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Early Cultural and Historical Seascape of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument

Archival and Literary Research Report

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Preface

The Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM, Monument) is one of four Pacific Marine National Monuments co-managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Monument was established in 2009 by Presidential Proclamation 8336 and Monument boundaries were expanded around Wake Atoll, Johnston Atoll, and Jarvis Island by Presidential Proclamation 9173 in 2014. Consisting of Wake, Johnston and Palmyra Atolls, Kingman Reef, and Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands, the PRIMNM is a unique marine protected area because of its remote and widespread distribution across the central Pacific Ocean. Understanding the value and importance of the diverse cultural and historical perspectives of the PRIMNM is a priority focus for Monument managers in developing the PRIMNM management plan. A deeper understanding of the Monument's collective heritage is also an instrumental step to support further research and engage the global audience with this expansive seascape. Through archival and literary research, the cultural resources, historical events, and stories of people's connections and interactions with the Monument area prior to the 20th century have been documented and compiled as a cohesive story.

Use as a Reference Tool

Archival and literary research was conducted at the Hawai‘i State Archives, the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives, the Hamilton Library at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and using online archival and newspaper databases. This research highlights the connectivity that weaves the Monument's early cultural seascape, while incorporating individual histories for each location and a comprehensive bibliographic reference. This collective work may be used as a reference tool to inform Monument managers and stakeholders, researchers, educators, and the public. While this report offers comprehensive insight into the heritage of the PRIMNM, it also provides opportunities for deeper exploration and collaborative projects that highlight the biocultural connectivity of the Monument.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude for the supportive partnership between the Kupu Conservation Leadership and Development Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) to conduct this research. Thank you to those who provided guidance throughout our journey, especially the Marine National Monument Program at PIRO. We would also like to acknowledge the many collection managers who provided access to the holdings at the Hawai‘i State Archives, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives, and the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Lastly, we appreciate the dedicated efforts of those who digitize archival material, bringing stories of the past within our reach.

Cultural-Historical Connectivity within the Monument

The Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument area is approximately 370,000 square nautical miles (nm^2), encompassing seven islands and atolls that share natural histories of geographic isolation, and provide invaluable scientific insight as thriving ecosystems in the open ocean. Similarly, the human histories that connect these remote islands and atolls shape a deeper understanding of the Monument's collective heritage. Exploration and research carried out in the Monument by vessels that traverse the open ocean today, reflect early oceanic voyages and expeditions that occurred before and during the establishment of whaling grounds, trade routes and Pacific Ocean surveying. As more vessels from around the globe frequented central Pacific waters, sightings of these islands and atolls increased, as did their encounters.

Many of the Monument atolls and islands were not continually inhabited, since they were prone to storm and wave damage, rainfall was too small to supply sufficient freshwater, and the land was too dry to grow food crops. However, early Micronesian and Polynesian presence was very likely, as people of Oceania often voyaged to other island societies to obtain resources and exchange localized skills. Marshallese oral tradition reveals that nearby Marshall Islanders visited Wake Atoll, which they named *Eneen-Kio* after the abundant *kio* (orange) flower. Prior to European contact, they endured the long and dangerous voyage to the atoll to obtain the wingbones of large seabirds, which were used in tattooing ceremonies. The *Whippoorwill* Expedition of 1924 mapped and photographed possible archaeological sites on Howland Island that likely indicated early Polynesian presence, based on previous observations by J. D. Hague in 1862, including distinct footpaths and coral shrines. The expedition also found a plank with the carving "Makaiattafofi" and a canoe paddle they believed to be of Tahitian origin, which likely indicated more recent Polynesian presence throughout these remote islands and atolls.

European exploration of the Pacific began with the Spanish and Portuguese in the late 1500s; and by the 1600s, explorers, merchants, and privateers from Holland, France, and England started charting the unknown expanse of the Pacific. Many Pacific islands received multiple place names on various charts, depending on the explorer and nation who sighted it. The British and the French dominated Pacific exploration in the 1700s by sending out scientific expeditions and nearly the entire Pacific basin had been charted by the 1800s. As the Pacific was brought to the attention of the West and whale populations severely declined in the Atlantic, the hunt for whales spread to the Pacific. By the early 1800s, hundreds of whaling ships, mostly from New England, sought out long voyages in the Pacific. Old shipping records and accounts report of whaling grounds around Baker, Howland and Jarvis Islands, and Johnston and Palmyra Atolls.

While whalers and tradesmen often times landed in the remote areas of the Pacific to bury dead seamen or to collect food, mainly seabird eggs and turtle, they discovered guano, or seabird excrement. Beginning in the 1840s, there was a high demand for guano to fertilize overworked agricultural fields in the United States and Europe. This led to the United States Guano Islands Act of 1856 which enabled U.S. citizens to take possession of unclaimed or unoccupied islands with guano deposits, simply by raising the American flag or burying a glass bottle containing a declaration of annexation.

Beginning in the late 1850s, thousands of laborers from throughout the Pacific migrated to the guano islands, including Johnston Atoll and Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands. The guano laborers were tasked to dig, bag, and load guano onto various vessels and were noted as exceptional watermen who understood wind patterns, ocean currents and swells. Shipped roughly 2000 miles away from their home to work on the guano islands, Hawaiian guano laborers named Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands. They named Howland Island *Ulukou*, which translates to 'kou tree grove,' and Baker Island *Puaka'ilima*, meaning 'the 'ilima flower.' They named Jarvis Island *Paukeaho*, meaning 'out of breath' or 'exhausted,' which described the workers' experience and working conditions.

In the late 1800s, there was also a growing demand for exotic seabird feathers to supply the millinery, or hat making, industry in Europe and the United States. Remote, uninhabited atolls in the Pacific were particularly sought after as they provided relatively undisturbed breeding grounds for dense seabird populations. Traces of operations for the millinery feather trade were found on Wake and Johnston Atolls by the *Tanager* Expedition of 1924. The two islets of Wake Atoll, Wilkes and Peale, were also named during this expedition, after Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and lead naturalist Titian Peale of the 1841 U.S. Exploring Expedition.

Many historical events that occurred throughout the Pacific are also reflected in the names of the islets at Palmyra. Sawles Point, like most geographic features encountered by Westerners, was named after the captain who first discovered the atoll. Strawn's Island was named for American businessman Clayton Strawn, who managed the island with workers from the Pacific islands curing copra, or the dried meat of coconut, which was primarily harvested for the extraction of coconut oil. During the mid-1800s, Western missionaries and colonists planted thousands of coconut palms on islands and atolls throughout the Pacific to establish coconut plantations. Portsmouth Point was named for the USS *Portsmouth*, which completed one of the first surveys of the atoll in 1873 and Penguin Spit was named after HMS *Penguin*, which surveyed the atoll on behalf of Great Britain in 1897. At this time, Great Britain and the United States were investigating strategic landing points for trans-Pacific telegraphic communication cables.

Following the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i in 1893 and annexation of Hawai'i by the United States in 1898, interests in these remote locations ebbed and flowed into the next century. However, many atolls throughout the Pacific with a shared history of international commercial exploitation, were subsequently impacted by military operations for World War II.

The following narratives encompass early recorded histories for each Monument location to highlight their distinctive stories. They are each introduced with the significance of their identified Oceania place name, followed by a timeline that begins with early encounters and concludes with events at turn of the twentieth century, before they became strategic positions with onset of World War II.

WAKE ATOLL || ENEEN-KIO

Marshallese oral tradition reveals that early voyagers from the Marshall Islands visited and named the atoll *Eneen-Kio* after the abundant *kio* (orange) flower. Marshallese men undertook the long and dangerous voyage to the atoll to obtain the wingbones of large seabirds. Prior to the discovery of the wingbone on *Eneen-Kio*, ancient rituals demanded human sacrifices to obtain human bones which were used to tattoo chiefs. Fear of being sacrificed was the primary motivation to travel to the atoll and collect the only bone that was an acceptable substitute. However, when Christian missionaries arrived in the mid-1800s and banned human sacrifices, the Marshallese stopped voyaging to the atoll.

Europeans first encountered the atoll on October 2, 1568. Spanish explorer Álvaro de Mendaña named the atoll San Francisco in honor of St. Francis and the atoll was also recorded as Mendana in old navigational charts for the explorer. The two smaller islets can be found in old Spanish charts from the 1700s under Desierta meaning 'desert' and La Mira meaning 'take care'. The atoll was eventually named after British Captain William Wake in 1796. It has been reported as both an island and reef by whalers and recorded under other names, such as Halcyon, Week, Helsion, and Wilson.

The first official visit by Americans took place in 1841 during the United States Exploring Expedition. The atoll's position was fixed at lat 19°10′54″ N, long 166°31′30″ E. While aboard the *Vincennes,* Lieutenant Wilkes (1849, 267-268) described the atoll.

Wake's Island is a low coral one, of triangular form, and eight feet above the surface. It has a large lagoon in the center, which was well filled with fish of a variety of species; among these some fine mullet. There is no fresh water on the island, and neither pandanus nor cocoa-nut trees. It has upon it the shrubs which are usually found on the low islands of the Pacific, the most abundant of which was the Tournefortia. Mr. Peale found here the short-tailed albatross, and procured an egg from its nest. The birds were quite tame, although they were not so numerous as we had before met with on uninhabited islands. [...] From appearances, the island must be at times submerged, or the sea makes a complete breach over it; the appearance of the coral blocks and of all the vegetation leads to this conclusion, for they have a very decided inclination to the eastward, showing also that the violent winds or rush of the water, when the island is covered, are from the westward. The reef around the island is very small in extent.

The German ship, *Libelle*, en route from San Francisco to Hong Kong, struck the eastern reef of the atoll during a powerful gale on the night of March 4, 1866. The ship was commanded by Captain Tobias and among the ship's passengers was a renowned opera troupe. The castaway passengers were stranded for 3 weeks before taking off in two small boats to the Mariana Islands, formerly known as Ladrone Islands. One of the boats made it safely to Guam where the 22 passengers were welcomed by the Spanish governor of the Mariana Islands, Francisco Moscoso y Lara. The other boat, carrying the captain and eight passengers, was never found. Before leaving the atoll to search for help, Captain Tobias buried flasks of quiksilver, coined money, and other valuables. It was reported that he even erected marks on the spot where the cargo was buried, but it had been washed away by the sea.

Newspapers across the world reported about the buried cargo from the *Libelle* shipwreck, and many expeditions occurred to the uninhabited atoll between 1867 and 1868 in search for the valuable goods. The Hawaiian schooner, *Moi Wahine*, brought 8 Hawaiian divers to the atoll to search for the cargo. The Hawaiian sloop, *Hokulele,* salvaged 247 flasks of quiksilver and a brig from China salvaged another 248. The English brig, *Cleo*, returned to Honolulu with 240 flasks of quiksilver, some copper, an anchor, and chain.

The China tea clipper, *Dashing Wave*, en route from China to Australia, crashed into the reef of the atoll during a gale on the night of August 30, 1870. The clipper was commanded by Captain Henry Vandervord, who managed to salvage a chart and nautical instruments but found no compass. After 31 days with no water and only a case of wine and some bread, the captain and 12 crew members fixed their oar and made a sail out of blankets sewn together. They set off to search for any inhabited land for 30 days. By the time they sighted Kosrae, the easternmost of the Caroline Islands, their mouths were parched and tongues were swollen by the tropical sun. The King of Kosrae housed the men and offered sails, a mast, and provisions of every kind. Captain Vandervord and his crew tried to reach Kingsmill, but encountered another gale and returned to Kosrae for 39 days until they were rescued by Captain Beatson of the *Oriti*.

On July 4, 1898, during the Spanish-American War, General Francis V. Greene of the SS *China*, stopped on the atoll en route to the Philippines and raised the American flag. Also in July 1898, another claim was made by General Merritt of the USAT *Thomas* who declared the atoll for the United States. Both acts, however, were not regarded as a sufficient claim to the island and on January 17, 1899, Commander Edward D. Taussig of the USS *Bennington* formally annexed the atoll by raising the American flag.

Although the United States rarely made stops on the atoll, an expedition in 1902 and 1904 encountered Japanese pearlers, fishermen, and feather hunters. In 1902, Captain A. Croskey, aboard the USAT *Buford,* sighted eight Japanese fishermen. The Japanese claimed they were left by a fishing schooner to fish around the atoll but, as noted in a report, Captain Croskey suspected that they were actually there pearling. In 1904, Rear Admiral Evans of the USS *Adams* spotted Japanese inhabitants collecting feathers and harvesting shark fins.

A number of Japanese artifacts were found on the atoll in the early 1900s. In 1906, General John J. Pershing of the USAT *Thomas* found shacks and graves of Japanese fishermen. The next U.S. visit in 1912 by the USS *Supply* found no evidence of Japanese feather collectors. However, between 1913 and 1921, apparently no U.S. vessel stopped at the atoll, so bird hunting could have gone on undetected once again. In 1922, Lieutenant Commander S. Picking of the USS *Beaver* reported several deserted huts which had been used by the Japanese for birds, fish or pearls.

In 1923, the *Tanager* Expedition completed an extensive biological survey of the atoll. The leader of the expedition, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, and other expedition members named the other two islets Wilkes and Peale after Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and Titian Peale of the 1841 U.S. Exploring Expedition. The expedition found three old Japanese camps, one on each islet, containing bird bones and other domestic artifacts and tools relating to the skinning of birds. On Wilkes Islet, a grave, Japanese shrines, and boat about 40-ft long were

found. A few bottles, bits of porcelain dish, and *Tridacna* shells were observed at the bases of the shrines which may have been used as offerings. The Japanese camps were described in the following journal entry by Dr. Wetmore on July 30, 1923:

There is no question but that it was built by men here to collect birds for millinery uses. One building 15 by 30 was evidently used for housing. **[...]** Another shed, somewhat larger, was a workshop. [...] A short string with a long hook tied at one end was fastened to a nail at the back and probably served to hold the bird's body during skinning. [...] There were large numbers of trays 18 inches by four feet to dry birds and a rack of bamboo at one side to support them. [...] Scattered among the trees behind were great layers of bones, witnesses to the slaughter that had taken place. The majority were those of terns with many boobies and larger numbers of man-of-war bird. Many thousand birds had been destroyed. [...] The huts are unquestionably of Japanese build as they show Japanese workmanship, Japanese material, and many boards are marked with Japanese ideographs. (Olson 1996, 106-107)

JOHNSTON ATOLL || KALAMA & CORNWALLIS

Johnston Atoll received the modern Hawaiian name, *Moku Kua‘au Ionatana,* by the Kōmike Hua‘ōlelo as a direct translation for the atoll. *Moku kua‘au* means ‘atoll’ or ‘lagoon island’ and *Ionatana* translates as the name ‘Johnston.’ However, Johnston Atoll shares a deeper historical connection with Hawai‘i, when in 1858, the Hawaiian schooner *Kalama* annexed the atoll for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and the two islets were then named Kalama Island and Cornwallis Island.

On September 2, 1796, Captain Joseph Pierpont gave the earliest recorded account and accurate position of the two islands and shoal that make up Johnston Atoll, when the American brig *Sally* ran aground on a nearby reef. Several newspapers published his report, including the *Boston Gazette* on September 18, 1797.

> In lat. 16,45 N. long. 169,38 W. from London, on my passage from the Sandwich Islands to China; the 2d of Sept. 1796, at midnight, in the company with the schooner Prince William Henry, William Wake, Master, of London, we both ran ashore on the north side of a reef of coral rocks and sand, where we continued until next day noon-at which time the weather being very clear. We saw two small islands of sand, bearing W. by N. 4 or 5 miles distant, and from our topgallant-mast-head. We saw the shoal extending E.S.E southerly round to W.S.S -but how far we were not able to determine.
>
> Keep the lat. 17 N. and this shoal will not be seen.
>
> Joseph Pierpont
>
> N.B. It is hoped the printers of America, will give the above a place in their papers.
>
> (Ward 1967, 3:417)

In 1804, Russian naval officer and explorer Adam Johann von Krusenstern (1813, 201) accurately suspected land in the vicinity of Johnston through his observations of surrounding seabirds.

> On the 15th June we saw in latitude 17° and longitude 169°30′an extraordinary number of birds that hovered round the ship in flocks of upwards of a hundred; this raised our hopes of meeting land very considerably; but although the night was perfectly clear, and we kept a good look out, there was none to be perceived. I cannot; however, but think, that during the night we must have passed near some island, or rock, standing above the water, that serves as a resting place for these birds; for we again saw several the next morning, nor did we lose sight of them until noon.

The islets were sighted 3 years later on December 14, 1807, by Lieutenant William Henry Smyth, aboard HMS Cornwallis, and became known as Johnston or Cornwallis Islands after the ship and her captain, Charles James Johnston. No additional accounts were reported in the area until 1841 during the United States Exploring Expedition when Samuel R. Knox, commanding officer of the schooner Flying Fish, sighted and described the atoll. His observations were summarized by Captain Charles Wilkes in the hydrographic report of the expedition under Smyth’s Island, indicating the position as identical to Cornwallis Island.

On December 19, 1857, William H. Parker and Richard F. Ryan obtained a working agreement with Robert Byxbee and Asa Stoddard, owners of the schooner *Palestine,* to take possession of Johnston under the Guano Islands Act of 1856. The *Palestine* party, including

Parker, Captain W. R. Perriman and the ship mate, arrived and took possession of Johnston on March 19, 1858, by erecting a flagstaff and cross bearing an inscription that claimed the entire atoll for the United States. On June 8, 1858, Byxbee, Stoddard, Ryan, and others then formed the Pacific Guano Company, based in San Francisco, to exploit the guano. Meanwhile, on May 31, 1858, Samuel C. Allen obtained a royal commission from King Kamehameha IV to take possession of unclaimed islands for the Hawaiian government. On June 14, Allen and Captain Watson, of the Hawaiian schooner *Kalama*, arrived at Johnston and proceeded to take possession of the islands. They removed the flagstaff, American flag and cross left by the *Palestine* and hoisted the Hawaiian flag, claiming both for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. They then renamed the larger island Kalama and called the smaller island Cornwallis. Following Allen’s initial report to the Minister of the Interior, which insinuated that the islands were deserted, the following proclamation was published in the *Polynesian* newspaper of Honolulu on July 31, 1858:

By Authority.

PROCLAMATION.

Whereas on the 14th day of June, 1858, Cornwallis Island in Latitude 16° 43' North, and Longitude 169°33' West from Greenwich, and on the 19th day of the same month of June, 1858, Kalama Island in Latitude 16°44' North, and Longitude 169°21' West, were taken possession of, with the usual formalities, by Samuel C. Allen, Esquire, he being duly authorized to do so, in the name of Kamehameha IV., King of the Hawaiian Islands: Therefore, this is to give notice that the said Islands so taken possession of are henceforth to be considered and respected as part of the Domain of the King of the Hawaiian Islands.

Published pursuant to an order by the King in Privy Council, on the 27th day of July, 1858.

On July 22, 1858, Captain Perriman was sent by the Pacific Guano Co. on a return trip to Johnston, where he and his crew discovered the Hawaiian flag in place of their American flag. He reasserted the rights of the United States by again hoisting the American flag and leaving two of his crew in occupation of the islands. These men were occupying the atoll for the United States at the time the Royal Proclamation was published and correspondence swiftly ensued between Louis Blanding, attorney for the Pacific Guano Co., U.S. Secretary of State Lewis Cass, Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black, U.S. Commissioner James W. Borden, Minister of Foreign Relations Robert C. Wyllie, Minister of the Interior Lot Kamehameha and E. P. Adams, contractor for Samuel Allen. Due to the claim of Johnston by the United States prior to claim by the Hawaiian Government, Lot Kamehameha revoked their contract with E. P. Adams. The following correspondence summarizes the situation:

Interior Office
October 16, 1858
E. P. Adams Esqre,

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 7th Inst. informing me in reply to my letters of the 16th & 17th of September, that when Mr. S. C. Allen visited Cornwallis' and Kalama Islands he found upon the latter Island a board with an inscription upon it to the effect that those Islands had been previously visited and taken possession of by the Schooner "Palestine."

I regret that Mr. Allen did not mention this circumstance in the report which he sent me, dated July 13th 1858, for, had His Majesty[']s Government been aware that such a notice had been found on Kalama Island, the Proclamation of July 27th would not have been published in the Polynesian newspapers until it had been clearly ascertained that these Islands had not been taken possession of by the officers of the Schooner Palestine in the form required by the laws of the United States.

On your receipt of application dated 24th May 1858 in which you stated that you were desirous to take possession of certain Islands in the North Pacific in the name of the Hawaiian Government, which islands were not at that time in the possession of any Government, I brought the subject before His Majesty in Council for consideration, and His Majesty being at all times anxious to encourage enterprises of this character which would benefit His Government granted a Royal Commission dated May 31st 1858 to Mr. S. C. Allen empowering him to take possession in His Majesty's name of any Island or Islands in the North Pacific which were not in the possession of any other Government or any other people.

On the same day, the agreement setting forth the terms and conditions on which you were to have the exclusive privilege for five years of taking Guano &c from any Islands taken possession of by Mr. Allen of the schooner Kalama under the commission was drawn up and signed; No mention however was made in the agreement that the contract would be void so far as related to any Island which might afterwards be proved to have been taken possession of previously, in the name of some other Government as I considered this agreement to be binding only so far as related to any Islands taken possession of by Mr. Allen which were not in the possession of another Government in accordance with the power granted to Mr. Allen in his commission.

On Mr. Allen's return from Kalama Island, I, under instructions from His Majesty in Council, ordered the Chief Clerk of this office to have a clause added to the agreement of May 31st providing for such an event, and he inform[ed] me that he submitted such a clause to you for approval, and that you told him the clause as he had drawn it up was not in accordance with the verbal management you had made with me on the subject, and that you would see me in relation to it--but from that day to this no further notice has been taken of the subject.

Under these circumstances, and from that fact that you admit that these Islands had been visited and taken possession of by the Schooner "Palestine" previous to Mr. Allen's taking possession of them in His Majesty[']s name. I consider the agreement of May 31st 1858 void so far as Cornwallis' and Kalama Islands are concerned, and I have to request you to have a clause added to the said agreement to prevent a similar occurrence.

I beg to remain Sir
Yours respectfully,
(signed) Lot Kamehameha

(Hawaii State Archives, Int. Dept., Land, Box No. 72)

In March 1859, Lieutenant John Mercer Brooke, of the U.S. schooner *Fenimore Cooper,* surveyed the atoll to assess guano mining operational logistics and secure the interests of the United States against further conflicting claims. By the time Brooke arrived, the Pacific Guano Co., under Captain A. D. Piper, had made their huts and planned on building a railway, wharf and channel through the reef to safely load vessels. In the following report from August 28, 1859, Charles N. Pendleton describes the guano production and facilities on island:

> The large Island appears to be covered with guano, and that of good quality, to the average depth of from three to four feet. A wharf five-hundred feet in length has been built off from the eastern side of the Island, and a railroad track laid from one end of the wharf up to the guano, so that with one wood car twelve men ship now about forty-five tons per day. […] The guano is taken off in lighters, carrying from eight to ten tons each. These lighters have sails, and generally fetch off and on with the regular trades which prevail here. (Ward 1966, 3:431-433)

Having already occupied the island and invested in their enterprise, on December 9, 1859, the Pacific Guano Co. received their official certificate from the Secretary of State stating that they had entered sufficient bonds to claim Johnston under the Guano Islands Act. Throughout their time on Johnston, the guano company harvested and shipped guano until the highest grades were depleted and the island was abandoned. However, ships from the American Guano Company were also reported at Johnston between 1860 and 1861.

The only significant shipwreck reported at Johnston during the 19th century was of the American whaling bark *Jacob A. Howland*, Captain McInnis, which struck the reef on December 26, 1889, while searching for whaling grounds near the atoll with another whaler, *Abraham Barker*. Following the wreck, the crew of 60 men took the boats and remained on the reef until morning. All but one or two men made it to Johnston, and once they landed on the island the crew reportedly collected bird eggs which were then rationed along with their few provisions from the boats. Just 3 days later, on December 29, the *Abraham Barker* made its way through the reef and picked up the crew. They sailed for Hawai‘i and arrived at Wai‘anae where they were then transferred to an inter-island steamer and safely taken to Honolulu.

Conflicting claims arose yet again, this time as Great Britain was planning their trans-Pacific cable. On July 13, 1892, Captain Eustace Rooke left Honolulu, aboard HBMS *Champion*, under orders to leave for Johnston without disclosing the destination. Captain Rooke found the atoll uninhabited when he landed on the July 19, and left an annexation notice claiming Johnston for Great Britain. While on the atoll, he observed four old huts from the guano companies and wreckage from the whaling bark *Jacob A. Howland,* including paddles, boat hooks, casks, a medicine chest, tinned goods and other provisions. His observations were published in the *Daily Bulletin* on July 25, 1892, along with a copy of the proclamation he left on the island.

PROCLAMATION.

In the name of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Queen of the united Kingdom of Great Britain and

Ireland, Empress of India:

By Eustace Rooke, Esquire, Captain in the Royal Navy Commanding her Majesty's Ship "Champion."Whereas, I have it in command from Her Majesty Queen Victoria, through her Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to assert the sovereign rights of Her Majesty over the group of islands, known as the Johnston Islands, the same having been taken possession of by Her Majesty.

Now therefore I, Eustace Rooke, Esquire, Captain in the Royal Navy, commanding her Majesty's Ship "Champion," do hereby declare and proclaim to all men that from and after the date of these presents, the full sovereignty of the Johnston Islands, situate in Latitude 16°15′ North, Longitude 169°30′ West, vests in Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors for ever.

Given under my hand at Johnston Islands, this nineteenth day of July, 1892.

Eustace Rooke,

Witnesses:

Captain of H. B. M. Ship
Champion.
James Weston Little,
Chas. Wilson Fowler,
Lieutenants.

Many inquiries followed the printing of this proclamation and on September 26, 1892, the *Daily Bulletin* reported a telegram from the *New York Herald*, "The guano beds on Johnston Island having been exhausted and the American firm having left that territory the State Department officials say the United States has no further interest in the island and has no right to interfere with Great Britain if she finds the island of any use to her." Although the United States claimed to have no further interest in Johnston, an agent for the Pacific Islands Guano Co. claimed that they did not abandon the islands and planned to resume work. However, no records indicate that the company ever returned to the atoll and negotiations ensued between the Hawaiian government and Great Britain when the former protested British annexation of the atoll. The British government later recognized Hawaiian sovereignty over the island, through the annexation of Johnston by the *Kalama* in 1858, and negotiations dropped when it appeared that Great Britain would run their cable through Tabuaeran, Kiribati. Johnston was still listed as an island bonded to the United States as of 1893, although little attention was given to the atoll until the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands in 1898.

In 1900, Johnston was omitted from the list of Hawaiian Islands annexed by the United States and Hawai‘i maintained ownership of the atoll. In February 1905, Messrs. Underwood and Brown chartered the steamer *Iwalani*, Captain Piltz, from the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company to prospect for guano and returned to Honolulu with samples. On September 11, 1909, the territory leased the islands to private citizen, Max Schlemmer, for a term of 15 years under a set of stipulations, including the annual planting of coconut trees. However, on August 8, 1917, Edward M. May reported to the Commissioner of Public Lands that during his visit on the islands in 1914, they were uninhabited with no sign of coconut

trees. On August 8, 1918, after unsuccessful attempts to contact Schlemmer and re-assert lease agreements, the Commissioner assigned the lease to C. K. Ai and Co. A few men from the company were then sent to Johnston to begin fishing operations but only lasted one day on the island before they mutinied and returned to Honolulu.

Johnston Atoll continued to be relatively abandoned until July 1923, when the fourth *Tanager* Expedition arrived and conducted biological surveys. During their surveys of the atoll, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, who led the team of scientists, found evidence of operations for the millinery feather trade. In the following journal entry for July 13, 1923, Dr. Wetmore describes a hollow filled with seabird bones that he discovered:

> In a hollow southwest of the hill I found remains of several thousand Sooty Terns, Wedge-tailed and Christmas Shearwaters that had been killed by plume hunters and the bodies thrown in a pile after the hand carrying the primaries had been cut away. Careful examination showed that the skeletons were complete except for the hand. In all the mass of bones examined I found no metacarpals. None of the rest of the plumage had been taken as the bones were held together by a felted mass of decomposed feathers. I judged that the work had been done during a few days at most and that it had taken place when the lumber and other supplies from the beach had been landed. Apparently an attempt had been made to burn the bodies, as the surface of the deposit was charred. (Olson, 1996: 96)

As a result of this expedition, President Calvin Coolidge declared the islands of Johnston Atoll a Bird Reservation by Executive Order No. 4467 on June 29, 1926.

PALMYRA ATOLL || HONUAIĀKEA

Palmyra Atoll received the modern Hawaiian name, *Honuaiākea,* by the Kōmike Huaʻōlelo. Honuaiākea was the name of Pele's canoe when making her migration to Hawaiʻi. The following version of *The Coming of Pele,* from Kaʻū, Hawaiʻi, begins the story of that migration:

Ka Huakaʻi a Pele

Mai Kahiki mai ka wahine ʻo Pele,
Mai ka ʻāina o Polapola,
Mai ka pūnohu a Kāne,
Mai ke ao lalapa i ka lani, mai ke ao ʻōpua.

Lapakū i Hawaiʻi ka wahine ʻo Pele.
Kālai i kona ka waʻa Honua-i-ākea,
Kō waʻa, e Ka-moho-aliʻi, holoa mai ka moku.

Ua ʻoki, ua paʻa ka waʻa o ke akua,
Kō waʻa o Kālai-honua-mea,
Holo mai ke au.

Hele a aʻeʻaʻe Pele-honua-mea,
ʻAʻeʻaʻe kalani ʻai punia mai ka moku.
ʻAʻeʻaʻe kini o ke ʻkua.

Iā wai ka uli, ka hope o ka waʻa, e nā hoaʻliʻi?
Iā Pele-a-ʻehu, a Menehune.
Ka ʻia ka liu, hoʻonoho ʻia kāu hoe iluna o ka
waʻa
ʻO Kū mā lāua ʻo Lono.

Holo i ka honua ʻāina kau i hoʻolewa moku,
ʻO Hiʻi-aka noʻeau he ʻkua.
Hele aʻe a kōmi i ka ale o Pele.

E huahuaʻi i Kahiki, lapa uila e Pele,
E huaʻi, ehuaʻinahoʻi a.

The Coming of Pele

From Kahiki came the woman Pele,
from the land of Polapola,
from the rising reddish mist of Kāne,
from the clouds blazing in the sky, horizon clouds.

Restless desire for Hawaii seized the woman Pele.
Ready-carved was the canoe, Honuaiākea,
your own canoe, O Kamohoaliʻi,
for sailing to distant lands.
Well-lashed and equipped, the canoe of the high gods,
your canoe, Sacred-hewer-of-the-land,
stood ready to sail with the ocean current.

Pele-Honua-mea embarked, the heavenly one
stepped aboard to sail round Kahiki island.
Multitudes of gods came aboard.

O royal companions, who handled the steering paddle
at the stern?
Pele-the-redhead herself was helmswoman, ruler of the
Menehune.
Kū and Lono bailed out the bilge water,
carried paddles, placed them in station.

Hiʻiaka, the wise sister, next embarked,
boarded the craft to dwell with Pele in her sailing quarters,
close to Pele on the long voyage.

Jets of lava gushed from Kahiki.
Pele hurled her lightning,
vomit of flame, outpouring lava was the woman's farewell.

(Pukui and Korn 1973, 52-56)

Recorded discovery of the atoll is attributed to Captain Cornelius Sowle, aboard the American vessel *Palmyra* on November 10, 1802. His description of the area was first introduced in the UK Naval Chronicle of 1805 (12:464-465) with the following opening letter:

> MR. EDITOR, I REQUEST you to insert in your Journal the following description of a newly discovered island in the South Sea, which was seen by Capt. Sowle, in the American Ship Palmyra, of Providence, Rhode Island, on the 10th of November, 1802. As the weather was fine, that day, at noon, he had an observation of the sun's altitude, by which the latitude is accurately ascertained; and as he took his departure from Christmas Island, and had a gentle westerly wind, it is scarcely possible there can be an error in the longitude, even of two or three miles.
>
> This island lies out of the track of most Navigators, who pass either from America to Asia, or from Asia to America; and, till lately, English Whalers have been prohibited fishing in that quarter, which accounts for it not having been seen before; it is, however, probable, that there are several other islands in the same direction. Capt. Sowle thinks he passed one the day before, as he saw many birds, and imagined he heard breakers; but the weather being very hazy, he could not see either rocks or land. I am, Sir,
>
> Yours, &c.
>
> Canonbury-place, Oct. 4. WILLIAM JACOB.

Commander Charles Wilkes summarized Captain Sowle's description of Palmyra in the hydrographic report of the United States Exploring Expedition, noting that the USS *Porpoise* sighted and confirmed the position of the island during the expedition. On September 15, 1840, Captain James Scott visited Palmyra, aboard HMS *Samarang,* and in some accounts the atoll was listed as the name of the vessel. Edward Lucett landed on Palmyra on July 21, 1848 after receiving an account from a man at Tabuaeran, Kiribati, that there were barrels of sperm oil left behind from a wrecked whaling vessel. Though no wreck or barrel remnants were discovered by Lucett and his crew, he provided one of the earliest accounts of wildlife on the atoll. Following the Guano Act of 1856, Gerrit P. Judd took possession of Palmyra for the United States as an agent of the American Guano Company on October 20, 1859. However, due to local environmental conditions, the availability of commercial guano was highly unlikely and no claim was ever formally filed nor evidence found to support that guano companies ever occupied or operated at Palmyra. On February 26, 1862, the Hawaiian Cabinet Council met in consideration of a petition from Zenas Bent and Johnson B. Wilkinson to extend Hawaiian sovereignty over Palmyra. On March 1, the petition was granted and Lot Kamehameha, then Minister of the Interior, issued a letter authorizing Bent to take possession of Palmyra as Hawaiian territory. On April 15, Captain Bent took formal possession of Palmyra for the Hawaiian Kingdom in accordance with the royal commission issued to him by King Kamehameha IV. Bent provided his first report of the atoll to L. Kamehameha on June 16, and on the June 18, L. Kamehameha issued a proclamation announcing the annexation of Palmyra to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. Bent sold his rights later that year to his partner J. B. Wilkinson. After Wilkinson's death in 1866, the rights of Palmyra were passed to his wife Kalama, as per his will, and continued to pass vigorously through various hands via sale and inheritance. The following correspondences from the Hawai‘i State Archives (Int. Dept., Land, Box No. 75) document the timeline of annexation, including the proclamation which commissioned Zenas Bent to take possession of Palmyra:

Kamehameha IV. By the grace of God, of the Hawaiian Islands, King.

To all whom it may concern, greeting:

Know ye, that we have authorized and empowered our faithful subject Zenas Bent and by these presents, do hereby empower the said Zenas Bent to take possession in our name of Palmyra Island, the said Island being situated in longitude 161°53′ west and latitude 6°4′ north not having been taken possession of by any other government or any other people, by erecting thereon a short pole with the Hawaiian flag wrapped [a]round it and interring at the foot thereof a bottle well corked containing a paper signed by him in the following form, viz:

"Visited and taken possession of by order of His Majesty King Kamehameha IV, for him and his successors on the Hawaiian throne by the undersigned in the Schooner Louisa this day of -- 186-"

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hand, conjointly with our Kuhina nui and caused the great seal of the Kingdom to be affixed this 1st day of March A. D. 1862.

(sig.) Kamehameha

(sig.) Kaahumanu.

By command of the King of the Kuhina nui,

(sig.) L. Kamehameha.

The Minister of the Interior then transmitted this commission to Wilkinson and Bent:

Interior Office.

Honolulu, March 1, 1862.

Gentlemen:

I am instructed by His Majesty's Government to acknowledge the receipt of your petition of the 24th ult. and to inform you that in Cabinet Council held on the 26th ult. at the Palace, the above mentioned memorial was considered and discussed, and I am authorized to state on the part of his Majesty's Government that they consent to the taking possession of the island of Palmyra, situated in longitude 161° 53 West and latitude 6° 4 North as described by you in said memorial; for the purpose of increasing the trade and commerce of his Kingdom as well as offering protection of interests of its subjects.

I have the honor to forward with this dispatch the authority under the Royal Sign Manuel to Zenas Bent, Esq., to take possession of the above mentioned island of Palmyra and I beg to request that you will after having executed the orders contained in the commission, you will report the fact to this Department.

Hoping that the enterprise may prove successful, I beg to remain,

Gentlemen,
Your ob.t Serv't,
(sig.) L. Kamehameha

To Messrs. J. Wilkinson and Zenas Bent.

The first official report from Bent to the Department of Interior went as follows:

To His Royal Highness PRINCE L. KAMEHAMEHA, Minister of the Interior

Sir: In pursuance of the authority granted to me by His Majesty Kamehameha IV., on the first day of March A.D. 1862, I took possession of Palmyra Island, in the name of His Majesty; and according to my instructions, I erected on the island a pole, with the Hawaiian flag wrapped [a]round it, and I interred at the foot of it a bottled [sic] well corked, containing the paper signed be me, in the following form:

"This island is taken possession of by order of His Majesty King Kamehameha IV., for him and his successors on the Hawaiian throne, by the undersigned, in the Schooner Louisa, this 15th day of April A. D. 1862.

(Signed) Zenas Bent"

By correct observation, I found the Island to be in latitude 5°50′ North, and in longitude 161°53′ West. The island is about ten miles in length and six miles in brea[d]th. The eastern end rises about twenty feet above the level of the sea; the landing is on the west end; and a vessel can lie in perfect safety in three fathoms of water.

The trees on the island are cocoanut, puhala and a species of the koa.* All kinds of vegetables will grow on the island. I planted some beans, corn and watermelons.

I erected a dwelling house on the island, and also a curing house for biche de mer. I left on the Island one white man and four Hawaiians, who are engaged in the curing of biche de mer.

I propose returning to the island in about ten days.

I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

Z. Bent.

Honolulu, June 16, 1862

*Kou was evidently meant instead of Koa. There is indeed a tree very common on Palmyra which greatly resembles the Kou (*Cordia subcordat*a). It belongs, however, to a different family altogether, and is *Pisonia grandis*. There is no tree on Palmyra which resembles the Koa (*Acacia koa*) unless it be the *Suriana maritima*, a shrub which has however entirely disappeared; it was recorded only by Streets from that Island. (Rock 1916, 5)

As Minister of the Interior, Lot Kamehameha then issued the following proclamation on June 18, 1862 announcing the annexation of Palmyra for the Kingdom of Hawaii:

> By Authority.
>
> PROCLAMATION:
>
> Whereas, On the 15th day of April, 1862, PALMYRA ISLAND, in latitude 5°50′ North, and longitude 161°53′ West, was taken possession of, with usual formalities, by Captain Zenas Bent, he being duly authorized to do so, in the name of KAMEHAMEHA IV., King of the Hawaiian Islands.
>
> Therefore, This is to give notice, that the said Island, so taken possession of, is henceforth to be considered and respected as part of the Domain of the King of the Hawaiian Islands.
>
> L. KAMEHAMEHA,
>
> Minister of the Interior.
>
> Department of the Interior, June 18, 1862

In 1873, the atoll was surveyed by surgeon William H. Jones of the USS *Portsmouth*, Commander Joseph S. Skerrett, who created the first standard chart of the area. Commander Skerrett and his crew landed on the morning of December 14, and remained until December 27. They encountered an American businessman, Clayton L. Strawn, who was living on the island curing copra and it was noted in Skerrett's report to the Navy that Strawn cured about 5 tons of copra in 5 months with the help of fewer than 10 Tahitian workers. In 1885, after the death of Wilkinson's widow Kalama, two of her heirs gave their rights to Palmyra to Luther Wilcox. Soon after, Wilcox transferred his rights to the Pacific Navigation Company, which paid their taxes for the atoll to the Kingdom of Hawaii through 1888. During that time, the company contracted a man named Dillon and his wife to live on the island for a year to plant coconuts, cut firewood, and seek commercial endeavors for fish and shells. On October 25, 1886 Dillon reported that the coconut trees on the island included 2,100 full bearing large trees, 1,000 full bearing small trees, 500 old trees not bearing and 6,000 young trees not bearing; also that he personally planted 200 on one islet. On April 16, 1888 the British iron barque *Henry James,* Captain Ralph Lattimore, wrecked on Kingman Reef. All 30 passengers and crew members remained at the small boats until morning and reached Palmyra in the evening. Although they found the islands uninhabited, they observed several huts and firewood that was cut and piled. With few provisions left by April 21, it was decided that the mate, boatswain and several seamen would head to Samoa in one of the boats. They arrived in Apia after 19 days and chartered the schooner *Vindex* to pick up the stranded party. Meanwhile, aboard the steamship *Mariposa*, Captain H. M. Hayward learned of the wreck from Lieutenant Cressap, of the USS *Mohican* in Apia. Feeling it was his duty to rescue them, Captain Hayward rescued the party on May 29, and everyone made it to Honolulu in good health. Captain Lattimore reported that during their six weeks on Palmyra, all hands procured fresh water and subsisted on coconuts, fish, eels, birds, land-crabs and peppergrass. Captain Hayward, the first officer and four seamen of the *Mariposa* were later awarded and recognized by the British Government and Board of Trade in London for rescuing the crew and passengers of the *Henry James.* On May 28,

1889, Commander Nichols, of HMS *Cormorant*, annexed Palmyra for Great Britain during their plans to construct a trans-Pacific cable. The atoll was then surveyed in 1897 for its suitability as a submarine cable station by Lieutenant C. Brewis aboard HMS *Penguin*, Captain Arthur M. Field. On July 16, 1897, the *Hawaiian Star* published a report from Captain Rosehill, of the schooner *Norma*, regarding British claims to the atoll. He reported that during his brief landing on the island, he found a weathered flagpole with a proclamation declaring the islands under possession of Great Britain, along with scattered remnants of clothing and items bearing the initials 'H. M. S. Penguin.' Following this report, Palmyra owners followed up to successfully dispute British claim through rights secured from the Pacific Navigation Company and the Hawaiian government via annexation by Captain Zenas Bent in 1862.On December 16, 1898, Palmyra was included as a territory among the Hawaiian Islands annexed by the United States. In 1911, the Pacific Navigation Company's rights were conveyed to Judge Henry E. Cooper, who then bought out the other claim the following year. In February 1912, knowing that Great Britain had lingering interests in Palmyra, the USS *West Virginia* took formal possession of the atoll for the United States. Four months later, Cooper successfully obtained a land court title and became the sole owner of Palmyra. In July 1913, H. E. Cooper, Joseph F. Rock and Dr. C. M. Cooke Jr. travelled to Palmyra aboard the *Luka* and surveyed the atoll. Along with his comprehensive botanical surveys and many photographs, Rock provided detailed descriptions of Palmyra Island, and Bird, Eastern, Home, Holei, and Cooper Islets. Among his observations were references to Japanese inhabitants, likely there to harvest feathers for the millinery feather trade or to collect copra oil.

> On Home Islet were signs of previous habitation. We found a wooden shack, covered with corrugated iron, full of wood and boxes with Japanese characters written on them; the place was surrounded by huge oriental jars 3 1/2 ft high, a few broken, others in good condition and full of rainwater. Behind the shack was a dug out pit which was undoubtedly used by the bird poachers in disposing bird cadavers. (Rock 1916, 12-14)

From 1920 to 1921 the island was leased to Colonel William Meng, his wife Idell Meng, and Edwin Benner Jr. who lived on Palmyra to investigate commercial copra production and fishing possibilities. At that time there were about 25,000 bearing coconut trees on the atoll, and on August 19, 1922, Leslie and Ellen Fullard-Leo acquired the title to Palmyra from H. E. Cooper, except Home islets, to establish the Palmyra Copra Company.

KINGMAN REEF || NALUKĀKALA

Kingman Reef received the modern Hawaiian name, *Nalukākala,* by the Kōmike Hua‘ōlelo. This name translates as 'surf that arrives in combers' and may be attributed to the atoll because it is largely submerged by rolling breakers. The first western record of Kingman Reef was given by Captain Edmund Fanning of the American ship *Betsey* in 1798. In *Voyages Round the World*, Fanning recounts his premonition on the evening of June 13, where multiple times he found himself on deck after sleepwalking. Before he finally retired for the night, Fanning left instructions with the officer on deck to maintain their position till morning. That morning, Fanning realized they were quickly sailing towards what he described as mast high breakers. After maneuvering out of immediate danger and gaining a safe view, he described the crescent shaped reef surrounded by shoalwater.

> We did not discover a foot of ground, rock, or sand, above water, where a boat might have been hauled up; of course had our ship run on it in the night, there can be no question but we should all have perished. (Fanning 1833, 234)

Kingman Reef was named after Captain W. E. Kingman, who described it in his journal on November 29, 1853, aboard the American ship *Shooting Star*. The reef was not written on his chart; however, he recorded its location near the spot assigned to Danger Rock and sent a copy of his journal entry to the *Friend*, published on September 9, 1855. He wrote to the Honolulu-based newspaper to inform ships passing within the vicinity of the reef that it is “very dangerous to approach in the night, particularly with a light wind and smooth sea, as such, there would be no breakers visible until a ship was so near as to be in considerable danger.” Well recognized as a danger to navigators, Kingman Reef has a long history of reported sightings, provided with alternative names and varying geographical points. The captain of the ship *Alice Thorndike* visited and reported the reef in 1859 and was known in some accounts by the name of the ship or simply as Thorndike reef or shoal. Despite the lack of land or guano, Kingman was claimed in 1860 under the Guano Islands Act of 1856 and formally listed as Danger island, Reef or rock. It was sometimes recorded as Maria or Crane Shoal, from Captain E. G. Crane, who reported the reef in 1862, aboard the schooner *Maria*. On October 2, 1872, Commander Nathaniel Green of the USS *Resaca* provided a report to *The Friend* regarding the dangers of the reef, and on June 22, 1874 the British steamship *Tartar*, commanded by J. S. Ferries, struck the reef and spent 2 days run aground before landing safely in Honolulu on June 28. Such reports of dangers and ship strikes within the vicinity of Kingman Reef appeared in navigational directories and newspapers frequently throughout the 19th century. However, with latitudinal and longitudinal points varying by report, some encounters proved to be treacherous. On January 16, 1893, the Hawaiian bark *Lady Lampson* was bound for Honolulu when the vessel struck a sunken reef off Palmyra. Captain J. Peterson, his wife and five crew members took to one boat and his first mate with the remaining four crew members took to the other. With plans to head for Palmyra, once they reached the open ocean a storm came through and both boats drifted for 9 days, before miraculously re-sighting the wreck. They boarded what remained of the *Lady Lampson* and obtained some food and water, made repairs to the boats, and loaded them with provisions and navigational instruments. Both parties made for Honolulu, but were separated after 2 days. On February 13, the Captain's boat reached Honolulu and following their news, the steamship *CR Bishop* searched for the remaining crew of the *Lady Lampson*. It was thought

to have wrecked at Palmyra, but the crew of the *CR Bishop* instead found a wreck on Kingman's Shoal, which they boarded and identified as the missing *Lady Lampson*. In 1894, the *Hawai'i Holomua* newspaper reported that the other boat was overhauled by a passing vessel on its way to San Francisco. In 1897, the entire reef area was surveyed by HMS *Penguin*, commanded by Captain Arthur M. Field, and was considered identical to alternative names and points reported within the vicinity. Such names were subsequently removed from charts, including Caldew Reef and Maria Shoal. Kingman was formally annexed to the United States on May 10, 1922, by Lorrin A. Thurston. As an agent commissioned by the Palmyra Copra Company, he read a proclamation of annexation in the company of five witnesses. He then left the signed certificate, a record of the proceedings, American flag, and copies of the *Honolulu Advertiser* and *Star Bulletin* of May 3, 1922, in a glass jar, deposited in the base of a coral cairn. In 1926, Lieutenant Poland of the USS *Whippoorwill* officially surveyed the reef, accompanied by L. A. Thurston. Recognizing the deterioration of the annexation records, the glass jar was then transferred to the Hawai'i State Archives.

HOWLAND ISLAND || ULUKOU

Recognized by guano laborers in the late 1800s as *Ulukou*, this name for Howland Island translates as 'kou tree grove' and likely referenced a distinct kou tree grove located in the center of the island. One of the first appearances of this name was published in the *Ke Au Okoa* on January 16, 1868. Just a few years prior, in September 1862, James D. Hague published a report on the Pacific guano islands which included his observations of remains on the island.

> There are some interesting traces on this (Howland's) island of former visitors or residents. Excavations and mounds in the centre of the island, among the thickets of brushwood... are evidently the work of man. The most extensive of these excavations is several hundred feet long, and about one hundred feet wide, and ten or fifteen feet deep, forming a gully or ditch, on each side of which the sand and gravel is carefully banked up and kept in its place by walls laid up of coral stone, (blocks of beach and reef rock).
>
> The trees themselves may possibly owe their existence here to the originators of these works, for the sides of this gully are covered by a growth of wood which, unless younger than the rest, would show the trees to be of more recent origin than the excavation.
>
> It is said to be of a species called by the natives of the Sandwich Islands, *Kou,* which abounds on many islands of the Pacific. In the same vicinity there are also the remains of what were low, flat mounds of regular shape, formed of gravel and walled up all around, being about a foot high, and just such as I have observed are used by many South Sea Islanders for the foundation and floor of their houses. In another part of the island, near the western beach some remains of a hut were found, and near by the fragments of a canoe, some pieces of bamboo and a blue bead. Here also was found, buried under a foot of sand, a human skeleton, the greater part of which, on being exposed to the air, crumbled to dust, leaving only two or three bones in condition to be preserved.
>
> On the south end of the island there is a foot-path laid to cross a bed of coral debris or beach accumulations. The edges of the corals being rough, sharp and painful to the feet, the paths seem to have been laid for the convenience of passengers across this end of the island. It is several hundred feet long, made of flat, smooth stones, at convenient distances apart, for stepping from one to the other. They were evidently laid by hand, as they lie in a direction which forms nearly a right angle with the ridges made by the sea. It is probable that the originators of these works were South Sea Islanders. No implements or other traces of civilized people have been found.
>
> It is not unlikely that the lizards which abound on the inhabited islands of the Pacific were brought here by these people, and the rats, possibly, came from the same sources. (18-19)*The hut may have been that built in 1857 by Arthur Benson. (Rogers 1933, 131)

The *Whippoorwill* Expedition of 1924 retraced Hague's steps on Howland Island. During the expedition, archaeological sites were mapped and photographed, including distinct coral pilings and footpaths. The following summary of observations was included in the expedition report:

> During a week's exploration by the Whippoorwill Expedition, Bruce Cartwright and C. Montague Cooke, Jr., examined the large excavation spoken of by Hague. They could find no traces of the retaining walls, which may have been removed by the guano workers or drifted over with sand. A thicket of half-dead *kou* (*Cordia subcordata*) trees still marks the slopes of the wide ditch. Excavations of this sort, dug within an inch or two of the water table, but rarely lined with retaining walls, are common in the Tuamotu Archipelago. In them, taro, *ape*, bananas, and sugar cane are grown.

> Ruins among the *kou* trees that Hague thought to be house platforms were not found in 1924. Here was found, however, a plank 4-ft long, 1-ft wide and 0.75-inches thick, on which was carved 'Makiattafofi.' On the east coast, a plain canoe paddle was picked up. A photograph shows it to be exactly like a Tahitian paddle.
>
> The footpath described by Hague is probably one of the six discovered by the Whippoorwill Expedition on the southeast coast. The remains of a hut and, nearby, the fragment of the canoe, pieces of bamboo, and a blue bead indicate visitors at no great time prior to Hague's visit. It may be noted, however, that on such desert islands wood is not easily destroyed. The board used to mark a grave on Jarvis Island in 1872 was firmly standing in 1924.
>
> Howland Island is overrun by the Polynesian rat, both the brown and the black varieties. The rat and the *kou* tree, it is safe to assume, are of Polynesian introduction. (Emory [1934] 1971, 5)

Several American whaling ships sighted and charted the island as of 1822, including *Oeno,* which was commanded by Captain George B. Worth and who named it Worth Island. In 1826, Captain Daniel McKenzie sighted the island aboard the whaler *Minerva Smyth* and named it for the ship's managing agent, Isaac Howland, Jr. After Captain McKenzie landed on the island in November 1828, the island was placed on charts under the name Howland Island. However, on September 9, 1842, aboard the whale bark *Isabella,* Captain George E. Netcher found the island unmarked on his chart, and lastly named it Howland Island for a member of the Howland family who sighted it.

In October 1856, Captain Netcher authorized Arthur Benson, son of A. G. Benson, to take formal possession of Howland Island for his budding guano enterprise with business partner Captain Taylor. After Arthur Benson reported his success in doing so on February 5, 1857, Netcher filed for legal recognition of ownership from the Secretary of State. However, unbeknown to Netcher, on February 5, 1857, Arthur Benson and Charles H. Judd actually took possession of Howland Island on behalf of A. G. Benson and the American Guano Company. Netcher and partners organized the United States Guano Company in October 1858, and on December 3, Howland Island was legally assigned to their company. The following year they sent a vessel to exploit the guano on the island. However, by the time the United States Guano Co. arrived, the American Guano Co., which had already been mining guano on Baker and Jarvis Islands, were in full operation and occupied the island. A heated dispute ensued between the two guano companies but was settled in court on June 11, 1865, and all enterprises ended around 1878 when guano deposits were depleted. Meanwhile, out of Holmes Hole, Massachusetts, the Pacific Guano Company formed in 1859 and leased Howland Island under the Guano Islands Act of 1856. They abandoned their work on the island around 1868, after importing roughly 42,000 tons of guano with some 33 ships; 6 of which were reported wrecked or lost at sea on their homebound journey. These included the wrecks of the *Mary Robinson*, *Lizzie Oakford* and *Arno*, and two ships (including the *Golden Eagle*) taken by Confederate cruisers as they passed the southern United States. Along with ships that were pirated or went missing, during peak guano mining years in the 1860s, many ships loaded with guano wrecked before they had a chance to leave the atoll. Such reports were published in newspapers and those collected by geographer R. Gerard Ward (1966, 3:269-319) are summarized below: According to Captain E. A. Swift, the *Golden Eagle* was captured by the *Alabama*, Captain Semmes, on February 21, 1863, while en route to New Orleans carrying 1,200 tons of guano. Captain Semmes then ordered his first lieutenant to

loot and burn the ship. *Alabama* officers and crew took the ship papers, logbook and instruments from the *Golden Eagle*. Officers and crew of the *Golden Eagle* were allowed to bring one bag on board the *Alabama*. Upon their arrival they were shackled and remained on deck as the *Golden Eagle* was then set on fire. She sank the following morning.

While loading guano after 18 working days, the ship *Monsoon*, under the command of Captain Edward T. Merrill, struck a reef during a gale on January 10, 1864. After pounding on the reef for some time, the ship came off and sunk one mile from shore along with 1,143 tons of guano.

When Master John A. Willey of the ship *Ladoga* returned to Howland on June 28, 1864, he found the ship *Mary Robinson*, under the command of Captain McCleave, severely damaged. By 1700 hours, the ship had filled and at 2000 hours *Mary Robinson* sank with 1,300 tons of guano on board. All hands were saved and went aboard the bark *Harrison*, which was bound for repairs in San Francisco.

On August 9, 1864 the ship *Arno*, commanded by Captain Nason, wrecked on a reef while attempting to moor. The ship sailed past the mooring buoy, grounded on the reef, and swiftly became a total wreck. Captain Nason then boarded the ship *Lagoda* bound for Holme's Hole.

The British clipper ship *Kathay*, under the command of Captain William Popham, arrived at Howland on January 6, 1867. On January 20, a strong gale came through, prompting the men to make sail, but the ship slipped from the buoy. *Kathay* quickly filled and heaved, the masts broke, and the captain and the 25-member crew left on the boats. The ship then slipped off the reef and sank with 400 tons of guano. All hands safely made it to shore and remained on island till February 15.

On September 25, 1868, the ship *Lizzie Oakford*, commanded by Captain Rocko, stood out at sea within sight of the island. At 0400 hours on September 26, the superintendent observed vessel lights and responded with a light from his house before retiring to sleep. However, he was soon awoken by a seaman who swam to shore and reported that the ship had gone into the reef during the night. The next day the superintendent and his men assisted with rescuing provisions, clothing, and some copper which was later sold at auction. The ship *Lizzie Oakford* remained on the reef for 2 days before breaking up and losing 1,300 tons of guano. All hands were safely taken to Honolulu aboard the brig *Kamehameha IV* and the schooner *San Diego*.

Guano mining operations ceased in the late 1870s until John T. Arundel and Company, based in London, commenced guano mining operations on Howland in 1886 and remained until 1891. Once all guano companies abandoned the island, it was uncertain who had official sovereignty until the young men of the Hui Panalā‘au project established permanent U.S. claims in 1935.

BAKER ISLAND || PUAKA‘ILIMA

Hawaiian guano laborers working on Baker Island in the late 1850s named the island *Puaka‘ilima*, meaning ‘the ‘ilima flower,’ which may have reference to the islet of Puaka‘ilima located off of Kawaihae on Hawai‘i’s Kona coast. Whiling living on the island, the laborers often thought of home and their queen, Emma Kaleleonālani, and composed a *mele* (chant) to show their affection for their queen. The *mele* was translated by Mary Kawena Pukui in 1937 and again in 1952 and by Marvin Puakea Nogelmeier in 2001. The following version was published in *He Lei no ‘Emalani*:

Aia ka nani i Puaka‘ilima
Kēlā ‘ailana noho i ke kai
No kai ka makani Pāulukona
Ha‘iha‘i lau lā‘au o ka uka
No uka ka ‘iwa i kiani mai
Ke hea mai nei lā i ku‘u kino
I naue paha wau me ku‘u hoa
Me ku‘u komo kaimana i ka la‘i
Ha‘ina ka inoa i lohe
Ke Kuini ‘Emalani he inoa.

The beauty is there at Puaka‘ilima
That island that dwells in the sea
From the sea comes the Pāulukona wind
Crackling the branches of the shoreland regions
From the highlands the frigate bird glides and wheels
Beckoning to my person
That I should perhaps move along with my companion
With my diamond ring in the serene calm
Tell of the name, that it be heard
Queen Emmalani, a name song.

(Nogelmeier 2001, 25)

The island was discovered in 1818 by Captain Elisha Folger of the Nantucket ship *Equator* and was given the name New Nantucket. It was also referred to as New Nantucket in 1825 by Captain Obed Starbuck of the Nantucket whaleship *Loper*. In 1832, Captain Michael Baker of the whaler *Gideon Howland* visited and named the island after himself. He landed on the island again on August 14, 1839, raised the American flag, and claimed the island for the United States. During the same trip, he buried an American seaman and while digging the grave site he discovered guano deposits. On September 1, 1855, Captain Michael Baker sold his interest to the island to the American Guano Company. The island was bonded under the Guano Islands Act of 1856. In 1857, agents of the American Guano Company, Arthur Benson and Charles H. Judd, asserted the company’s claim on the island. In August 1857, Charles Henry Davis of the USS sloop *St. Mary's* surveyed and made formal claim to the island in the name of the United States. The island was visited by many whalers as a stopping ground for food, such as seabird eggs, and to exchange news with other whalers. The following report from the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on July 3, 1869, describes a box used by passing whalemen to leave papers, letters, and log-books inside: Previous to its coming into the possession of its present owners, it was occasionally visited by ships, chiefly sperm whalers, which frequent these waters. A weather-beaten piece of timber, firmly planted in the ground, and bearing a rude but secure letter box, still stands, like a beacon, upon the most prominent part of the island. For many years it served as a seaport office—a sort of news exchange or station, where passing vessels left papers, letters and log-books, and thus received, now and then, crumbs of intelligence from the great world from which they had been so long shut out. The island was considered the most dangerous of all the guano islands, where many vessels have been lost, including the *Asterion*, *E. H. Taylor*, *Minehaha*, *Seaman’s Bride*, *Lady Washington*, *St. Charles*, *Mattapan*, *Robinson*, *Mary L. Sutton*,

Shaftsbury, *Mattie Banks*, *Nettie Brooks*, *Liebig*, and *Napier*. British ship *Virginia*, commanded by Captain Jairus Withers, struck the island's reef on May 16, 1859, while searching for the guano islands. On May 21, the captain, first officer, steward, five apprentices, and two crew members took a longboat to Fiji to get help while 14 seamen remained on the island for 10 weeks. On July 13, the brig *Josephine* arrived at the island and rescued the 14 seamen, however, it is unknown what happened to the longboat and its passengers. An account of the shipwreck was reported by G. W. Kaluahine and published in *Ka Hae Hawaii* on August 24, 1859.

Haalele makou ia aina, holo mai i Puakailima, oia ka aina, a i ka la 14 o Iulai ike makou ia Puakailima. Ia wa, ike makou i kekahi mea hou, oia hoi he moku ili, no Beretania mai, i holo mai i ke kuake manu, aole nae i loaa ka lakou mea i holo mai ai. Ua ili ko lakou moku i ka malama o Mei i ka la 17, oia ka wa i ili ai. O ke kumu o ka ili ana, ua pau na mea maluna o ka moku i ka ona i ka rama, a ua lele iuka ke kapena e nana i ke kukae manu, a hoi mai, ua pau na luina oluna i ka ona i ka rama. Kahea aku ke Kapena e huki i ka waapa iluna, aole nae i hiki i luna, kahea hou ke kapena, ia wa no o ka wa ia ili ai ka moku. Ke waiho nei ke kino o ka moku i Puakailima nei. Ua hoi aku ka poe nona ka moku maluna o Josephine.

We departed that land and sailed to Puakailima, (that land) which we saw on the 14th day of July, Puakailima. It was then that we saw something new, mainly a stranded boat from Britain that had sailed here for guano which was not obtained when they came. Their ship had gone aground in the month of May, on the 17th. This was when it ran aground. The reason for the grounding was that (those) aboard ship were drunk with rum, and the captain had gone inland to look for guano, and when he returned, all the sailors were drunk (with rum). The captain called out to hoist the rowboat, however, it was not hoistened. The captain called again and that was when the ship went aground. The hull of the boat was left at Puakailima. The crew went home on the *Josephine*.

(Johnson 1976, 146-147)

On August 30, 1869, the American ship *Robin Hood,* commanded by Captain Taylor, was in flames while carrying 412 tons of guano. The captain in charge of the island and 40 natives immediately boarded the ship and poured water all over the ship. Four crew members were arrested by the United States Consul for setting the ship on fire. One account of the incident was reported in *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on December 25, 1869.

At 12 N., no flame could be discovered which led to the belief that the fire was in the hold. At 4 P.M., the between decks were heard to fall in. At 6 P.M., the fire broke out about ten feet from the stern post and just above the copper. The fire was now raging fearfully and the after part of the ship was a mere shell. Cut the standing rigging from the fore and main masts and sent it ashore. In a few minutes the flames broke through the poop deck and soon after wrapped about the whole afterpart of the ship. Being fearful that the spars might fall, ordered all hands into the boats and ordered the moorings slipt. At about 6 P.M., all hands left the ship and she was soon on fire fore and aft, the masts falling in. At 12 midnight she was burned to the water's edge and was slowly drifting to the westward. (Ward 1966, 1:281-282)

American guano companies abandoned operations on the island in the 1880s, however, British guano companies continued mining. The British firm John T. Arundel and Co. established their headquarters on the island for their guano digging enterprise in the central Pacific between 1886 and 1891. The island was reportedly abandoned in 1910, as the guano supply was exhausted. The *Whippoorwill* Expedition surveyed the island in 1924 and found old deep sea moorings, remains of a pier, walls of coral stone buildings, boilers and buoys, and wooden headboards which indicated remains of a graveyard. When the *Whippoorwill*

left, the island was deserted until 1935 when young men known as the Hui Panalāʻau occupied the island for the United States.

JARVIS ISLAND || PAUKEAHO

During the late 1850s, Hawaiian guano laborers named the island *Paukeaho*, meaning 'out of breath' or 'exhausted,' which described their experience and working conditions. In a letter published in *Ka Hae Hawaii* on August 24, 1859, G. W. Kaluahine describes the work environment on the island.

I ka la 28 o Mei, 1859, holo mai makou mai Honolulu mai, eono o makou la ma ka moana, a i ka hiku o ka la, oia ka la 4 o Iune, ike makou ia Paukeaho, he aina haahaa loa keia ke nana aku, e noho ana ilaila o Kale, Livai me na kanaka he 50, he poe hana kukae manu keia poe. Hookahi moku kalepa e ku ana, a he mau mouo ekolu i mea e hoopaa ai i na moku, a he wahi wapo maikai, i mea e hooili ai i na kukae manu, holo no hoi ka hana o ka poe kanaka o Kale. Ka nui o na kanaka he 80. E hiki no i keia poe kanaka he kanawalu ke hana i 2,640 paiki i ka la hookahi. Nui no ka ai me ka wai, mai Honolulu mai e lawe ia mai ai, maluna mai o Josephine. [...] O ka aina, he wahi aina uuku no; ina e ku aku a nana ma kekahi aoao, ike ia aku no ke poi mai ka nalu. He aina wela loa keia, e like me Kawaihae ma Hawaii. O ka makani mai ka moana mai ka mea i olu iki ai keia aina.

On the 28th of May, 1859, we sailed from Honolulu. We were six days at sea, and on the seventh day, the fourth of June, we saw Paukeaho, a very low land when looked at. Kale, Livai and 50 other people were living there. These were people who worked with guano. One clipper ship would anchor and there were three buoys to which the boats could tie up. It was a good wharf so that guano could be loaded. The work of Kale's people went very fast. The number of workers were about 80. These 80 people could complete 2,640 bags per day. Lots of food and water are brought from Honolulu on the ship, *Josephine*. [...] Concerning the land, it is a small island. If you stand looking (across it) to the (other side), breakers can be seen. This is a very hot land, like Kawaihae on Hawaii. The wind from the sea is what cools the land. (Johnson 1976, 146-147)

Jarvis Island was first sighted on August 21, 1821 by Captain Matthew Brown of the British whaler *Eliza Francis*, who claimed the barren and uninhabited island for Great Britain. The island was named after the owners of the vessel, Edward, Thomas, and William Jarvis. It was also called Brock, Brook, Bunker, Jervis, and Bunker Island and some of these names appear on nautical charts published before 1821. On January 20, 1825, the British South Seas whaler *Mary*, commanded by Captain Edward Reed Lacy, was lost on the island while carrying 1,800 barrels of sperm oil. The crew was rescued by two whaling ships after being stranded on the island for 6 weeks. On May 25, the ship's fittings and gear were salvaged by the New Bedford whaler, *Minerva Smyth*. Two additional shipwrecks, the *Silver Star* and *Amaranth*, were found on the island on November 10, 1860 and August 30, 1913, respectively.

In 1835, Captain Michael Baker of the whale ship *Braganza* landed and claimed the island for the United States. He kept the British name Jarvis even after American sovereignty was firmly established. In 1836 and 1845 he visited the island again, and while searching for seabird eggs, he discovered large deposits of guano.

It was the resort of myriads of birds. Its surface presents a stony formation, which has since proven to be Guano, as per analysis annexed. The island is perfectly barren and sterile. Said island can be seen from the deck of a ship a distance of from ten to twenty miles, while the birds may be found further distant. (*Report to the Stockholders* 1857, 21)

The island was surveyed on December 20, 1840, by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes during the U.S. Exploring Expedition. Aboard the *Peacock* and *Flying Fish*, Lieutenant Wilkes (1849, 4) positioned the island at lat 0°22′33″ S, long 159°54′11″ W with the following report:

> This is a small coral island, triangular in shape, a mile and three-fourths in length east and west, and a mile wide north and south. It exhibits the appearance of a white sand-beach, ten or twelve feet above the sea, without a tree or shrub, and but a few patches of grass. The sea breaks violently around its shores, but no reef extends to any distance from the island, which may be closely approached. A few sea-birds were seen about the island. No landing could be attempted, the surf being too heavy. Captain Hudson considers this a dangerous island for navigators. The American Guano Company claimed the island on October 28, 1856 under the Guano Islands Act. The company sent Arthur Benson and Charles Judd aboard the Hawaiian schooner *Liholiho* to take possession of the island and written declarations of possession were left on the island on January 16, 1857. In August 1857, the USS *St. Mary's,* under Commander Charles Henry Davis, surveyed and made formal claim in the name of the United States. Shipping entrepreneur Samuel Gardner Wilder charted the clipper *White Swallow* to carry the first-ever cargo of guano from Jarvis Island to New York in 1858. Wilder lived in a house on the island and was later joined by his wife Elizabeth Kīnaʻu Judd, her sister Laura Judd and brother Charles Judd. A letter written by Laura recounted a burial service that occurred on the island and also noted of a burial place with tombstones for at least twelve graves. Then forming in procession, with all the natives in the rear, they would their way along the beach, pausing about a quarter of a mile to the southwest of our door, where the grave stood ready for its occupant. We four took a nearer path, and stood within hearing as the Captain read in a clear, but at times slightly tremulous, voice the burial service. You know how beautiful it is. The men all appeared solemn, and as one stepped forward with the shovel of earth, the Captain, taking a handful, threw it in upon the coffin; two of them seemed much affected, and shed tears. (Wight 1909, 123-124)

It is not clear when the American guano companies left the island; however, it is noted that they abandoned the island by 1889 when the island was annexed to Great Britain on June 3, by Commander Nichols of the HMS *Cormorant*. Following the annexation, a British phosphate company took possession of the island, but it is unknown if the company actually occupied the island or commenced guano mining operations. In 1924, the *Whippoorwill* Expedition surveyed the island and observed two coral platforms which were found to be modern tombs and a wooden plank with the following inscription:

> “To the memory of Capt. Alex. Aliny, 1st assistant of Jarvis Island, who died May 15, 1873, from injuries by being thrown from a car” (Emory [1934] 1971, 24).

The next significant visit to the island took place in 1935 when the Hui Panalāʻau landed and established permanent U.S. claim.

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Specifically collected from Papakilo and the Hawaiian Nūpepa Collection, these Hawaiian- language newspaper sources remain an essential component of this research and are listed in both chronological and alphabetical order. Translations of these newspaper articles and the incorporation of historic sources and oral interviews directly from nearby island nations have yet to be explored.

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