

Appendix



Ancient Hawaiian Surfing Terms

The earliest known surfing terms sprang from the Hawaiian people. Surfers of the kingdom of Hawaii had words for every aspect of the sport. Names for some of their favorite surfing locations illustrate this: *nuumehalani*, a surf site on Oahu, meaning "the heavenly site where you are alone"; *po'o*, a Kauai location for many ancient surf competitions, meaning "to hollow out"; *uo*, a Maui surf site that translates as "a nimble threading of a needle"; *hamakuapoko*, a well-surfed Oahu location that means "sky clouds of fragrance"; and *kahalala*, the "site of four winds" at Hilo. Specific words detail specific surf situations. *Ahua* means a place close to shore where a broken wave rises and breaks again; *lauoa* is a wave crest that breaks from one end of the beach to the other; *kakala* is a swift, curling wave. (GFF) Also see Hawaiian and Hawaiian Pidgin English surfing terms in the main text.

ahua (ah-HOO-ah) *n.* A place close to shore where a broken wave rises and breaks again. Also known as KIPAPA or PUAO. (F&H)

alaia (ah-LAI-ah) *n.* A thin wooden surfboard, wide in the front and tapering toward the back, made of koa or breadfruit. Also called OMO. (F&H)

hamakuapoko (ha-ma-KOO-ah-PO-ko) *n.* A well-surfed Oahu location, literally "sky clouds of fragrance." (GFF)

he'e (Hay-ay) *v.* To slide, to surf (F&H); to slip or flee. (P&E)

he'e nalu (Hay-ay NA-lu) **1** *v.* To ride a surfboard. **2** *n.* Surfing; literally "wave sliding." (F&H) **3** *n.* Surf rider. (P&E)

he'e pu'ewai (Hay-ay POO-e-wai) *v.* To ride toward the mouth of a stream or up a stream. (F&H)

he'e umauma (Hay-ay oo-MAU-ma) *n.* Bodysurfing. (F&H)

hee (Hay-ah) *n.* **1** A flowing, as of liquid. **2** The menses. **3** A flight, as of a routed army. **4** The squid, so-called because of its slippery qualities. (ADW, 1865)

hee (Hay-ah) *v.* **1** To melt; to run or flow, as a liquid. **2** To slip or glide along. **3** To ride on a surfboard. **4** To flee; to flee through fear. (ADW, 1865)

heenaluu (Hay-ah NA-lu) *n.* Hee and nalu, the surf. (ADW, 1865)

- heihei nalu** (Hay-hay NA-lu) *n.* A surfboard race. (F&H)
- honua nalu** (ho-NU-ah NA-lu) *n.* The base of the breaker.
- huia** (hu-E-ah) *n.* An especially high wave formed by the meeting of two crests, said to characterize the surf of Kaipaloaoa, Hawaii. (F&H)
- iki** (E-key) *n.* The collision of a returning wave with an incoming wave; this phrase may have been coined on the west side of Oahu, where these situations are common. (SFR, January 1990)
- kaha** (KAH-ha) *v.* To surf; to bodysurf. (F&H)
- kaha nalu** (kah-ha NA-lu) *n.* Bodysurfing. (F&H)
- kahalaia** (Kah-ha-LAYa-ah) *n.* The "site of four winds" at Hilo. (GF)
- kakala** (kah-KAH-la) *n.* The surf in which an *alaia* board is used; a curling wave. (F&H)
- kiko'o** (key-CO-oo) *n.* A twelve- to eighteen-foot surfboard that is hard to handle but good for surf that breaks roughly. (F&H)
- kioe** (key-O-e) *n.* A small surfboard. (F&H)
- kipapa** (key-PAH-pah) *n.* **1)** The prone riding position. **2)** A place close to shore where a broken wave rises and breaks again. (F&H)
- kulana nalu** (ku-LAH-nah NA-lu) *n.* The place where a surfer paddles to catch a wave; usually the most distant line of breakers. (F&H)
- lala** (LAH-lah) **1)** *v.* To surf diagonally to the wave front. **2)** *n.* Diagonal surf. **3)** *n.* A wave front; a wave to the right.
- lala muku** (LAH-lah MOO-koo) *n.* **1)** A wave to the left. **2)** The seaward side of a cresting wave. (F&H)
- lauoa** (lah-oo-LO-ah) *n.* One of two kinds of surf ridden (the other is 'ohu); a long wave that crests and breaks from one end of the beach to the other. (F&H)
- lele wa'a** (lay-lay WAH-ah) *n.* Canoe leaping—leaping from a canoe with a surfboard to ride the wave. (F&H)
- muku** (MOO-koo) *n.* **1)** The side of a wave near the crest. **2)** The broken section of a wave. **3)** A wave to the left. See LALA MUKU. (F&H)
- nala ha'i lala** (NAH-lah HA-e-LAH-lah) *n.* A wave that breaks diagonally. (F&H)
- nala nui** (NAH-lah NU-e) *n.* A big wave. (SCSM)
- nalu** (NA-lu) **1)** *v.* To form waves. **2)** *n.* A wave; surf. **3)** *adj.* Full of waves; wavy, as wood grain. (F&H) Usage: "Ke *nalu nei ka moana.*" "The ocean is full of waves." (P&E)
- nalu** (NA-lu) *adj.* Roaring; surfing; rolling in, as the surf of the sea. (ADW, 1865)
- nalu** (NA-lu) *n.* **1)** The surf as it rolls in upon the beach; a sea; a wave; a billow. **2)** The slimy liquid on the body of a newborn infant. (ADW, 1865)
- nalu** (NA-lu) *v.* **1)** To be in doubt or suspense; to suspend one's judgment. **2)** To speak secretly, or to speak to oneself; to think within oneself. **3)** To talk together or confer concerning a thing. **4)** To think; to search after any truth or fact. (ADW, 1865)
- nalu puki** (NA-lu PU-key) *n.* A wave that shoots high. (F&H)

nalunalu (NA-lu NA-lu) *adj.* oRough; of sea with high waves; forming high waves. (F&H)

no ka pakaka ale (no ka pa-KAH-kah AH-la) *v.* Gliding on the surf; probably refers mainly to canoe surfing. (F&H)

nuumehalani (NU-oo-MA-ha-LA-ne) *n.* A surf site on Oahu; means "the heavenly site where you are alone." (GFF)

'ohu (O-hoo) *n.* One of two kinds of surf ridden (the other is *lauoa*); a low, small wave that rises without breaking but with enough strength to carry a board. Also called *opu'u*. (F&H)

olo *n.* The long heavy surfboard reserved for chiefs. (F&H)

omo (O-mo) *n.* ALAIA. (F&H)

onaula-loa (o-na-OO-la LO-ah) *n.* A wave of great length and endurance. (F&H)

onini (o-NEE-nee) *n.* A surfboard used by experts, difficult to manage; a thick board made of *wiliwili*; perhaps the same as an *olo*. (F&H)

opu'u (o-Poo-oo) *n.* A large surf, a swell. (F&H)

owili (o-WE-lee) *n.* A thick board of *wili-wili*; perhaps an *olo*. (F&H)

pa-ha (PAH-ha) *n.* A surfboard. (F&H)

papa he'e nalu (pa-pa HAY-ay NA-lu) *n.* A surfboard; literally, "a board for sliding waves." *Ha'awi papa he'e nalu*: To give a board with the understanding that it would be returned. Boards were apparently loaned rather than given. (F&H)

po'o (PO-o) *n.* A Kauai location for many ancient surf competitions; means "to hollow out." (GFF)

pu'ua (poo-OO-lah) *n.* A surfboard. (F&H)

uo (OO-o) *n.* A Maui surf site; translates as "a nimble threading of a needle." (GFF)

SURFBOARD

WHAT YOU SURF WITH

Art: Rick Griffin,
courtesy of Greg Noll

