

# KILO 'AINA

RR1 BOX 581 • CAPTAIN COOK, HAWAII 96704 • (808) 328-2569

2 March, 1981

Wilson, Okamoto & Associates  
P. O. Box 3530  
Honolulu, HI 96811

Att.: Mr. Gary Okamoto

Gentlemen:

In accordance with the request of Mr. H. F. Richards, 5 February, 1981, I have searched for archaeological and historic features on the parcel identified by Tax Map Key 8-1-07:por. 1, situated at Keopuka, South Kona, Hawaii.

The area examined comprises the portion of the same parcel not covered by my report to you dated 21 July, 1980. It extends from the shore inland about 7400 feet, rises to about 850 feet above sea level and contains approximately 500 acres. Average annual rainfall at the shore is probably less than 40 inches, increasing with elevation to perhaps 50 inches at the upper edge. The entire area is classified by the Soil Conservation Service as "Rough lava" consisting mostly of very recent aa. which supports virtually no vegetation except at the upper edge. The aa flow did not reach the shore except near the southern boundary of Keopuka, leaving a broad, flat promontory of older pahoehoe on which grow a few scattered 'uhaloa, 'ilima, noni and grasses. At the southwestern corner, near the Kaawaloa boundary, kiawe and ekoa are well established along the shore. The entire shore of Keopuka is typically sea cliffs 20 feet high with numerous blowholes, fissures and lava tubes.

The parcel is within the "Kona Field System" (HRHP 10-37-6601) which has been declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. However, there is no evidence of systematic cultivation by the aboriginal Hawaiian on the parcel examined, nor is there any reason to expect any, of the kind defined in the nomination forms. The Kealakekua Bay Archaeological and Historic District (HRHP 10-47-7000), which is listed on the National Register, includes a narrow portion of Keopuka along the southern edge of the parcel examined, approximately as shown on the accompanying plan. Such districts were defined arbitrarily as quadrilaterals to include general areas rather than specific features; the boundary here would more appropriately conform to the ahupuaa or current property boundary.

Rough aa land was of little value to the aboriginal Hawaiian, it having little capacity for production of food or other plants

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of utility. It did provide, mostly near the margins, suitable crevices for disposal of the dead and abundant stone with which to erect monuments over them (as at site 1960, below). Small areas, again at the margins and near the shore, might be cleared and leveled for use as camp sites, sometimes with the addition of low stone walls for windbreaks, or for purposes unknown. Such situations offered the advantage of protection against surprise visits: it is virtually impossible to walk on the surrounding sharp clinker without sound of either the crushing, falling lava fragments or of the owner of wounded flesh. Accordingly, this reconnaissance survey is limited to the shore, except as noted.

The barrier to travel presented by the aa lava which dominates the area was surmounted by trails of different kinds and times of construction. Near the center of the area examined, at about 400 feet elevation, is the "old government road from Kealakekua pali to Kainaliu" beach which probably dates from about 1840. It was most likely built as a type B or C horse trail as described by Russel A. Apple in his monograph Trails: From Steppingstones to Kerbstones (Bishop Museum Special Publication 53, 1965). Nearer the shore is a similar trail connecting the landing at Kaawaloa with the coastal villages to the north, including Kainaliu, Keauhou and Kailua. Although now used as a jeep road and labeled "old cart road" on the tax map, it has evolved from an earlier steppingstone foot path as attested by the smooth, flat waterworn boulders which have been taken up and now rest along either side of the track. Also of historic interest, although intruding only briefly into Keopuka, is the cart road from Kaawaloa landing up the pali to Kuapehu, residence of missionaries Samuel Ruggles and later Rev. John D. Paris to whom its construction is attributed.

Such trails, however, are of Western, not Polynesian, origin, built to accommodate horses and wheeled vehicles. The aboriginal Hawaiian traveled on foot, first within his ahupuaa between seashore and upland and secondly to neighboring lands. On pahoe-hoe or in soil abandoned footpaths are difficult to trace, but across the sharp aa they are clearly marked, often by steppingstones of waterworn boulders carried from the beach or smooth slabs found in the lava.

Two steppingstone trails lead from the shore inland across the lava, both near the south side of Keopuka as shown on the accompanying plan. A third trail which crosses the "old cart road" seems not to have been finished but was abandoned at the base of the pali. The more northerly trail (7727) leads from site 1962 inland across an old pahoe-hoe "kipuka" cut off by the later aa flow. This portion is difficult to follow but is revealed by occasional steppingstones or short sections of pavement in rubble filled areas. Mauka of the "old cart road" the trail is clearly marked by waterworn steppingstones placed nearly to the top of the pali. The other trail (7728) lies entirely on the aa and is easily followed from the shore up the pali, then south toward

the gardens of Kaawaloa (see site number C23-209 in Archaeology of Kealakekua Bay by Soehren and Newman, Bishop Museum, 1968).

Previous surveys of the archaeological sites along the shore were made by Bishop Museum in 1929 and by the State of Hawaii in 1971. The great majority of the sites are typical of temporary camp sites used by fishermen. They include small caves in the pahoehoe, stonewall windbreaks, low stone platforms probably used for drying fish, a probable fishing heiau and a few graves. Most of the sites listed in 1929 were given numbers in the State inventory; a few may have been destroyed and a few were overlooked. All were classified "reserve" or "marginal" by the State, indicating they have little significance. The two trails identified on this survey have been given numbers 7727 and 7728 in the State numbering system. In the following tabulation the prefix 10-47- has been omitted from the site number.

1948. Keopuka complex 3. Camp site with stone wall windbreaks, enclosures, platforms. Some walls rebuilt since 1929.
1949. Small heiau, probably fishing shrine. Northwest and southwest corners have been deliberately pulled down.
1950. Keopuka complex 4. Camp site with remains of low stone wall windbreaks.
1951. Keopuka shelter 1. Camp site with low stone wall windbreak.
1952. Keopuka complex 5. Camp site with stone wall windbreaks, platforms, rock shelter. Scattered traces of other human activity over a wide area.
1953. Keopuka shelter 2. Rock shelter with stone wall windbreak.
1954. Keopuka shelter 3. Rock shelter with stone wall windbreak.
1955. Keopuka complex 6. Camp site with stone wall windbreaks, rock shelters and platforms.
1956. Keopuka platform 2. Probably a drying platform, not house.
1957. Keopuka habitation 2. Modern camp site with new three sided stone wall windbreak, possibly built on old site.
1958. Keopuka complex 7. Rock shelter, stone wall windbreaks disturbed by surf; three contiguous platforms are probably graves. Traces of other features in wave washed rubble.
1959. Keopuka shelter 4. Camp site, ruins of stone wall windbreak.
1960. Keopuka burials 2. Group of burial platforms and terraces on aa lava flow.

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1961. Keopuka complex 8. Camp site with stone wall windbreaks, some still in use; platform, probably for drying.

1962. Keopuka house sites. Two house platforms surrounded by a stone fence on pahoehoe; other platforms, pavements and enclosures adjoining on south. Some surf damage. Trail 7727 begins at this site.

Detailed descriptions of the foregoing are on file in the Historic Sites Section of the Division of State Parks. In addition are the following two features, believed not to have been previously recorded or numbered:

7727. Foot path across old pahoehoe to top of pali; some stepping stones of waterworn boulders and flat lava slabs. Mauka terminus unknown.

7728. Foot path across aa to top of pali, then southeast to Kaawaloa and perhaps to Napoopoo. Many waterworn stepping-stones from the shore to the pali.

If I can be of further assistance, please call. My invoice is enclosed.

Very truly yours,

*Lloyd J. Soehren*

Lloyd J. Soehren

Consulting archaeologist

Encl.

cc: State Historic Preservation Officer  
Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu

