

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE HAWAII	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XKI - Special Study -- Hawaii History
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Waimoa Beach (Cook Landing Site)	4. APPROX. ACREAGE about 4 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) On the southwestern shore of the Island of Kauai immediately west of the mouth of	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) * see below	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant) the Waimoa River, in front of the eastern end of the town of Waimoa. (see also block 9)	

6. About 1 acre on the west bank of the river immediately south of the highway bridge, containing the most probable landing place, is owned by the County of Kauai and is maintained as a recreational park. The breakwater and beach south of the park are owned by the State of Hawaii.

(7. According to the best evidence currently available, the beach at Waimoa was the spot where Captain James Cook, the first European known to have sighted the Hawaiian Islands, made his initial landing upon island soil on January 20, 1778. In Cook's own judgment, this discovery of the Hawaiian Islands seemed "in many respects to be the most important ... made by Europeans throughout ... the Pacific area"; but the perspective of time has not sustained this opinion since the effect upon the rest of the world was relatively minor. For the Hawaiian Islands, however, the discovery was momentous. Hitherto, during centuries of nearly complete isolation, the pattern of Hawaiian social and cultural life had evolved gradually and primarily from internal forces. Henceforth, economic and social change was rapid and was moved primarily by external forces. In a sense, it is true that, as has been claimed, the American occupation of Hawaii was a result of this discovery.

While on his way from the Society Islands to the Northwest Coast of America during his third great voyage of Pacific exploration, Cook and his men, on the ships Resolution and Discovery, sighted a hitherto unknown island at dawn on the morning of January 18, 1778. The mountainous isle later proved to be Oahu. Soon another island was seen to the north. This was Kauai, and toward it, because of the prevailing winds, Cook directed his course. The next day the vessels coasted the eastern shore of Kauai. Trade was opened with the natives

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8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

James Cook and James King, A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, Undertaken ... in the Years, 1776, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (4 vols., Perth, Australia, 1785), II, 99-159.

James Cook, The Explorations of Captain James Cook in the Pacific as Told by Selections of His Own Journals, 1768-1779 (Melbourne, Australia, 1938), 215-225.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

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Map reference USGS, Topographic Map of the Island of Kauai, 1:62500 scale, 1957.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION altered, but historic scene can be pictured.	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Beach, wharf	13. DATE OF VISIT April 27, 1962
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) John A. Hussey	15. TITLE Regional Historian	16. DATE May 24, 1962	

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
 SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE HAWAII	NAME(S) OF SITE Waiimea Beach (Cook Landing Site)
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7. Importance and description (cont'd):

who came off in canoes. The Hawaiians at once showed a great avidity for iron of which they had some knowledge, probably from pieces of the metal washed ashore with driftwood. Incidentally, the old theory that the islands had previously been discovered by Spanish voyagers has been thoroughly disproved.

On January 20, 1778, Cook found what seemed to be a possible anchoring ground off the mouth of the Waiimea River, on the southwestern coast of Kauai. About 9 o'clock in the morning he sent Lieut. John Williamson with 3 boats ashore to "look out for a proper landing-place, and for fresh water." About noon, Williamson returned, reporting that behind a beach, near a village, he had found a large lagoon said by the natives to contain fresh water, and that the anchorage in front of it was "tolerable." In attempting to land at another place, Williamson had shot and killed a native who was attempting to steal articles from the boats. Thus were the Hawaiians early made acquainted with the power of firearms.

Cook then anchored a mile off the village and, between 3 and 4 in the afternoon, he went ashore in 3 armed boats. The natives had assembled "in considerable numbers on a sandy beach before the village," "behind which was a valley" "in which was the piece of water." As soon as he "leaped" ashore, the natives prostrated themselves as they did for their own highest chiefs. Friendly relations being established, he visited the lagoon, determined that the water was good, and returned to his ship. The next morning he went ashore again, this time making an "excursion" up the valley. He noted the villages, native temples, crops, cultivated trees, and the other aspects of Hawaiian culture. He made one more landing during his stay, but he soon sailed the Resolution for Niihau, leaving Captain Clarke, of the Discovery, to complete the watering operation. After about two weeks at Waiimea and Niihau, the ships sailed for America. Waiimea was briefly visited again by the ships, after Cook's death, during their second and final stay in the island group.

In addition to marking the effective discovery of the Hawaiian Islands, the landing at Waiimea was important in other ways. Cook's observations of the natives and their customs, the first ever recorded, are of ethnological importance, as are the drawings made by other members of the expedition. And it may have been at Waiimea although it probably was on Niihau, that Cook's sailors, despite every precaution taken by their commander, introduced venereal disease into the islands. Thus, from nearly the first day of discovery, contact with Western civilization began its work of disintegrating the native culture and decimating the native population.

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7. Importance and description (cont'd):

The site is still somewhat as it appeared in Cook's time, although a stone wall and breakwater at the west entrance of the river have to some degree changed the beach scene. Yet a small county park and the beach preserve a sizeable area of open space. A plaque in the town square of Waimea, "erected by the people of Kauai" in 1928, commemorates Cook's landing. It is maintained by the County of Kauai.

8. Bibliographical Ref. (cont'd)

Samuel M. Kamakau, Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii (Honolulu, 1961), 92-104.

Arthur Kitson, Captain James Cook (London, 1907), 417-421.

Ralph S. Kuykendall, The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854 (Honolulu, 1957), 12-15.

Interview with Mr. Edward K. Robinson, Waimea, April 27, 1962.

UNITED STATES
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WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Cook Landing Site, Waimea, Island of Kauai

Waimea Beach on the southwestern coast of Kauai is the site, according to the best evidence on the subject, where Captain James Cook, the great English explorer, made his first landing in the Hawaiian Islands on January 30, 1778. He was the first European to discover the Islands and to land on them. Cook sighted an unknown island (Oahu) on the morning of January 18, 1778 while on his way across the Pacific Ocean from the Society Islands to the Northwest Coast of North America. He soon saw another island to the north and, because the prevailing winds favored proceeding there rather than to the first island sighted, Cook directed his ships, the Resolution and Discovery, to it. This was Kauai. The County of Kauai owns 1 acre and the State of Hawaii about 3 acres at the landing site at Waimea Beach.

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NSHSB 11-14-62

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

Cook Landing Site

Date: August 28, 1969

Visited by:

Russell A. Apple, Hawaii-Pacific Historian on occasion of unveiling of plaque

1. Location: Plaque adjacent to modern seawall, Waimea River, near ocean, on County administered land but close to State administered land. Across river from "Russian Fort," Waimea, Kauai.
2. Theme: XVI - Indigenous People and Cultures
3. Owner State of Hawaii, through County of Hawaii, and Division of State Parks, Department of Land and Natural Resources.
 - a. When designated 1963
 - b. Present: (x) Same
() New
4. Use: Actual Cook's Landing unknown, but probably in middle of existing town; land seaward is accreted.
 - a. When designated 1963
 - b. Present: (x) Same
() Changed as follows:

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

Cook Landing Site

5. Plaque and Certificate: Location and condition
- a. Plaque Mounted on rock, beside seawall of Waimea River, near ocean, Waimea town. (On County administered land.)
 - b. Certificate ~~In Office of State Parks, Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawaii.~~ Western Regional Office
6. Physical condition The actual site of Cook's Landing is probably way inland; land has accreted since 1778.
- a. When designated No major change from 1963.
 - b. Present: () Excellent; () Good; () Fair; (X) Poor
If based on immediate scene, but excellent potential if recognized
Comments: /and treated as a vicinity.

Land seaward of probable landing site has been filled and occupied and river confined within man-made channels, so that entire vicinity has been changed since 1778. This does not detract from event, as long as the physical changes are acknowledged.

Cleanup of site, better litter control, and appearance of nearby structures needed. State has been contacted in this regard.

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

Cook Landing Site

7. Special Problems:

Inability to show beach line as in 1778 due to man-made and natural changes; some confusion between monuments; such as Captain Cook Park, inland and near High School; 1928 monument in middle of Waimea community; and 1969 Landmark plaque near beach on river. Probably the 1928 Cook Sesquicentennial Plaque is closer to actual landing than any other. But community is aware of problem and will probably standardize on one area before 200th anniversary in 1978.

8 Suggestions Offered:

The State take the lead in centralizing the location on which the 200th anniversary of Cook's landing will take place, and that the National Park Service serve only as advisors to the State.