

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. XXI. Special Study - Hawaii History	
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Puukohola Heiau (Heiau of Pu'u Kohola)		4. APPROX. ACREAGE 10 acres	
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) (on the Puako road directly west of its junction with the Kawaihae-Haione Rd), in South			
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) 0.9 mile southeast of Kawaihae (junction with the Kawaihae-Haione Rd), in South Kamehameha District, Island of Hawaii; map ref. Parker Ranch, Mr. Richard Penhallow, Mgr., owned by Queen's Hospital, Honolulu; see block 9			
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)			

This ancient temple, sitting high atop a hill about 150 yards from the Puako road, is perhaps the most famous heiau in all the islands. It is an impressive structure, measuring about 224 by 100 feet, walled on the ends and on the landward side, the seaward side being open and terraced. It overlooks Mailekini Heiau, another large temple down the slope a short distance to the northwest.

The original temple on this site was in existence as early as the time of Lonoikamakahiki (about 1550) and was even then a place of human sacrifice. The present heiau was built, or rebuilt, by Kamehameha the Great and is closely associated with his rise to power as supreme ruler of all the islands.

In 1790 Kamehameha, king of Kohala, Kona, and Hamakua districts on Hawaii, successfully invaded Maui, Lanai, and Molokai. During long years of earlier struggle, he had not been able to conquer the other two kingdoms on Hawaii. While on Molokai he sent an emissary to the famous soothsayer of Kauai, Kapoukahi, to determine how he could conquer all of the island of Hawaii. He was told that he must erect a large new heiau at Puukohola, near Kawaihae.

Called back to Hawaii by an invasion of Kohala by his cousin, Keoua, ruler of Kau and part of Puna, Kamehameha fought more battles without gaining a decisive victory. Meanwhile, he remembered the words of the soothsayer and started to erect the heiau near Kawaihae. So great was the undertaking that workers by the thousands were called in; even chiefs and Kamehameha himself joined the labor. This "pious enterprise" was interrupted by an invasion from Maui and Oahu, but Kamehameha defeated the attackers in a famous naval battle off Waipio in the spring of 1791. The heiau was then finished during the summer of that year. One account says 11 men were sacrificed upon its completion.

Kamehameha then invited his great rival, Keoua, to come to Kawaihae to make peace. Despite a fear of treachery, Keoua, for some unknown reason, accepted. As he was about to step ashore from his canoe he was attacked by one of Kamehameha's chiefs and

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

William Ellis, Narrative of a Tour Through Hawaii (3rd ed., London, 1827), 81-83.
Samuel M. Kamakau, Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii (Honolulu, 1961), 154-158.

(cont'd)

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

Map reference: Heiau is shown on USGS, Kawaihae Quadrangle, 7.5' Series.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		11. CONDITION Excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Historical exhibit	13. DATE OF VISIT 5/4/58; 3/29/62
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) John A. Insoey		15. TITLE Regional Historian	16. DATE May 25, 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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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 Pukohola Heiau (Heiau of Pu'u Kohola)
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7. Importance and description (cont'd)

killed, along with a number of his companions. His body was taken up the hill to the new heiau and sacrificed. His death, in the summer of 1791, ended all opposition to Kamehameha on Hawaii, and all the island fell to "The Lonely One." With this accomplishment behind him, he was free, a few years later to proceed with the conquest of all the islands and to found the Hawaiian Kingdom.

The incident was not only a crucial step in Kamehameha's rise to supreme power, but it also superbly illustrates the fact that he, despite more than a decade of contact with foreigners, remained true to the ancient Hawaiian social, political, and religious system. His treatment of Kaoua, which has never been fully explained, was typical of the ruthlessness by which Hawaiian chiefs sometimes gained power.

The heiau, which has been restored, is in excellent condition and is open to the public, with walks and steps to provide easy access. It commands a superb view of the west coast of Hawaii. It is marked by a bronze tablet erected by the Territorial Superintendent of Public Works in 1928.

8. Bib. Ref. (cont'd)

Ralph S. Kuykendall, The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854 (Honolulu, 1938), 36-38.

Thomas G. Chrum, "Tales from the Temples - Part II," in The Hawaiian Annual for 1908 (Honolulu, 1907), 64-69.