COMPLEX
circa A.D. 1300
Initial construction -
women's & sports sites.



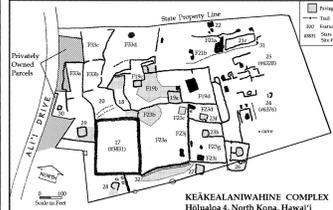
KEOLONAHIHI COMPLEX
circa A.D. 1600
Expansion of the complex makai to the area
referred to as Keakalaniwahine's Residence.
Makai area appears unchanged in this time.



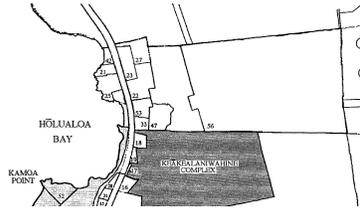
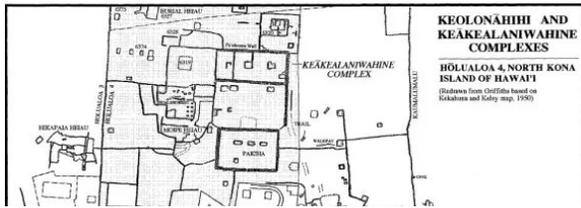
KEOLONAHIHI COMPLEX
circa A.D. 1780
Construction of Hale O Kaili and
Hale O Ke Kupua Heiau by
Kamehameha I.



KEOLONAHIHI COMPLEX
circa A.D. 1800
Construction of house & Ahi Drive.



KEAKEALANWAHINE COMPLEX
Hōlualoa 4, North Kona, Hawaii



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