

## The Heritage of Koloa Landing at Poipu Beach

On the south shore of Kaua'i, where the Waikomo Stream enters Hanaka'ape Bay, a small cove was born with a gentle slope arching up to the shore. It has been, over the centuries a gift to everyone who has come to share its blessed nature. When the first Polynesian voyagers arrived on Kaua'i from the Marquesas Islands by canoe, this cove began writing itself into the history of Kaua'i as one of the most important ports of call on the island.

There are three possible meanings attached to the word 'Koloa'. There is the land itself, whose marshes are home to the flightless Koloa Maoli, Hawa'i's native duck, and there is a great rock known as *Pali O Koloa*, meaning 'Cliffs of Koloa'. No known documentation exists to unravel the mystery of who or what Koloa was, yet this great rock and native Hawaiian duck have always carried this name. Surrounding these marshlands, an exceptionally tall variety of sugar cane grew, characterized by its long nodes and unusual sweetness. The words Koloa, *ko*, 'sugar cane' and *loa*, 'long', provide Koloa with its most delicious definition.

When the Resolution and Discovery, the first European ships to reach Kaua'i were sighted from the island, their tall masts of wood swaying high above the waves led native eyes to believe that small forested islands were floating toward them. The canoes launched from the small cove at Koloa that paddled out to investigate these mysterious floating forests, established the first contact between the Hawaiian people and Europeans. As the canoes accompanied the ships into Waimea Bay, their Captain, James Cook, caught his first glimpse of native Hawaiian people. Realizing their undeniable similarities in language and lifestyle, as well as their physical resemblance to the Tahitians he had last seen. This first encounter marked the beginning of the European fascination with the navigational prowess of the early Polynesians, and a revolutionary turning point in the thus far quiet history of the Hawaiian Islands.

The early visitors to land at Koloa would have found the remains of fishponds and salt pans, and abandoned agricultural fields. By the 1830s, the cove was referred to as a landing and the Hawaiian Islands became the preferred supply and the rest stop for Russian, American and other whalers returning from the Northern seas. Koloa Landing became Hawai'i's third largest whaling port. Up to 60 ships a year would anchor at Koloa to stock provisions of salt, firewood, melons, molasses, cattle, sheep and goats. Most foreign goods coming to Kaua'i arrived here. By 1850, Koloa Landing was not only recognized as Kaua'i's port of entry and Koloa would soon prepare for the Sugar Cane Era.

Hawaiians speak of their home with the passionate rapture and profound knowledge of a mother speaking of her children, a lover describing his beloved, a child extolling the virtues of his hero. Every tree, plant, outcropping, waterfall, stream and valley figures in its own narrative, usually a colorful legend wherein divine characters leave their mark in some form on the earthly playground. Yet of all these legends, tales and myths, those most characterized by romance recount the relationship between the humanity of the land, and the mystery of the sea.

Hawaiians regard their land and sea as lovers in a daily, everlasting embrace. Waves washing ashore are their caresses, the various sea creatures, their children, and every sunset, spectacular evidence of the lover's passion. To share this embrace, to have daily access to its healing warmth, that is heaven to Hawaiians. Hawaiians strongly believe in *Malama'aina*, "to care for the land as it cares for you."

Koloa Landing at Po'ipu Beach is situated in close proximity to *Waikomo*, the name of the freshwater stream that enters the sea at Koloa Landing and serves as the entrance to the island and to the community via canoe. The owners of this 25 Acre Parcel began with the King of Kaua'i who later sold the land to the Knudsen Family, a prominent family on Kauai, and lastly transferred the land to Poipu Beach Villas, LLC, the developers of Koloa Landing. Koloa Landing at Po'ipu Beach was envisioned with careful observance of, and respect for, Hawaiian history and culture. Such care will enrich the spirit of the community both physically and spiritually, rendering it far more meaningful to our future residents.