

Kalaupapa

National Historical Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

The Archaeology of Kalaupapa



Through radiocarbon dating of charcoal from Kaupikiawa Cave, archaeologists believe that Hawaiians lived on the Kalaupapa peninsula for at least 800 years before the first Hansen's disease patients arrived. In ancient times, the peninsula and its valleys supported a sizable population. The area was known for its sweet potatoes, good fishing grounds, salt deposits and special varieties of *kapa* (tapa, bark cloth).

Settlement Patterns

The flat part of the peninsula gets an average of 40 inches of rain each year, enough to grow surplus sweet potatoes to trade for taro or other products from the windward valleys. At Kalaupapa, the style was to plant potatoes behind low stone walls that protected the crops from powerful trade winds. Remains of taro *lo'i* (irrigated terraces) are found in the valleys.

Most of the permanent house sites were located at the base of the pali and in the valleys, but families also built field and fishing shelters near their fields and along the coast. These shelters tended to have higher walls; some have storage cupboards built into the walls.

Historic Intensification of Agriculture

During the California Gold Rush of 1849, agriculture intensified throughout Hawaii to provide surplus potatoes, beans, onions and squash for export to California. Kalaupapa became a major export center for sweet potatoes. California ships came directly to Kalaupapa to collect mounds of sweet potatoes piled up at the port.

Religious Sites

Numerous *heiau* (temples), ranging from large public *heiau* to small family shrines, attest to the significance of religion and ritual in daily life on the peninsula. Kalaehala Heiau at Wai'ale'ia was said to be a *ho'oulu'i'a* (fishing) *heiau*, dedicated to the gods Ku and Hina. Kamanuolalo Heiau at Kalaupapa was said to be a temple for *hana aloha*, compelling love.

Makapulapai

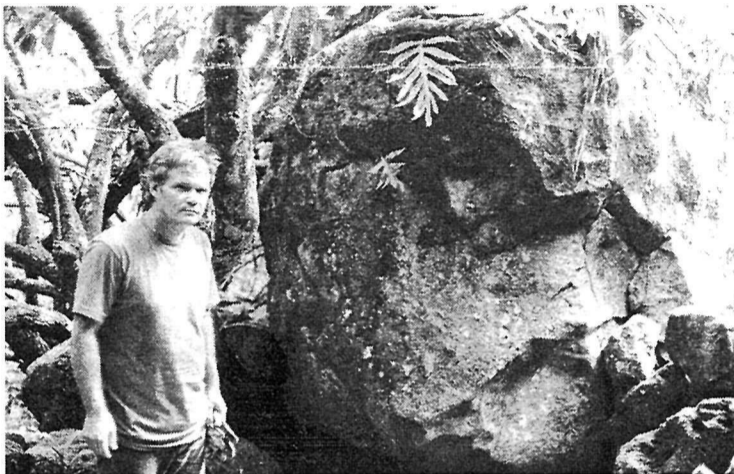
Located on top of a volcanic hill called Makapulapai are 60 impressive stone platforms and terraces thought to be burials. These burial monuments may have been constructed in the early 1700's for Ko'olau warriors slain during a famous battle waged at Kalaupapa against the Kona Chiefs over their fishing grounds. The only known petroglyph on the peninsula is pecked into a slab lying at the base of one these platforms. It depicts a human figure holding something in the right hand, perhaps a weapon or an adz.

Other Sites

Other interesting sites include canoe sheds, caves and a small settlement inside Kauhako Crater. On the outside slope of Kauhako Crater is an example of a *holua*, a stone slide built for the recreation of Hawaiian ali'i or royalty. Another rare site is a canoe ramp, made of tightly fitted waterworn stones, located on the Kalawao coast.

The End of An Era

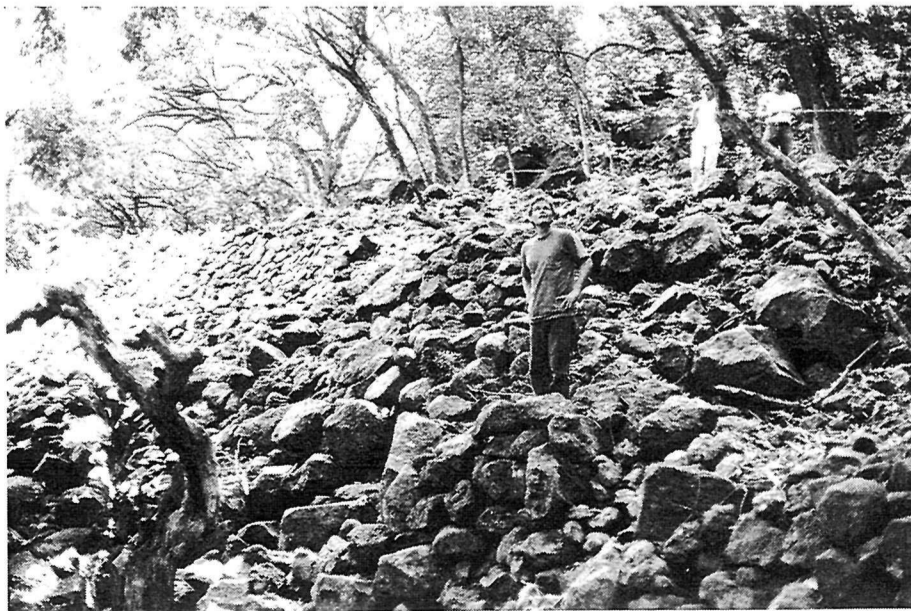
When the leprosy settlement was established in 1866, Kalawao residents were given government lands in trade at Kainalu on topside Molokai. A small village of original inhabitants remained at Kalaupapa until the leprosy settlement officially relocated to Kalaupapa, where the weather was better, in 1894.



This stone is the centerpiece of a *ko'a* (fishing shrine) located on high ground at the mouth of Wai'ale'ia Valley (Site 288). An offering platform of *'ala* (dense, waterworn) stones is built to the south of the boulder; a low, small enclosure is built to the west. Numerous fishing shrines are found all along the coast of the peninsula.



In ancient times, the peninsula was divided into three *ahupua'a* (land divisions) — Kalaupapa, Makanalua and Kalawao. This site is a boundary shrine located along the coast at the Makanalua/ Kalawao boundary. The *ahupua'a* wall, probably built early in the 19th century, extends from the coast to the base of the *pali*.



Kawaha'alihi Heiau (Site 289) is the largest known *heiau* on the peninsula. It measures more than 100 feet long, 25 feet wide and 20 feet high.

Archaeological Sites at Kalaupapa National Historical Park

Kalaupapa National Historical Park was established in 1980. Two main purposes of the park were to provide for the patient community and to research and preserve the peninsula's natural and cultural resources. Kalaupapa was also listed as a National Historical Landmark in 1976 because of the area's historical, architectural and archaeological significance. Kalaupapa is one of the richest and least disturbed archaeological preserves in Hawaii.

Since 1980, the National Park Service has surveyed five percent of the park's land area and recorded 500 sites.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Cultural resources include archaeological sites and artifacts. Visitors should not climb on or alter any rock structures, such as rock walls, *heiau* (ancient temples) or petroglyphs. Discoveries should be reported to the National Park Service. No collecting allowed. All archaeological sites are protected under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

