



Mākua Means Parents

A Brief Cultural History of Mākua Valley

By Marion Kelly and Nancy Aleck

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Mākua Valley, 1932. US Army Signal Corps photo from General Wells' album, courtesy Schofield Barracks Library.

Polynesians first sailed their voyaging canoes to these islands from the South Pacific, perhaps as early as two thousand years ago. They came to *Ka Pae 'Āina* (the Hawaiian Archipelago), bringing with them the knowledge their ancestors had gathered over many centuries of living on small islands all across the Pacific Ocean. The first *Kānaka Maoli* (Hawaiian People; literally, the true people) already knew the rules for preserving their natural resources. They knew how to create everything they needed from limited amounts of land and from the sea around them. They brought with them an understanding of the fragile nature of an island environment. Their culture, their

daily lifestyle, and their belief system reflected their awareness of the need to preserve island resources for themselves and for their children.

The culture of *Kānaka Maoli* was based on the belief that the land and the sea and everything on the land and in the sea was created by their gods for people to use and enjoy. *Kānaka Maoli* recognized the gifts of their gods by caring for them and creating conditions that made them productive. They devoted their lives to attain harmony among themselves, their gods and their environment.

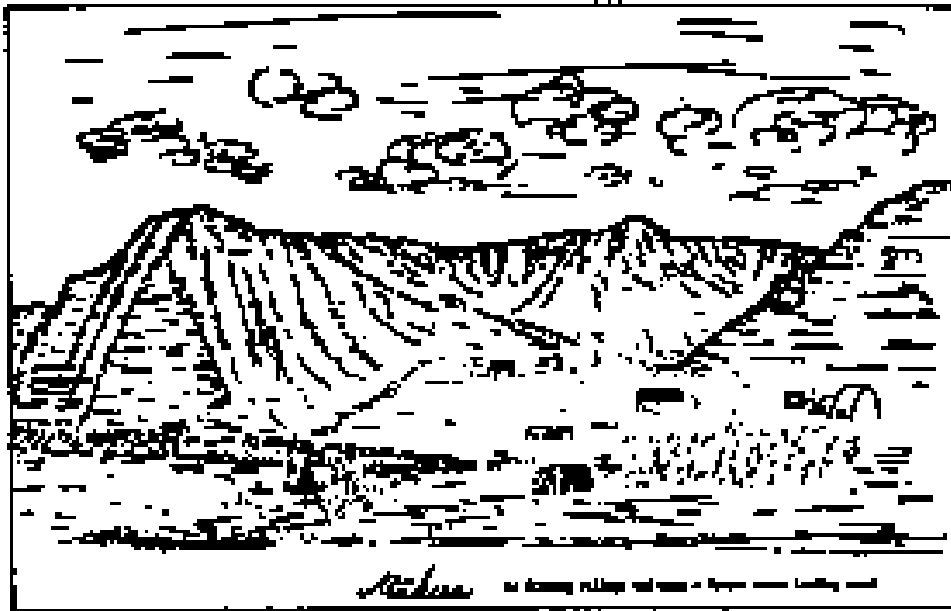
Kanaka Maoli cultivators and fishermen practiced constant concern and vigilance in every aspect of

daily life. As careful observers of their environment, they translated what they saw into codes of human conduct; they produced those things needed to survive without destroying nature's resources for future generations.

In a valley such as Mākua, where rainfall and fresh water resources are relatively sparse, keeping

alive the knowledge of successful practices is imperative. The presence of *heiau* (temples) and *ko'a* (fishing shrines) in the area suggests intense involvement and attention to these activities.

With the introduction of the market economy into Hawai'i by western traders in the late 1700s and changes



Drawing of Mākua by Rev. Hiram Bingham, circa 1821.

to land tenure in the mid-1800s, commercial values infiltrated the values of *Kanaka Maoli* society. The basic practice of Hawaiians was to use the land and sea to provide all people with the necessities of life. It was replaced by the practice of using the natural resources of the land to bring the greatest possible profits to the landowners.

A century later, military use and occupation in Mākua dealt an even greater blow. It destroyed the natural environment and furthered the alienation of land from the native tenants.

PRE-COLONIAL MĀKUA

The *mo'olelo* (oral histories) of Wai'anae claim the entire coastline from Kea'au around Ka'ena to Kawaihāpai as a *wahi pana* (sacred place). It was here that the *Kānaka Maoli* were formed from the 'āina (land). It is here that our spirits return to *Pō* (the spirit realm) at *Leina a Ka'uhane* (soul's leap). *Mākua* means parents: it is the site where *Papa* (the earth-mother) and *Wākea* (the sky-father) meet.

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Note: The original 1977 study, "A Cultural History Report of Mākua Military Reservation and Vicinity" by Marion Kelly and Sidney M. Quintal, was prepared for the Bishop Museum under U.S. Army contract. The Army was required by law to survey all the lands it was using and to identify any and all cultural sites. The report was never published. In support of growing efforts to win the return of Mākua Valley, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has prepared this paper to include information from the original report and events since 1977.



Mākua Valley, 1932. US Army Signal Corps photo from General Wells' album, courtesy Schofield Barracks Library.

Kāneana Cave was said to be the dwelling place of the shark-man. His lover was a *mo'o* (guardian lizard) who could change into a beautiful woman. They would meet at the rock below the cave where the stream meets the ocean—*pōhaku kūla'ila'i*. Both the cave and, at certain times, the stream, were *kapu* (sacred; off limits). It is likely that a *heiau ko'a* was nearby.

Many ancient legends are linked with Mākua, but little is known with certainty about the earliest

Wai'anae districts.

At one time there were at least five fresh water springs in the interior of the valley. Agriculture was practiced in the lower valley. At least three large *heiau* (temples) are known of: *Kumuakuopi'o*, a large agricultural *heiau*; *Ka'ahihi*; and *Ukanipō*, used for burial rites. In ancient times, the valley was known for its expert *lua* (Hawaiian martial arts) fighters.

Early census record by missionaries gave only one figure for the entire Wai'anae District, not by individual *ahupua'a* (a traditional land division usually encompassing the land between two ridges from the mountain top to the sea). The population of

"[T]he climate is hot and quite destitute of water and the poor ignorant natives of those days lived mostly by fishing." - written of Wai'anae in 1828 by the son of Rev. John Emerson

times. A fishing village probably dominated Mākua Beach where a number of *ko'a* stood (one was still there in the 1930s). The ocean off Mākua Beach was once a rich resource for many kinds of fish, shellfish, and *limu* (seaweed). The beach was an important canoe landing for travelers between the Wai'anae and

Mākua area was probably around 300 to 400 in pre-colonial times.

Emerson's view of Wai'anae (see insert) was seen from the dusty road on the coast. Another view of the valley is that of a deep, spacious, green valley. There were endless terraces that once produced *kalo*

(taro) and *'uala* (sweet potatoes). Then, in the 1820s and 1830s, foreigners introduced western diseases. As a result, the *Kanaka Maoli* population was drastically reduced and the terraces were no longer cultivated.

Botanists throughout the 20th century have found upper Mākua valley to be the location of one of O'ahu's most abundant collections of rare and endangered Hawaiian plants. Mākua was known for its *maile lauli'i*. It was said that people walking along the



Ivanhoe Naiwi at the spring in lower Mākua Valley. The spring is associated in legends with the *mo'o* of Kalena Stream Pond.

beach could smell the fragrance of this small-leaved *maile*.

The Māhele of 1848 required *Kānaka Maoli* to file claims for their *'ohana* (family) lands. About 200 acres were eventually awarded to Hawaiian families in Mākua. It can be assumed that Mākua Valley was well cultivated, since one of the requirements for a *kuleana* claimant was that his land had to be used to grow crops to feed his family.

Mākua Valley was made Government Land by Kamehameha III at the time of the 1848 Māhele, and sixteen *kuleana* were awarded in Mākua Valley in the 1850s. The rest remained Government Land that was leased out by the government to non-*Kānaka Maoli* for ranching.

CIVILIAN OCCUPATION OF MĀKUA

Beginning in the 1860s and after, there were at least two well-known western family names involved in ranching in Mākua. Samuel Andrews was the son of

Judge Lorrin Andrews. Rather than follow in his father's footsteps and become a missionary, Samuel Andrews chose to be a rancher. He was comfortable living and working with *Kānaka Maoli*. Andrews raised a family with Malaea Naiwi, whose home originally had been in Waimea, Hawai'i. Most of their children took their mother's surname. Andrews lived in Mākua until Naiwi died in 1897. Shortly thereafter Andrews sold his lease to Lincoln McCandless, including some *kuleana* in the valley that he had acquired. McCandless became a major landowner in Mākua Valley, as well as other places on O'ahu. The *Commercial Advertiser* called him "Link the Land Baron," and said he made a specialty of getting *kuleana* from native tenants (October 20, 1908).

It became increasingly difficult for the *Kanaka Maoli* families who remained in the valley to live surrounded by ranching activities, so they eventually moved to the coastal area. Originally, sweet potato was the basic crop; land near the freshwater springs was used for *kalo*. People interviewed in 1975 remembered crops of cucumber, watermelon, pumpkin, sweet potato, cotton, tobacco and corn grown in the lower part of the valley. Although rainfall was limited, wells pumped by windmills furnished somewhat brackish water for residents. Brackish water ponds existed most of the year, some providing habitats for edible fish.



Helemihi House, circa 1913. Photo from Mable Putnam Chil-son albums, courtesy Hawaiian Historical Society.



ABOVE: Planting cucumber seeds. Ushijima children prepare a field for planting, circa 1930s. Photo loaned by H. Okamoto.

RIGHT: Mākua Railroad Station. Photo loaned by H. Okamoto.



“... I was born on the hill right in Mākua, and they call it Pu‘upa‘i ... My dad had his ranch house ... he had cows ... horses and ... vegetables, too. And alongside of his place was a stream. It was a beautiful place. All the Hawaiian people gathering at the station mixed in with the cowboys and kids, waving and saluting. We would give them a toot-toot, and pretty soon...they would be out of sight. We would come Saturday morning to Mākua. As soon as we get there, all the Hawaiians down there would be waiting for us at the depot...We used to have a nice time. Those days won't come back any more,” A Train Engineer of 25 years

Paniolo Days

Young Hawaiian and other local boys worked as cowboys for McCandless from their early teens. Roping wild cattle in the forests of Mākua was an art, and only a few achieved proficiency at it. In addition to cattle, several hundred pigs were kept on Mākua Ranch. Wild pigs that often took over the feeding troughs, were caught and given to the cowboys.

Today, the influence of rooting pigs and browsing goats is evident within the native forest of Mākua. Native flora ground cover has been removed, soil erosion has depleted some species, and native plants have been eaten or overtaken by introduced species.

Those who lived at Mākua before 1947 have vivid memories of the trains that came and went, all signs of which have now nearly completely disap-



ABOVE: Mākua Beach scene, circa 1913. Note church and *auolo* (canoe shed) in the distance and *wa'a* (canoes) and fish-nets on the beach. Photo from Mable Putnam Chilson albums, courtesy Hawaiian Historical Society.



LEFT: Mākua Church Choir, circa 1915. John Naiwi, choir master, kneeling in center. Photo loaned by H. Meyers.

peared. For almost fifty years the train was Mākua's most important link, bringing news, supplies, and people, and taking cattle and surplus produce and fish to the markets of Wai'anae, 'Ewa, and Honolulu. Most of the Japanese who lived in Mākua Valley in the early 1900s came as railroad workers and stayed at the Section Camp. For a dollar a day pay they built and maintained the track.

At least once a year the church communities from Waialua and from the Wai'anae coast would gather at Mākua Church for a Saturday evening concert and services the following day.

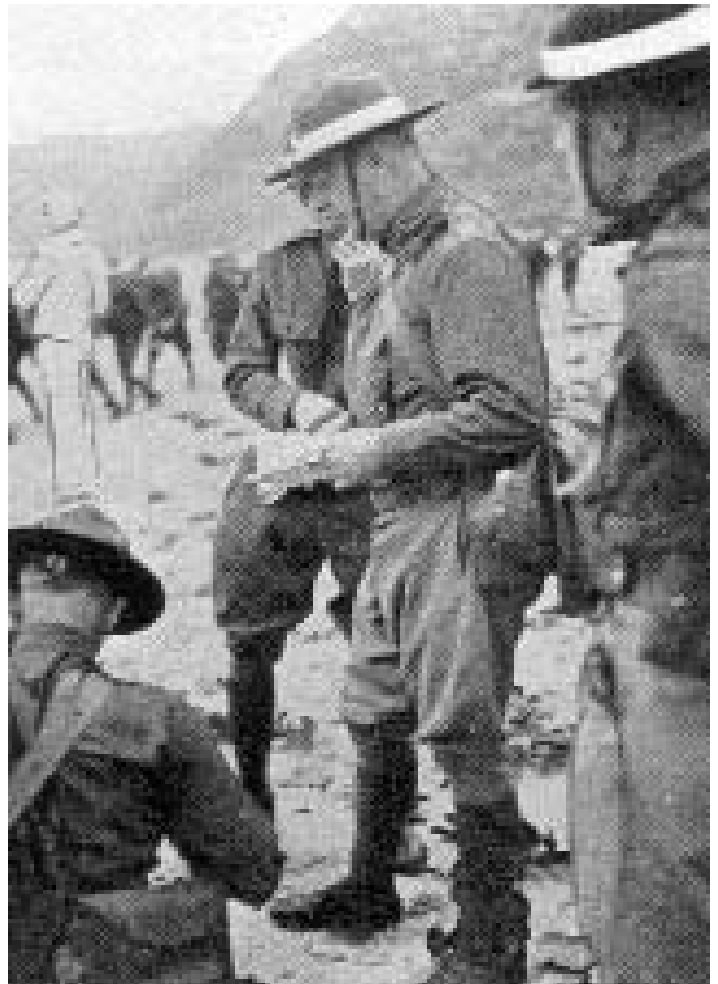
The first written mention of Mākua Church is found in a minister's 1860 complaint about the parishioners dancing. When he tried to put a stop to this, however, the people resisted. Mākua Church was one of the Hawaiian Protestant Congregational Churches, but it remained relatively independent when most others joined the United Church Council. Although the church was destroyed by the military during World War II, the Mākua congregation still maintains the cemetery and is gradually restoring the area.

MILITARY OCCUPATION OF MĀKUA

U.S. military use of Mākua Valley dates from the 1920s when it first acquired three parcels in the



*“At about 11 A.M. ... there came sounds of boats scraping on the sandy beaches nearby, and bursts of strong language. We know the marines were landing! ... All in all it was hard work, fine experience and good fun. We hope to go again some day.” — From the *Infantry Journal*, March-April, 1932.*



PHOTOS THIS PAGE: 30th Infantry amphibious landing at Mākua, 1932. Walter Mann, in *Infantry Journal* 39, p.87, 1932.





In the 1970s activists fought to protect Mākua as well as Kaho‘olawe. Now that Kaho‘olawe has been returned and is being restored, activists are renewing the movement for the return of Mākua. Unexploded ordnance litters the valley in Mākua, making the valley hazardous. Photo: Ed Greevy.

upper floor of the valley for howitzer emplacements. Condemnation proceedings, or notice to turn over, or sell lands were begun with the valley residents. Public notice in the newspaper called on those who might have title to appear in court to certify their claims. No one (with the exception of L.L. McCandless) was paid

“Under these conditions you couldn’t even talk. Martial law came in, they move you out of Mākua...and that’s it.” [Interview No. 14]

for condemned parcels. Military war games in the 1930s first used Mākua for amphibious landings.

At War in the Pacific

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the US Army took over the entire Mākua-Kaena Point area for military security and training operations. At this time there were about 3,000 people living along the Wai‘anae Coast. World War II changed the use of the

valley dramatically. It was transformed from a relatively peaceful cattle ranch into a busy garrison. The remaining *kuleana* residents, the railroad workers, and the McCandless Estate ranch were told to leave the valley. Structures were demolished by target practice, fences torn down, pipelines cut, fishing holes bombed,

and fresh water wells were used as dumps for waste oil.

Up to 1943, Mākua had been used mainly for howitzers and troop bivouacs. Newly modified training activities changed the valley into an area of intensive joint Army-Navy maneuvers. The Navy sent planes to bomb the valley, while battleships shelled it from the ocean and troops were landed from amphibious crafts. White crosses were painted on the roofs of homes and on the Church and church hall, and the sites were bombed. Even gravestones in Mākua cemetery

were damaged by live target practice. The number of military personnel on O‘ahu rose to 400,000, many of

the Army for the lower portion of the valley. The cost to the Army was \$1.00 for the term of the lease. The coastal area was granted from the federal government to the State as a public trust and allowed for public access and use, except when training activities would present a danger.

“What have the military accomplished? The total destruction of Makua Valley! What have they gained? Nothing! . . . It is a gross stupidity for not returning Makua to the rightful owners!”

Ivanhoe K. Naiwi, Letter dated April 5, 1988

At War in Mākua

whom lived in a tent city in Mākua Valley.

A permit issued by the Territory in 1943 specified that military use of the area was to be “for the duration of the present war [WWII] and six months thereafter.” This “Revocable Permit 200” also agreed that upon relinquishment of the area, the military authorities would “remove all its property and return the premises ... [in] a condition satisfactory to the Commissioner of Public Lands.”

World War II in the Pacific ended in August, 1945. As early as November of that year, Territory of Hawai‘i Governor Stainback called for the return of

Mākua. “I feel strongly that these lands should be made

available to the public again and not permanently removed from their enjoyment,” he wrote to the US War Department. His request was denied. The Army by now had plans for a permanent Mākua training area.

The Statehood Admission Act of 1959 allowed the Federal government to reserve land for military purposes. This formed the basis for President Johnson’s Executive Order in 1964 which reserved the interior portion of the valley as Mākua Military Reservation. This also provided a 65-year lease to the

To this day, military activities continue at Mākua. The local population of the Wai‘anae Coast has swelled to over 40,000 people. The Army controls approximately 4,200 acres in Mākua Valley and uses the land 75% of the time. Training activities have included ground maneuvers, amphibious landings,



Unexploded ordnance in Mākua Valley. Photo: Ed Greevy.

naval and air bombardment, helicopter strafing, mortar and artillery fire, mustard gas and napalm use. They also include open burn and open detonation (OBOD) of old ammunition and other waste from military sites all over O‘ahu. Bombing and fires caused by live-fire training have damaged cultural sites, burned forest and killed many of the endangered plant and animal species native to the valley. Lead and various cancer-causing toxins have been introduced into the air, land and water.

In 1955 the Army said that Mākua Valley was so contaminated that it was not practical to return it. However, this did not stop them from continuing to harm the environment. In 1977 the military again pointed out how expensive it would be to de-dud Mākua. Peter Apo, who was then working with the Wai‘anae Hawaiian Heritage Center, replied, “Even if

continues to this day and is not subject to public review.

Department of Defense policy is to return target lands only after all explosives are cleared. Continuing the training exercises and burnings will guarantee that cleaning Mākua Valley will eventually be impossible, making it unsafe for anyone to ever use



As the military continues its occupation and desecration of Mākua, Kānaka Maoli are denied access to the valley. Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

the land. This has occurred in Waikāne Valley, where the military leased land from the Kamaka family for live ammunition training. When they were through, the Marine Corps never cleaned up the land as it promised in the lease. Instead, they claimed that the Kamaka property was now too hazardous for human use and too costly to clean up. The condemned land, was made it off-limits to the public, including the Kamaka family, forever!

it takes a hundred years to restore the Valley it obviously makes more sense to start now than to keep bombing.” But the Army insisted. In 1988 they wrote that it “would not be feasible in either terms of time or money, to clear unexpended ordnance from Mākua Military Reservation.”

In November of 1992, the Army applied for a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency to permanently conduct open burn/open detonation (OBOD) of waste munitions. Following public outcry, this request was withdrawn. However, 95% of the OBOD done at Mākua is classified as “training” and is exempt from EPA regulations. This type of “training”

Rare and endangered plants and animals struggle to maintain their habitats within Mākua. **Another form of life is also endangered: the people.**

At War with a Culture

“You know, we gave back Germany and Japan after the war and returned the land to the people who we were at war with. Now what’s the big deal with Mākua Valley?” [Interview No. 9]

Relationship to the land is primary in Hawaiian culture. But, public access to the Mākua Valley is limited and under strict military control. Because of Mākua’s bounty and beauty, Hawaiians and other local residents have always been drawn there to practice a simple and traditional lifestyle. Despite consistent live-fire training in the upper valley, some have found refuge at Mākua beach. For centuries, *Kānaka Maoli* have gone



ABOVE: Mākua Council, 1996. Houseless *Kānaka Maoli* made Mākua their *pu'uhonua*, a place of refuge, healing and peace. Photo: Ed Greevy

RIGHT: The military painted a white cross on the church and bombed it. All that remains is the local cemetery and rubble. Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

BELOW: The state evicted families living on Mākua Beach June 18, 1996. It bulldozed homes and barricaded the beach. The graffiti on the barricade reads "No Hawaiians -- No Aloha." Photo: Kyle Kajihiro



to Mākua to fish, gather salt, and teach their children about their heritage. These practices are expressions of *Kanaka Maoli* cultural and religious way of life developed over millenia to serve the needs of the 'ohana. Today, the government labels such families "squatters." For more than two decades, people have been consistently evicted from Mākua Beach.

In 1965 a motion picture company was allowed use of Mākua Beach for the filming of the movie *Hawai'i*. To accommodate the movie company's needs, the state requested the police to see that all "squatters" were removed.

Then, in 1969 the Division of State Parks began an effort to create a Mākua-Ka'ena Point State Park, which included Mākua Valley, the M ā k u a - K e a ' a u , Mokulē'ia, and Kua-okalā Forest Reserves, with Peacock Flats to be left as a protected



Several of the ten thousand mourners at the funeral of Israel "Iz" Kamakawiwo'ole at Mākua Beach, July 12, 1997. Photo: Sparky Rodrigues

wilderness area. The Army was again unwilling to release the land at Mākua.

At the time of this original study in 1977, fifty-two dwellings were counted on the beach at Mākua. During that year, one of the earliest protests was held. Two hundred *Kānaka Maoli* and supporters placed a flag at the Army's locked gate, claiming Mākua for the people.

After Hurricane Iwa destroyed the homes of about 40 people living at Mākua Beach in 1982, the State sent police, dogs, and machinery to stop them from rebuilding. *Kōkua Mākua 'Ohana* was formed, and in January of 1983 six people were arrested for "obstructing governmental operations." These

resisters, "the Mākua Six," argued that the land belonged to the Hawaiian nation and that they had the right to exercise traditional and customary practices of subsistence, culture and religion. Several hundred people rallied in support of the Mākua residents.

As many as 300 people were living at Mākua Beach in the fall of 1995. Some had been there for years. Most, who called it home, found it a healing place, a *pu'uhonua*. On June 18, 1996, 16 people were arrested when state authorities evicted families from Mākua Beach. State bulldozers demolished their

dwellings. The news media was barred from covering this eviction, the third eviction at Mākua since 1983.

Despite these repeated attempts to deny them their traditional practices at Mākua, *Kānaka Maoli* continue to exert their cultural rights there. On July 12, 1997, nearly ten thousand mourners gathered at Mākua Beach to bid farewell to

singer/songwriter Israel Kamaka-wiwo'ole and scatter his ashes at sea. Two days later, the Marine Corps announced plans to land nearly 700 California-based troops in those same waters and march them across the beach for war games in the valley. Strong community opposition forced the cancellation of the September exercises, but the Marine Corps has stated that it intends to conduct amphibious landings at Mākua twice a year.

In the more than 50 years of battle training, the war against the traditional life of Mākua has not been a "training exercise." In other areas of the world where the U.S. military has engaged in a real war, it has, at the end of hostilities, returned the land to the people



ABOVE: *Kanaka Maoli* students from the University of Hawai‘i clear weeds at Mākua to reopen a stream bed. Efforts like these will be critical to the restoration of *ahupua‘a*. Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

and helped to restore it. This is not so of Hawaiian Land.

The military occupation of Mākua Valley, their use of the beach, the destruction of sacred sites and endangered species habitats, and the consistent eviction of people from Mākua Beach are all harming the ‘āina and slowly killing the culture. This is a form of cultural genocide - if the means for practicing the culture is destroyed, the culture eventually is destroyed.

In August of 1997, two *Kanaka Maoli* cultural structures were restored at Mākua. *Pōhaku* (stones) were gathered for the building of a *paepae* (foundation) named *Papa Honua* (Earth Foundation) ☀



and a for a *kuahu* (altar) dedicated to *Kanaloa*, the god



In 1996 when the State announced plans to evict the residents of Mākua, the community organized to fight the eviction. The State succeeded in evicting the families, but their spirit lives on. *I mua Mākua!* Photo: Ed Greevy

E ola hou 'o Mākua

May Mākua live again



ABOVE LEFT: Volunteers from Koa Mana, Mālama Mākua, Hui Mālama o Kāne'ākī, AFSC, and friends restore a *paepae* (foundation) named *Papa Honua*. Once there was a *Kanaka Maoli* settlement here. Photo: Bonita Chang

ABOVE RIGHT: Native Hawaiian practitioners constructed a *kuahu* (altar) dedicated to *Kanaloa*. Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

LEFT: When Senator Inouye came out in support of the marines landing at Mākua, the Hawai'i Ecumenical Coalition and other organizations organized a vigil at Punchbowl Cemetery. The vigil highlighted the similarities between the desecration of Punchbowl by vandals and the military desecration of *Kanaka Maoli* burials at Mākua and elsewhere. Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

If you wish to help to free Mākua, contact:

Mālama Mākua
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Historic sites in Mākua and Kahanahaiki Valleys by several archaeologists and illustrated in Rosendahl's report as Fig. 12-1. Site distributions at Mākua Ahupua'a.



Ē, Makua,
Fishing companion of Kawelo,
Awake!
It is day.
The sun is rising.
Bring hooks and lines and net.
The paddles rattle.
The bailers rattle.
Ē, Makua, awake!
It is day.*

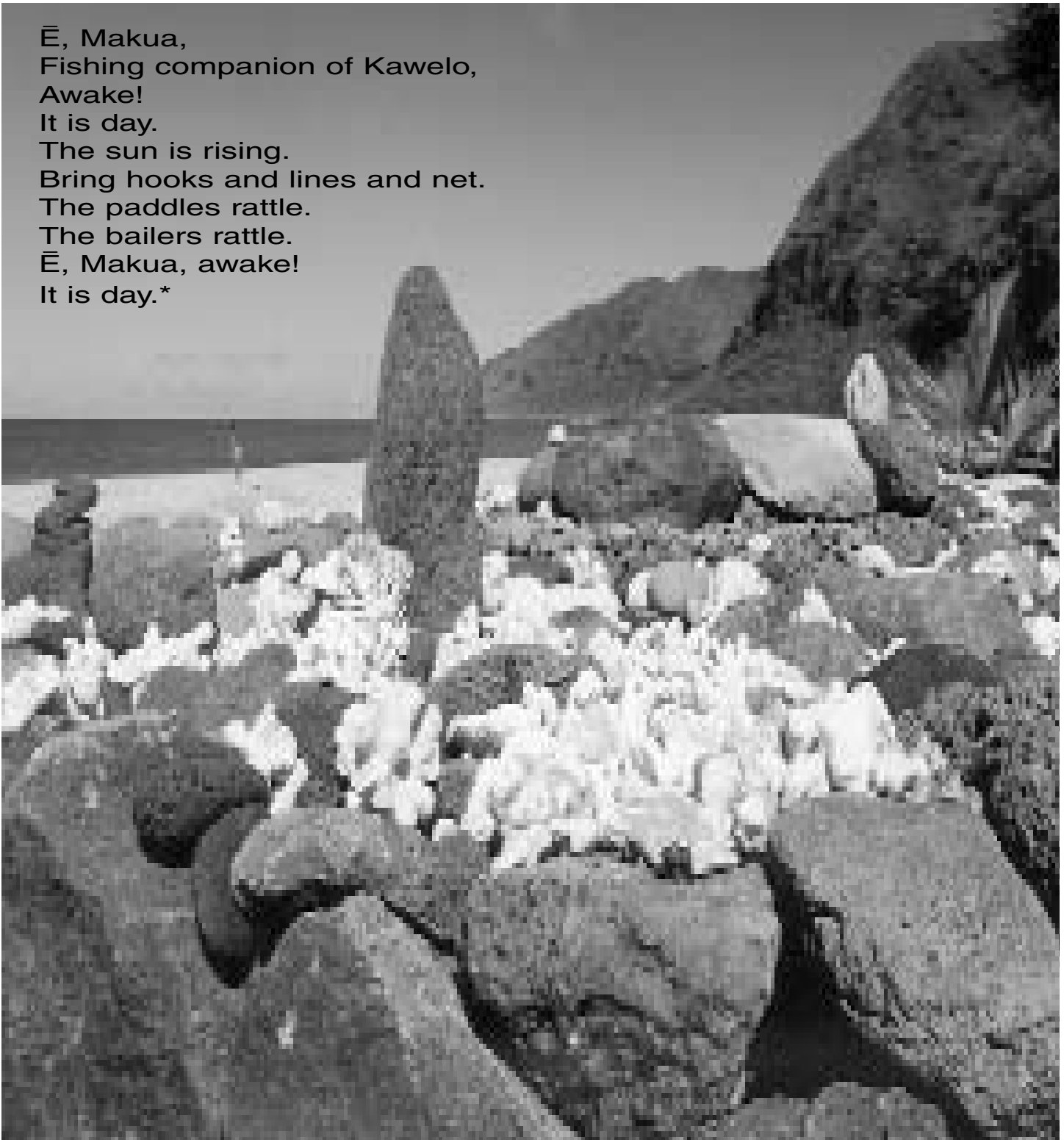


Photo: Kyle Kajihiro

* From Kawena Pukui and Caroline Curtis, *The Waters of Kāne, and Other Legends of the Hawaiian Islands*. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press. 1951.