

The Waiomina Centennial June Trail Ride Stories

Pu'uhihale

This is the large stone-walled corral that you saw from up on a bluff. Pu'u Hihale is often pronounced "puhi-hale" with a long "u" sound. It was built around 1850 and modified over the years. The walls are ten feet high and about eight feet thick, built to withstand the wild bulls that used to be brought in there for culling or castrating. What you saw is about half the original size and the remnants of those original walls can be described if you have eagle eyes.

It was the main branding corral for the Ranch for herds in that area. In the early 1900's, AW Carter had some viewing stands built on the northeast side so that the Waimea people and visitors could enjoy the branding in comfort. It was much like Europeans who used to take carriages out to view the battles of the Napoleonic wars – champagne, parasols, lots of cannons and horses. It was all very elegant and fine unless Napoleon lost, in which case everyone mounted up and got back to town fast! With walls like Pu'u Hihale, there was little danger of a raging bull breaking out.

In the 1930's the saddle house was built and the corral became the main mounting-up station. Paniolo kept their saddles and other equipment in lockers like those you saw on the back wall of the building. At the end of the day, they rode back, put the saddles away till tomorrow and put their wallets, cell phones, Blackberrys and credit cards back in their pockets to go home.

In 1944, Parker Ranch hosted the first military rodeo for the inhabitants of Camp Tarawa. Two bucking chutes were built and used for several years until Paniolo Park was built at the site of the current rodeo arena and racetrack. The chutes were then used for grooming green broke horses – they were tight, like squeeze chutes, but without a squeezing mechanism.

Pu'u Holoholoku

This was our rest stop. The pu'u was extensively mined for cinders for many years, resulting in a large pit much used these days by motorcycle riders to do wheelies. That pit was on the makai or west side, your left from the rest stop. The top of the pu'u can perhaps hold eight horses that know each other – not the kind of place to take riders up. The zigzag road you saw is used exclusively by ATVs now. The surface is very soft and rutted.

Everybody knows a holoku is a formal version of a mu'umu'u, with a train, right? Well, that has nothing to do with the pu'u. The name comprises "holoholo", which means run, come toward, move along; and "-ku" which means stand, or stop. Hold that in your mind a while.

A few years ago, about 1640 to be inexact, a fairly old Maui high chief named Kama-lala-walu decided to teach the moku o Keawe residents a lesson. He had been visited by Lono, the Hawaii high chief, a few weeks earlier and, being senile and a bit arrogant, figured he could take Kohala. He landed his army at Puako and cut down some coconut trees. As you all know, the coconut tree is symbolic of the male members of society, having a tall, erect trunk and rounded coconuts. Cutting down coconut trees was an absolute act of war and not the nice European kind of war. To make sure everyone understood that, Kamalalawalu killed some fishermen too. The primary chief on our island at that time was Lono-i-ka-makahiki, a grandson of 'Umi. He is credited with

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starting the Makahiki tradition of a three month long year-end holiday. His older brother Kanaloa-kua'ana was living in Waimea at the time the Maui army invaded. He sent a messenger to inform Lono, who was residing in Kohala, assembled a small force and ran down the hill to Puako. Kanaloa was taken prisoner by Maui and they ensured their fate and dishonor by gouging out his eyes and torturing him (“Blackened was the face of Kanaloa with fire, The face of Kanaloa, with burning fire”) before they killed him.

Lono-i-ka-makahiki sent his version of the CIA out and they convinced Kama-lala-walu (not the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree) his best bet was to dig in his army on the two biggest hills back of Waimea – Hoku'ula (Buster Brown) and Pu'u Oaoaka (mauka of Hoku'ula and to the east). During that night, the warriors from Hilo and Hamakua arrived and took up positions from Mahiki (Mud Lane) to Kakanihia (where I live). The Kona army stretched from Pu'upa (hill on the makai side of the current highway to Kona about 3 miles past the airport) to Haleapala. Lono and his Kohala army guarded from Momoualua to Waihaka (probably Wai'aka stream).

Finally comes our resting place – Pu'u Holoholoku. The army from Ka'u and Puna arrived during the night and morning of the next day. To scare the dakines out of the Maui warriors, they would run a mile with their torches, then stop, run a mile, then stop. This spread out their numbers and gave the impression of a huge column of warriors. They eventually occupied from our hill Holoholoku to Waikoloa. So it was the run and stop tactic – holoholo=run, ku=stop – that gave our hill its name.

They fought for three days, just skirmishing, with Kama-lala-walu's son leading the action. The fourth day began with a massive faceoff. The two war chiefs – Kama-lala-walu's son, and Pupuakea, Lono's main war chief – met alone. The chosen weapon was clubs (newa). They battled for three hours before Pupuakea, using a tactic called “ka malo o Liloa,” (named after his chief's great grandfather) was victorious. The Maui forces, deprived of their leader and more than a little concerned about following orders given by Kama-lala-walu, decided to return to Maui (hence the popular song “I'm going to Maui tomorrow...”). Kama-lala-walu was easily caught two-stepping along with his ko'oko'o and killed. The Maui people ran to Puako and found their canoes disassembled with the 'iako broken. They saw bait boxes floating out on the sea and thought they were canoes of warriors hemming them in. At that point we fade to a lovely sunset off Puako and ignore the crunching, gasping, and loud, shrill noises.

And that – folks – is what we were going to tell you on the ride, but it was 1) too noisy, 2) too dusty and 3) we were too spread-out (holoholo-ku).