

0. KING KAMEHAMEHA and HIS DESCENDANTS - Story
Preface

1. ELIZABETH KING'S ACCIDENT

2. LIFE in a COMA

3. MATT KING and HIS FAMILY

4. FINDING BRIAN SPEER

5. KING KAMEHAMEHA and HIS DESCENDANTS

6. THE PRINCESS and HER SCHOOLS



This image depicts the cliffs of the Ko'olau Range as seen from the Nu'uaniu Pali lookout on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The area is a key place in the history of King Kamehameha. Nu'uaniu Pali, a traversable section of the Ko'olau mountain range (connecting the leeward side of Honolulu to the windward side of Kailua and Kane'ohe), was the scene of a deadly battle in 1795. At the end of the fighting, Kamehameha had conquered Oahu, bringing it under his rule. Photo by Howcheng, online via Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

A great legend was once told about a future Hawaiian ruler. The day a fiery light - with feathers like a bird - appeared in the sky was the day a great ruler would be born. It was he who would unite all of the islands and would be known as a "killer of chiefs."

On the day a child named Pai'ea was born into a noble family, on the island of Hawaii, the fiery light of Halley's Comet - with its feather-like tail - was visible in the Hawaiian skies. Because of the legend, his parents worried that the current ruler - a man named Alapa'i who was himself a killer of chiefs - might order the death of their son.

To be safe, they asked another nobleman to care for, and raise, Pai'ea. Their concerns saved the child's life since Alapa'i had, indeed, ordered the baby's death.

Five years later, the ruler relented and allowed Pai'ea to be raised by his own parents. There he was taught the ways of the court, and the ways of war, by his teacher.

Some records tell us that Pai'ea was given a new name, based on his personality. Other records say the name came about because the child was away from his parents for five years. However it happened, *Ka mehameha* means "solitary," or "lonely," in the Hawaiian language.

Kamehameha was strong. According to stories which survive about him, he was able to overturn a massive stone - called the Naha Stone - which reportedly weighed between 2.5 - 3.5 tons. And ... he was anything but lonely in his drive to unite all of Hawaii's islands.

Born in 1758 (although other records say he was born in November of 1737), Kamehameha lived and ruled at the same time as American colonists were revolting against Great Britain. Long before Hawaii became part of the United States, Kamehameha had fulfilled the legend - he had united the various islands of Hawaii:

- Hawaii - "The Big Island"
- Kauai - "The Garden Island"
- Kahoolawe - "The Target Island"
- Lanai - "The Pineapple Island"
- Maui - "The Magic Island"
- Molokai - "The Friendly Island"
- Niihau - "The Forbidden Island"

- [Oahu - "The Gathering Place"](#)

As ruler of the newly formed [Kingdom of Hawaii](#) - in 1810 - Pai'ea would soon have two additional names: "Kamehameha I" and "Kamehameha the Great."

Kamehameha I instituted laws which governed a united Hawaii. His first law protected civilians during war. Known as the "Law of the Splintered Paddle," it required that every man, woman and child would be able "to lie down to sleep by the roadside without fear of harm."

His stance on protecting civilians and non-combatants, during war, remains a model law and is part of Hawaii's state constitution. After the great King's death, however, his descendant - Kamehameha III - allowed the "[Great Mahele](#)" in 1848. It would lead to disastrous consequences for native Hawaiians.

Following the advice of foreigners, Kamehameha III drastically changed Hawaii's land-use laws. It was the first step in allowing people with no historical ties to the area to own some of Hawaii's prime real estate.

Kamehameha's great-granddaughter - [Princess Bernice Pauahi Paki](#) - left her own mark on Hawaii when she willed her fortune - mostly tied-to Hawaiian land - to benefit Hawaiian children.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/KING-KAMEHAMEHA-and-HIS-DESCENDANTS-The-Descendants>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/KING-KAMEHAMEHA-and-HIS-DESCENDANTS-The-Descendants>

Questions 2 Ponder

Do Legends Ever Predict Reality?

At least by the early-to-mid 18th century, Hawaiian culture included a legend about the birth of a great leader.

The story was told that on the day a fiery light—with feathers like a bird—appeared in the sky, that would be the day a great ruler was born. It was he who would unite all of the islands and would be known as a “killer of chiefs.”

On the day a baby boy called Pai'ea was born, as Halley's Comet with its feather-like tail appeared in the sky, Alapa'i (the current ruler) ordered the child's death. His parents, however, had already given the newborn to another nobleman to raise him.

Later, the baby Pai'ea was given a new name: Kamehameha the Great, who was a “Killer of Chiefs.”

In light of this story, think about these questions: Do legends ever predict reality—like the legend of Kamehameha's birth? If not, what do you make of the story (and its legendary prediction)?

How Do We Protect Non-Combatants during War?

Kamehameha the Great, also known as Kamehameha I, was a warrior king who united the Hawaiian Islands. In the process of unifying Hawaii, he fought many battles.

He did not want those battles, however, to harm people who weren't involved in the fighting. We would call such people non-combatants.

The Hawaiian King's law was known as the “Law of the Splintered Paddle.” It required that every man, woman and child would be able “to lie down to sleep by the roadside without fear of harm.” It is part of modern Hawaii's state constitution.

How does that 18th-century law compare with the way non-combatants are treated in today's world?

Non-combatants whose lives are damaged and whose property is destroyed, in today's world, are often referred to as “collateral damage.” What does “collateral damage” mean to you?

How does the concept of “collateral damages” compare to the “Law of the Splintered Paddle?”

Which of the two concepts is more enlightened? Explain your answer.



Halley's Comet and King Kamehameha I

Photo of Halley's Comet, taken on May 29, 1910. This photo was published in the *New York Times* on July 3, 1910. Photo online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Naha Stones

Photo of the Naha Stones by W. Nowicki, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Oahu - The Gathering Place

Map of Oahu by Joel Lovingloss, online courtesy Adventure Hotels.

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Hawaii - The Big Island

Map of "The Big Island" of Hawaii, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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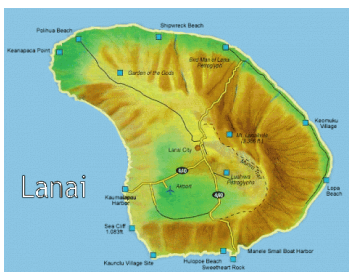


Kahoolawe - The Target Island

Aerial view of Kahoolawe - with Maui in the distance, including the dormant volcano Haleakala rising above the clouds - by Travis.Thurston, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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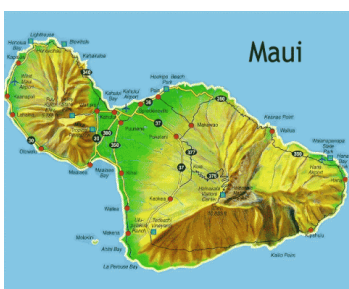
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Lanai - The Pineapple Island

Lanai map, online courtesy State of Hawaii.

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Maui - The Magic Island

Image of Maui map, online courtesy State of Hawaii.

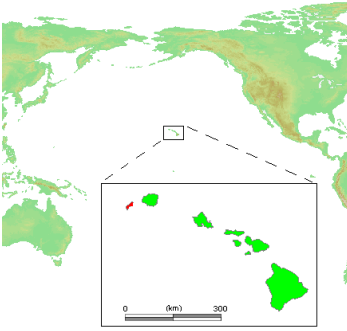
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Molokai - The Friendly Island

Map of Molokai, online courtesy State of Hawaii.

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Niihau - The Forbidden Island

Location map of Niihau, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Oahu - Waves at the North Shore

Image of waves at Oahu's north shore, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Bernice Pauahi Bishop - Kamehameha's Last Survivor

Portrait of Princess Bernice Pauahi Paki Bishop, by Jeanette Shepperd Harrison Loop (signed "Jennie S. Loop"), online courtesy [Bishop Museum](#) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

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