

## **Battle of Nu'uaniu & Auwai System History**

- There were various battles in Nu'uaniu throughout the eighteenth century due to interisland conflicts between different chiefs.
- Warriors used the Pali area due to its pass between the various sides of the island which they used to conduct raids into each other's territories.
- The most significant and well known of those battles was between two chiefs, Kamehameha who was then seated on the Big Island and also controlled Maui and Moloka'i, and Kalanikupule, who was the current ruler of Oahu.
- The battle took place in 1795 and would be a pivotal event in Hawaii's history. Kamehameha brought an invasion fleet of 1200 canoes and 12,000 warriors which arrived on Oahu in the Waikiki and Wai'alae/Kahala areas. The Oahu troops of Kalanikupule were severely outnumbered at only 9,000.
- Kalanikupule lived and ruled from Waikiki but chose to strategically place his troops in Nu'uaniu Valley.
- One of Kamehameha's commanders, Ka'iana, had betrayed him and gone over to Kalanikupule's side, even helping cut notches in the Nu'uaniu Pali ridge to serve as gunports for Kalanikupule's cannons.
- There were various battles in different portions of Nu'uaniu with both traditional Hawaiian spears as well as muskets and cannons, ending in the notorious battle at the Pali Lookout that has been memorialized in stories and artwork.
- About 300 of Kalanikupule's warriors made a final stand, with Kamehameha's warriors forcing them over the Pali's cliff, a drop of over 1,000 feet. Ka'iana was killed during the battles; Kalanikupule was later captured and sacrificed.
- By winning this pivotal battle, Kamehameha was able to unite the islands of Oahu, Moloka'i, Lanai'i, Maui, and Hawai'i. He divided the lands of Oahu between his warrior chiefs and counselors. In 1810, after the ruler of Kauai agreed to become a tributary ruler, Kamehameha became King of all the islands and established the seat of the Hawaiian monarchy in Honolulu; first at Waikiki and later at the fishing village called Kou (now called Honolulu Harbor) that was at the mouth of the Nu'uaniu stream.
- He utilized areas of Nu'uaniu for large farms to produce food, mainly taro but also banana, sugarcane, rice, and sweet potato, to feed the growing population. Nu'uaniu was a perfect agricultural resource due to its abundant rainfall and extensive network of streams and pools. The terraced taro patches, or lo'i, were fed by those natural springs, that were engineered into a series of auwai, or irrigation ditches.
- The construction of new auwai during the time before the Great Mahele or land redistribution was only ordered by the Mo'i or King. It was a process that all members of society took a part in, and the amount of work contributed equated to the amount of water rights you were given for your family.
- In the ahupua'a, water rights were valued over land rights. Hawaiians equated access to water (or wai) with wealth, property, and ownership (waiwai). The Hawaiian word for law kanawai comes directly from water rights governance.
- Taro or kalo was not just a food staple of the Hawaiian culture, but also part of their mythology, religion and customs. To create lo'i and auwai was a sacred thing, consecrated by certain rituals and sacrifices when the water source was found and lo'i created.

- The royal family continued to expand and improve upon the Nuʻuanu loʻi and auwai after Kamehameha’s death in 1819. One of the last auwai to be created was in 1850 and took 700 people just 3 days to construct. It ran from the Luakaha area up near the top of Old Pali Road, all the way to Wyllie Street and Oahu Cemetery. In a detailed map of this auwai, called the Paki Auwai it was recorded that it was feeding more than 100 loi at that time.
- Both private and government owners shared the auwai and adhered to a specific schedule of when water could be taken by whom, and how much, even after the Mahele ended the land tenure system and resource sharing in the ahupuaʻa.
- By the mid twentieth century, tracts of single family homes had replaced the farms and loʻi, and reservoirs and underground pipes reconfigured the natural flow of the valley’s streams. The auwai today are almost all covered up by development. There are bits and pieces that are still visible in residential neighborhoods such as Dowsett, but most have disappeared under pavement and homes, with people having little understanding of what their significance was.
- Currently evidence of 14 original auwai and numerous smaller branches have been identified in connection with the Nuʻuanu, Pahoa and Waolani streams. Of those there are eight that still carry water or are have enough physical integrity to be restored. Recently there are groups that are helping to build awareness and education about the importance of the auwai and their historical significance.