

Shad Kane: Pu'uloa: Where once there was life...

Aia i Keawalauopu'uloa he kai hāuliuli 'o neia lā he pōuliuli
There at Pu'uloa the sea is blue.. today it is dark/murky.

Aia nui nā kahawai i laila ... koe kaka'ikahi nō.
There were many streams there ... only a few remain.

Aia i ulu pono nā loko i'a e kanu 'ia.
There the fishponds flourished ... they (are now) buried.

Aia nā lo'i kalo i ulu ai He pōhaku puna i laila
There the kalo terraces produced rich harvest ... It is now concrete (spring of stone).

Aia ka nui o nā limu maoli ... he limu 'ē
There were many native limu ...now foreign.

Aia nā i'a hāmau leo o 'Ewa i ulu ai... he mō'alihaku
There the pearl oysters thrived ... now fossil.

Aia nui nā i'a 'o laila ... kaka'ikahi wale nō.
There were many fish there ... Only a few(today).

Aia i kani nā manu maoli... kaka'ikahi a nalowale nō.
There the native birds sang ... Scarce and vanishing.

Aia 'o Ka'ahupahau i Pu'uloa Ua pa'a ka hale
There lived Ka'ahupahau, the shark at Pu'uloa .. her home is all closed up.

Aia 'o Kanekua'ana, he mo'o..... ha'alele 'o ia.
There Kanekua'ana, a mo'o lived She left.

Aia nā ali'i e kū nei... poholo lākou
There were chiefs that stood firm there... they plunged out of sight.

Aia nā kanaka i laila ... Pio loa la
There were people there ... they were snuffed out.

Aia kākou e ola nei..... ua hāmau 'ia.
There we lived .. we were silenced.

Hawaiian translation by Rona Dale Rosco Rodenhurst

This Oli came from these words.....

*Where once there was blue water.....is now black.
Where once there were many rivers.....are now few.
Where once there were loko i'ais now buried.
Where once there were lo'i kalo.....is now concrete.
Where once there was limu.....are now foreign.
Where once there were pearl oyster.....are now fossils.
Where once there were fish.....are now scarce.
Where once there were native birds.....are no longer.
Where once there was Ka'ahupahau.....is now homeless.
Where once there was Kanekua'ana.....has since left.
Where once there were chiefs....have since vanished.
Where once there were people.....are now gone.
Where once there was life.....is now silence.*

This essay is about the urbanization of a cultural landscape. It holds true today as it did in 1778 when Cook arrived. The issue whether it is good or bad is up to us to decide. It will change and evolve with every generation. However these stories are not meant to judge the decisions of those of the past or those of today.....but rather to be observant.....and having the strength to be strong when you need to be strong. Foremost in all our thoughts should be the care of this land of our ancestors.

There are no mistakes. There is a plan and order to everything. Perhaps there is a plan to redefine us as a people. And when I refer to "us" I mean.....all of us who live in these beautiful islands. To see if we have the strength to do the things we need to do. There is a time for everything. There is a time for each of us. It will be different for all of us. It may take some of us longer than others. But in the end most all of us would have made some contributions in our lifetime. That is the fabric from which life is made. The level of that contribution defines us as a people. That level of contribution is in direct relationship to the tools that we have gathered along the way. Those tools may be our education or life experiences or our commitment to a way of life. What is important to understand is that we will all have that opportunity. We only need to recognize it when it presents itself.

These cultural essays are meant to do a number of things. I have shared only a few. It is hoped that they help us develop a sense of personal relationship for this place that we all call home. Whether it is Kapolei or Waianae, whether it is Los Angeles or New York or Bangkok or London or wherever you live. Most importantly for those of you who take the time to venture through these pages.....it is hoped that you see yourself amongst them. All these pages are for naught if it cannot accomplish that simple task. For although these stories are of our ancient past.....it is really about us.....and how we can make a difference in the years to come. It is about connecting the past with the future and make it better.

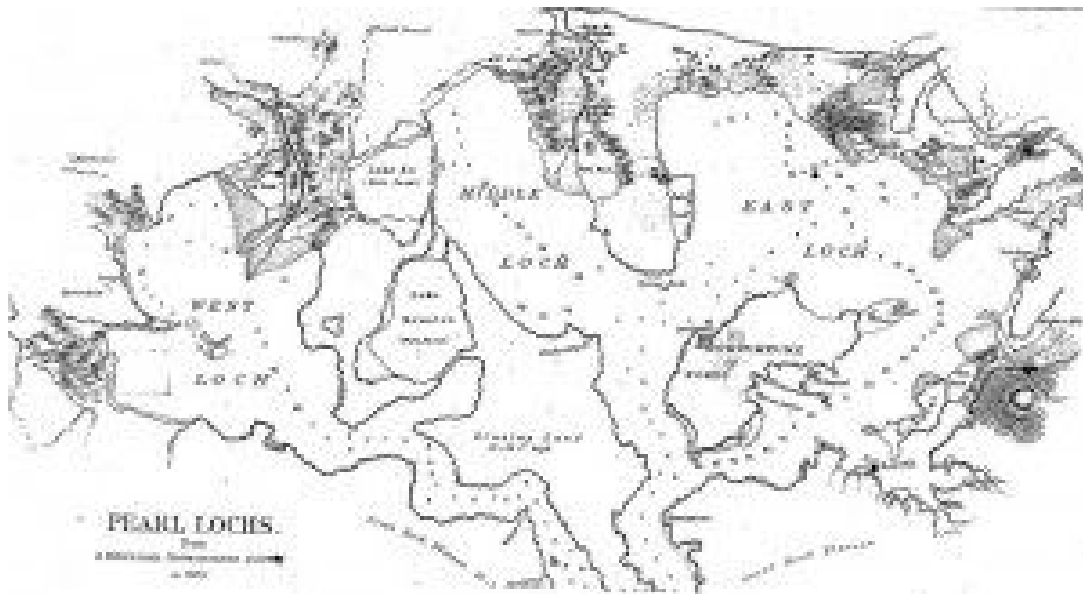
So.....what is it that we need to do. We need to decide that for ourselves for it is a personal journey. Much the same as I am sitting here alone in the quiet of my room with my fingers to the keys of a laptop. Our world needs our help and only we can make it happen. The path I have chosen is to write about it not knowing whether anyone is there. But nevertheless it is my personal effort.....it is something. For me that

motivation comes from an appreciation of knowing how things once were.....and the hope that we can make things better.....and this is where I shall start.....

Our ancestors lived in a subsistence world. Perhaps one of the most difficult things to do today as a consulting Native Hawaiian Organization is getting federal agencies to understand that you cannot separate the land or oceans or inland waterways from traditional practices and beliefs. The word religious also becomes a sensitive reference in consulting documents where it should not be. Access to lands and oceans is an intrinsic part of these traditional practices and beliefs. There are prayers, rituals and protocols that kahea and call out to bring back these better days when fish, birds and food were plentiful in terms of a traditional subsistence lifestyle. Much like the Native American Plains Indians pray for the day when the buffalo returns.

Our ancestors were farmers and fishermen. Their laws were based on conservation.....of a people living on an island with limited resources. However it was not just a matter of providing food and eating to strengthen one physically.....but also spiritually. It is this aspect of the act of eating that we as a people today have lost touch with the ancient past of our ancestors. We today take eating as commonplace and a simple act of necessity. Eating was sacred. That was the basis of the "Aikapu". The gods would manifest themselves as "kinolau" or body forms in the many different foods that one would partake of. For example Kalo was the kinolau for Kane, Ulu (breadfruit) was the kinolau for Ku, Uala (sweet potato) was the kinolau for Lono, Limu kala was the kinolau of Hina and the list is endless. Let me go one step further so we can all understand how powerful and how all consuming the simple aspect of eating and how important these places of subsistence played in their world. In the Catholic Church is the celebration of the Eucharist where in the mass the priest consecrates and transforms bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. This grew out of the religious significance of the "Last Supper" when Jesus changed bread and wine into his body and blood. The celebration of the Eucharist is meant to help all of us who join in partaking of his body and blood to become like him. In order to understand the importance of different places of subsistence we would need to understand this relationship between a people and the foods of their toil. For it is this relationship that binds them to the aina (land). It is here that their strength, commitment and perseverance can be found and must be understood by all. It is a spiritual and fundamental religious belief. This is the story of Pu'uloa.....

Anciently when reference is made to Keawalauopu'uloa it is referred to as being "momona" or fat. Fat in terms of the abundance of Loko i'a and Lo'i kalo. It was a place known to be rich and abundant in fish, oysters and many varieties of shell fish, kalo, uala, ulu and all the necessities of life. Moku 'O Kakuhihewa (Mokupuni of O'ahu) was known to be the bread basket of all these islands. All the chiefs of all the islands knew for generations that the island of O'ahu had more inland fresh water than all the other islands combined. Much of this fresh water fed Keawalauopu'uloa.



Our ancestors knew that when the water reached the shoreline it was rich in nutrients and attracted shoreline fish. It was in these areas where these rivers exited into Pu'uloa that they built numerous fishponds. Amongst these ponds are those that were built by Kalaimanuia around the late 1500s. Kalaimanuia was the daughter of Kukaniloko who was the great granddaughter of Mailekukahi. Kalaimanuia was also the grandmother of the great and benevolent Chief Kakuhihewa. She built a fishpond named Loko Paaiau just adjacent to today's McGrew Point. She lived at this time on the high ground above today's McGrew Point anciently known as Kuki'iahu. Loko Paaiau was in the Ahupua'a of Kalauao and was fed by water from the surrounding Lo'i Kalo.

These lands today are occupied by the Pearlridge and Pearl Kai Shopping Centers. Another Loko i'a built by Kalaimanuia is Loko Opu, also in the Ahupua'a of Kalauao close to where Sumida Watercress Farm is located and perhaps fed by the same waters. Kalaimanuia is credited for building Loko Pa'akea at Waimalu close to where Best Buy and Cutter Ford is located.

Another interesting fishpond is Loko Kahakupohaku where remnants of the old Aiea Railroad Station still stands and can be seen from Kamehameha Highway. This pond has been filled and is at the site of the present Honolulu Pearl Canoe Hale and an adjacent public park.

Other fishponds in this area are Loko Kukona and Loko Luakahaole at Waiiau close to the Hawaiian Electric Waiiau Power Plant and Zippy's Restaurant. Loko Weloko at Pearl City Peninsula is filled in today (*Left: Former site of Weloko Fishpond now paved over with concrete and buildings in the distance*). There is a story that in the construction of Loko Weloko a line was formed by people from the site of the construction for a mile in the mauka direction. Stones were passed from one person to the next hand over hand till it reached the construction site of Weloko. It is said that not a single stone had touched the ground till it reach Weloko. This was at a time perhaps in the early 1700s which is an indication that there were substantial numbers of people living in the area of Waiawa, Manana and Waimano. This was before the invasion of Kahekili, Kamehameha and foreign diseases.



Figure 5. The 1927 aerial photograph of Pearl City Peninsula, showing Loko Pa'au'au filled in and Loko Weloko located at its edge.

1927 aerial photo: Loko Weloko on the right hand side of the Pearl City Peninsula.



Loko Pa'au'au, top left, has been filled in.

Loko Pa'au'au also in Pearl City Peninsula has now been filled in and so is the story of Loko Apala in Waiawa adjacent to Loko Pa'au'au. Loko Pamoku and Loko Okiokilepe are reported to have been destroyed however their outline in the mangroves can be seen by Google Earth on the internet. To access these 2 ponds one needs to get access to the Iroquois Point Naval Magazine. Laulaunui, a little island off the West Loch Homes Subdivision, is also reported to have been a former fishpond. It is however presently overgrown in mangrove.

There are fish structures identified as fish traps rather than fishponds. Such is Kapakule. It is reported to have been used by ancient Hawaiians for catching sharks, large akule, opelu, weke and kawakawa. It had the shape of a tennis racket. Traditions indicate that the gods Kane and Kanaloa with the help of the Menehune built this fishpond. Stories from families living in the area also indicated that there were 2 stones identified as Ku and Hina associated with Pakule. With the dredging of the channel entrance by the Navy in the 20th Century, Ku and Hina were removed from Kapakule and taken to a safe place in deeper water never to be disturbed again.

It is also of interest to note that the first time the entrance was dredged was perhaps 29 generations ago by an Ewa Chief by the name of Keaunui who was the son of Maweke. This becomes much more interesting when considering the travels of his father. Maweke's voyaging traditions are repeated in the oral traditions of Southwest Native Americans and the stories of the battles between Cortez and Montezuma. It was Maweke who perhaps brought the sweet potato to Honouliuli from which the name of "blue poi" comes from. The sweet potato or uala came from South America. So....it is not surprising that his son Keaunui would be the first person to dredge the entrance of Keawalauopu'uloa to accommodate large canoes.

I will finish with this short story. In an attempt to find some interesting photos to accompany this cultural essay I came away initially feeling both disappointed and somewhat sad. I drove the perimeter of Pu'uloa all the way from Aiea to Iroquois Point looking for at least one lo'i or ancient fishpond that I could share with the readers by way of a photo. I did get help from the Navy to access some fishponds on Navy property. I am very thankful to them. I am also thankful to them for sharing public documents and maps on the progression of urbanization of Pearl City Peninsula.

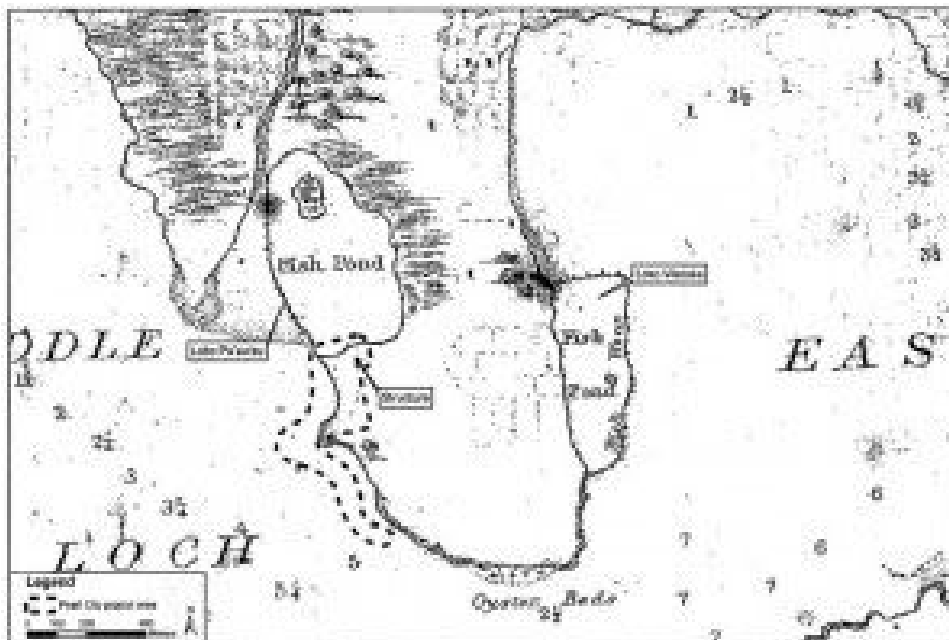
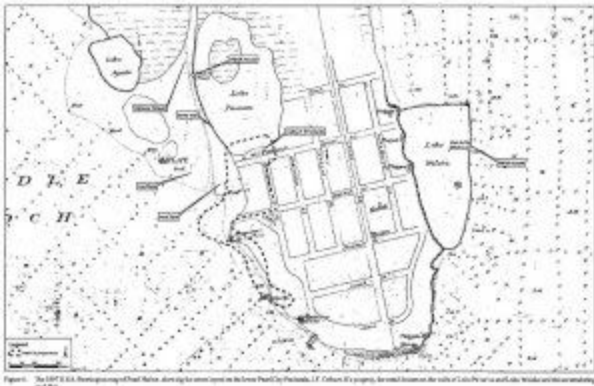


Figure 11. C.I. Lynch map of 1873, showing one structure south of Loke Puaia.

Pearl City Peninsula fishponds in 1873. [Click to enlarge](#)



Pearl City Peninsula fishponds in 1897. Click to enlarge

Most all of the fishponds were either destroyed, paved over with concrete, filled in or buried in mangrove. Pa'au'au Fishpond in the area of Pearl City Peninsula was turned into a landfill buried in trash.

Kuhialoko Fishpond had what appeared to be long lengths of yellow hoses strung out on the seaward side obviously to catch seeping oil or petroleum from ships anchored close by.

It does not end here but it is best to finish this story on a good note.

I spent 3 days trying to find a good picture. On the last day of the last hour I took a drive onto Waipi'o Peninsula from Waipahu Depot Road. Someone had cleared all of the mangrove that over the years had been growing in Kapakahi Stream in the area of the Honolulu Police Department's Training Academy. They had also cleared all of the mangrove that was growing in Kaaukuu and Pouhala Fishponds. At one point I also counted 12 endangered Hawaiian Stilt, and one Blue Heron all feeding in the pond. The pond also seemed to be thriving in fish as I saw from a distance one Hawaiian stilt catch what looked like a small fish.

As I approached the edge of the pond I observed a large ripple and splash as hundreds of little fish scattering on my approach. I am not sure if it is City or private property but would like to get a letter to whoever is responsible and commend them. I think this effort can serve as an excellent example or model of what can be done. Maybe one day Waipahu will be known not for sugar but for its flocks of nesting birds at Kaaukuu Fishpond.

Where once there was black water.....is now blue.

Where once there were few rivers.....are now many.

Where once there were loko i'ais now restored.

Where once there were lo'i kalo.....is now flourishing.

Where once there was no limu.....are now thriving.

Where once there were fossil pearl oyster.....are now alive.

Where once there were no fish.....are now abundant.

Where once there were no native birds.....are now many.

Where once there was Ka'ahupahau.....is now home.

Where once there was Kanekua'ana.....has since returned.

Where once there were chiefs.....are now visible.

Where once there were no people.....have since returned.

Where once there was no life.....is now hope.

***Shad Kane** grew up in Wahiawa and later moved to Kalihi where he spent most of his teen years. He attended Kamehameha and graduated from the University of Hawaii. He retired from the Honolulu Police Department in 2000. He is a member of the Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club and former chair of the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board, the Kapolei Outdoor Circle, the Friends of Honouliuli, Ka Papa O Kakuhihewa and the Makakilo-Kapolei Lions Club. He is also the Ewa Representative on the O'ahu Island Burial Council and a Native Hawaiian Representative on the Native American Advisory Group (NAAG) to the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation in Washington DC.*