Moʻokūʻauhau
Researching Hawaiian Ancestry
A User-Friendly Beginner’s Guidebook

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Mo'okūʻauhau is the Hawaiian term for the genealogical succession of a family. Through this genealogical succession is a family’s story; their history woven throughout generations. Mo'okūʻauhau is a traditional Hawaiian practice that was once reserved for the aliʻi. The mo'okūʻauhau of the aliʻi distinguished his/her rank among the rest of the population. The aliʻi valued mo'okūʻauhau for it told of whom they were and who their family was, marking their place in history. Today, Native Hawaiians use moʻokūʻauhau for the preservation of their families’ stories and history and also to establish a connection with their ancestors. Mo'okūʻauhau is significant for providing a sense of identity for an individual and their ānaha. Mo'okūʻauhau are also used today to prove Native Hawaiian ancestry for qualifications of applicable programs and benefits.
What kinds of information are useful for a moʻokūʻauhau?

- Stories and memories from family & friends
- Names (birth, maiden, former, adopted)
- Names of parents, children, spouses, relatives
- Dates (birth, death, marriage, divorce)
- Places of residence
- Ethnicities
- Profession
- Photos
- Organizations/Clubs
- Religion/Church

Finding any type of information that is relevant to one’s family is a success in moʻokūʻauhau research. Any date, name, picture, document, record, article, memory, or story is significant to the moʻokūʻauhau. “Talk story” with your ‘ohana and document it at the same time by writing information down or even recording it.

TYPES OF INFORMATION
Where can you find information for moʻokūʻauhau research? What kinds of resources are available?

Below are several types of resources that are commonly used.

- Oral histories or “talking story” with family & friends
- Vital Records (birth, death, marriage & divorce certificates)
- Obituaries
- Newspapers (Hawaiian & English)
- Church Records
- Government Documents
- Journals
- Probates & Wills
- Biographies
- Genealogy Books & Charts (published)
- Newsletters
- Hawaiian History Books
- Ship Passenger Manifests (records of people who came to Hawaiʻi by boat)
- Tax Maps
- Census Records
- City Directories
- School Yearbooks/Annuals
- Cemetery Indexes
- Kūʻē Petitions
- Land Commission Awards
- Foreign/Native Registers & Testimonies
- Adoption Records
- Criminal records

TYPES OF RESOURCES
Common Questions to Ask…

Here are some tips for making your research visits easier.

Make Friends!!!
Get to know your librarians or reference staff. It definitely makes the whole research process easier and more amicable when you & the librarians/reference staff are familiar with one another.

When in doubt, always call!
If you are not sure about what you can bring or where to park or have any other questions, call the institution ahead of time so that you can be better prepared for your visit. Always have quarters for parking/making copies.

Q: What should I bring with me?
It is always safe to bring a pencil (most places have a pencil-only policy), a few sheets of paper, and quarters for copy making and parking. A digital camera & USB flash drive are optimal. Leave your belongings in the lockers provided or in your car.

Call ahead if you are unsure or have questions.

COMMON QUESTIONS
Q: Where can I park? How much does parking cost?
The repositories in the Downtown Honolulu area (Hawai’i State Dept. of Health, Hawai’i State Archives, Bureau of Conveyances, Hawai’i State Library, Hawaiian Mission Children’s Library, and the Hawaiian Historical Society) have either metered street or lot parking. Bring quarters for parking meters. A daily parking pass is available for purchase at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, the parking lots accept cash.

Q: Can I use a digital camera?
Most places will allow it, however WITHOUT flash. The Hawai’i State Archives requires an appointment if using a camera. Rare and archival materials at each place are available for photographing on a case by case basis. No cameras allowed at Bishop Museum Library & Archives, Bureau of Conveyances, & the Kalihi Family History Center. However, due to occasional policy changes, call ahead to determine camera usage.

Q: Can I bring a laptop and scanner?
The Hawai’i State Library allows laptop/scanner usage, but call ahead to check if the items you need are available. UH Hamilton Library Hawaiian & Pacific Collection has a scanner for use. The Hawaiian & Pacific Collection require a 48 hour retrieval time for some archival materials (which are subject to scanning on a case by case basis). The Hawai’i State Archives requires an appointment if using a scanner/laptop. No scanners/laptops allowed at the Bishop Museum Library & Archives, Bureau of Conveyances, Kalihi Family History Center, Hawaiian Historical Society, Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Library.

Call ahead if you are unsure or have questions.

COMMON QUESTIONS
Q: Can I make copies?
Most places have coin operated copy machines that allow for non-rare materials to be copied. Some places may also have a copy debit card. For rare and archival material, the institution may offer copies for a fee, depending on the size and nature of the item. Some institutions also offer professional copies of items for a fee. It is always best to keep handy several quarters for copy making.

Q: Can I research anyone’s genealogy? Can anyone research my genealogy?
Yes, with stipulations. At the Hawai‘i State Department of Health a government-issued ID is required. When requesting or paying by postal mail, they require a copy of your government-issued ID to be sent with your application & payment. On the application, the applicant’s name & address, relationship to record requested, reason for request, etc. must be provided. Everywhere else, information is deemed public records and searchable.

Q: Can I access genealogy records online?
Some genealogy resources are available online, including Hawaiian language newspapers, marriage, divorce, death (wills & probate), & citizenship indexes on Ulukau.org. On the Hawai‘i State Archives website, you can browse the Index to Passenger Manifests & Vital Statistics Collection. The U.S. Census Records are also online. All these types of information can be helpful for mo'okū'auhau research.

Call ahead if you are unsure or have questions.
Q: How long will researching my mo‘okū‘auhau take?
Researching can take anywhere from a few minutes to many years to document, depending on your success in finding the documents and the depth of information you desire. It is a task that requires much persistence and patience. Plan research trips so that there is a considerable amount of time to look around, request & wait for records, make copies, document, and even stumble across unexpected obstacles/findings.

Q: Is there anyone who can help me with my mo‘okū‘auhau research at the various research locations? There are reference librarians or staff that can assist you with questions or help guide you to what you may be looking for. It is best when you have specific questions to ask.

Call ahead if you are unsure or have questions.

COMMON QUESTIONS
Here are some Public & State agencies that have resources for mo‘okū‘auhau research:

**Bureau of Conveyances**
Kalanimoku Building
1511 Punchbowl St. Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 587-0314, fax (808) 587-0136
Public research room hours: 8:15a-4:15p
Website: [http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/boc](http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/boc)
Online Search: [https://boc.ehawaii.gov/docsearch/nameSearch.html](https://boc.ehawaii.gov/docsearch/nameSearch.html)

The Bureau of Conveyances is the State agency responsible for recording all Land Court and Regular System documents and maps. It handles all issues dealing with land. The Bureau of Conveyances also has an Online Search and Ordering System in which you can search through their database and order records via web. This online search has indexes from 1976 to present. Some of the useful things that can be found through documents from the Bureau of Conveyances are:

- Grantor/Grantee Indexes
- Land Transfer Records
- Maps

Call ahead for updated business hours.

PUBLIC/STATE AGENCIES
Hawai‘i State Archives
Kekāuluohi Building, ‘Iolani Palace Grounds
364 South King St. Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-0329, fax (808) 586-0330
Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00a-4:00p
Website: http://statearchives.lib.hawaii.edu

The Hawai‘i State Archives hold public government records which can be important to mo‘okū‘auhau research. Some of their resources include:
- Vital Records (1832-1929)
- Native Register & Testimony (for Māhele)
- Probates (1848-1915)
- Wills (1852-1915)
- Divorce Records (1858-1899)
- Census Records (1840-1896)
- Cemetery Records (Indexes to names)
- Obituary Index (from Newspapers, 1836-1950)
- Photographs
- Name/Place indexes for Government Documents

Hawai‘i State Department of Health
1250 Punchbowl St. Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-4400; Vital records (808) 586-4533
Hours: Mon-Fri 7:45a-2:30p
Website: http://hawaii.gov/health/vital-records/vital-records/index.htm
Email: vr-info@doh.hawaii.gov

The Hawai‘i State Department of Health provides certified copies of vital records (birth, death, marriage, & divorce certificates). Ordering certificates can be done in person, postal mail or via their website.

Call ahead for updated business hours.
Hawai‘i State Judiciary Court, Family Court (O‘ahu First Circuit)

Kapolei Judiciary Complex
4675 Kapolei Parkway, Kapolei, HI 96707-3272
Family Court Service Center (808) 954-8290
Adoption Records: (808) 954-8145

If there are any adoptions within a family, this agency can be of service for those who need help finding records, going through the process and applications for retrieving records.

Hawai‘i State Library (Main Branch)
478 South King St. Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-3500
Hours: Mon & Wed 10:00a-5:00p; Tues & Sat 9:00a-5:00p; Thurs 9:00a-8:00p
Website: http://www.librarieshawaii.org

This library offers a wide selection of resources for mo‘okū‘auhau research, including:
- Published genealogy books
- Birth Indexes (inc. Delayed Births & Territory Births)
- Newspaper indexes
- Census records
  (computer/microfilm)

- Ancestry.com
- Heritage Quest
- City & Polk Directories
- Who’s Who Biographies
- Men & Women of Hawai‘i

Call ahead for updated business hours.

PUBLIC/STATE AGENCIES
Hamilton Library is located on the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus however they are open to community users not affiliated with the University. There are also annual memberships available for purchase for those visitor users who wish to borrow items. Here are some of the mo’okū‘auhau resources available at Hamilton Library:

- Hawaiian language newspapers (Indexes & microfilm)
- Some published genealogy books
- City Directories/Polk Directories
- Other various directories
- Who’s Who Biographies
- Mele/Oli
- Obituary Indexes
- Indexes to the Honolulu Advertiser, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Honolulu Star-Advertiser

The Audiovisual Center holds DVDs, CDs, audio cassettes, phonodiscs, etc. Some of the resources here that might help with mo‘okū‘auhau research include:

- Hawaiian songs
- Biographical videos

Call ahead for updated business hours.

PUBLIC/STATE AGENCIES
Here are some private organizations that have resources for moʻokūʻauhau research:

**Bishop Museum Library & Archives**
1525 Bernice St. Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 848-4148, fax (808) 847-8241
Hours: Wed-Fri 12:00p-4:00p, Sat 9:00a-12:00p
Website: [http://www.bishopmuseum.org/research/library/libarch.html](http://www.bishopmuseum.org/research/library/libarch.html)
Online Catalog: [http://bishopmuseumlib.lib.hawaii.edu/](http://bishopmuseumlib.lib.hawaii.edu/)

It is located on the Bishop Museum grounds. Some of their moʻokūʻauhau research resources include:
- Photographs
- Manuscripts
- Oral Histories
- Published genealogies

**Hawaiian Historical Society**
560 Kawaihaʻo St. Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone & Fax (808) 537-6271
Hours: Tues-Fri 10:00a-4:00p
Website: [www.hawaiianhistory.org](http://www.hawaiianhistory.org)

This library is located on the grounds of the Mission Houses Museum. This library shares space with the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Library. Their moʻokūʻauhau resources include:
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Journals
- Telephone directories
- City directories
- Biographies
- Hawaiian language books
- Hawaiian, English, & Portuguese newspapers

Call ahead for updated business hours.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS
This library is located on the grounds of the Mission Houses Museum. This library shares space with the Hawaiian Historical Society Library. There is also access to some Hawaiian language resources through the library’s website. This library has the following resources helpful for mo‘okū‘auhau research:

- Family genealogy books
- Other published genealogy books
- Some Hawaiian language resources

The Kalihi Family History Center is a part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Although established for LDS/Mormon Church members, they are open to the public as well. The resources available here are:

- Computer access to Genealogy programs
- Ship Passenger Manifests
- Vital records on microfilm
- Volunteers to assist with searches

Call ahead for updated business hours.
Here are mo'okū‘auhau resources that are available online:

Oʻahu Cemetery
2162 Nuʻuanu Ave. Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 538-1538, fax (808) 538-1490
Website: www.oahucemetery.org

On Oʻahu Cemetery’s website, there is a page that you can request to look for someone who might be buried there. They state that they have burial records that date up to 1844. Fill out the form online and it gets sent to Oʻahu Cemetery’s superintendent.

Ulukau.org
Hale Kuamoʻo Hawaiian Language Center
Ka Haka ‘Ula O Keʻelikōlani,
College of Hawaiian Language
University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo
Website: http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/

Native Hawaiian Legacy Program,
Native Hawaiian Library, Alu Like, Inc.
Website: nativehawaiianlibrary.org

Ulukau.org is the Hawaiian Electronic Library. It is a collaboration project between Hale Kuamoʻo of UH Hilo’s College of Hawaiian Language and the Alu Like’s Native Hawaiian Library. This website can be accessed in both English and Hawaiian languages. Regarding mo'okū‘auhau, there are several resources that may be helpful for your research:

- The Hawaiian Genealogy Indexes
- Hawaiian language newspapers
- Hawaiian language dictionaries (searchable)
- Place Names of Hawai‘i/Hawai‘i Place Names (searchable)
- Māhele Database
- Photograph collection
- Large selection of digitized books (including some Polk Directories, published genealogies, Fornander, Beckwith, etc.)

ONLINE RESOURCES/PROGRAMS & SOFTWARE
Here are some websites & software programs that can be helpful for moʻokūʻauhau research:

**Some Genealogy Websites**

- www.ancestry.com
- www.familysearch.org
- www.genealogy.com
- http://genforum.genealogy.com/hi/
- http://www.cyndislist.com/
- http://www.myheritage.com/
- www.archives.com
- http://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/hawaiiangenealogies

Some of the genealogy websites require that you register and become a member. Some websites require membership fees. They often have helpful information, guides, charts & tips that help with genealogy projects. They also have lots of records in which you can search names. Be sure to do your own searches for other genealogy websites/forums to help with your moʻokūʻauhau research, as new resources may become available.

**Programs & Software**

- Reunion, for Macintosh
- Family Tree Maker, by Ancestry.com for PC

These are two programs that are available for purchase that provide a system to keep your moʻokūʻauhau records organized.
Agencies That Require Hawaiian Ancestry Verification

**Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Homestead Applications Branch**

(808) 620-9220  
[http://hawaii.gov/dhhl/the-department/HSD](http://hawaii.gov/dhhl/the-department/HSD)

DHHL Homestead Applications Branch helps beneficiaries apply for homestead leases. There are also District Operation Branches in East Hawai‘i, West Hawai‘i, Maui, Molokai, O‘ahu, & Kaua‘i which also help with application and other services.

To apply and qualify for Hawaiian Homestead lands, you must have a 50% or more Hawaiian blood quantum. The application has a genealogy worksheet that is used to confirm the 50% Hawaiian blood requirement.

**Kamehameha Schools**

Ho‘oulu Hawaiian Data Center  
567 South King St. Suite 102  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813  
(808) 523-6228  
Website: [www.ksbe.edu/datacenter](http://www.ksbe.edu/datacenter)

The Kamehameha Schools Ho'oulu Hawaiian Data Center handles all matters dealing with genealogy. The Ho'oulu Hawaiian Data Center is the agent that collects information about the applicants regarding Hawaiian ancestry. Their application requires the submission of a genealogy chart (provided in their application packet) and birth certificates for 3 generations. Once registered, the applicant is cleared for any programs or scholarships that the Kamehameha Schools offer with preference to Native Hawaiian ancestry.

**Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Honolulu Office**

711 Kapi‘olani Blvd., Ste. 500 Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 594-1835  
Website: [www.oha.org](http://www.oha.org)

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs uses genealogy to determine Hawaiian ancestry for their OHA Hawaiian Registry Program and Kau Inoa, OHA’s initiative for creating a Native Hawaiian governing entity. They also offer helpful genealogy tips & a sample of a pedigree chart on their website.

**AGENCIES THAT USE GENEALOGY**
Various Scholarships

There are many scholarships that are specific to ethnicity and ancestry; these include preschool/early education and college scholarships. Scholarships that specifically give preference to those of Native Hawaiian ancestry usually require documents showing ancestry. This can be verified with moʻokūʻauhau research.

The following are some scholarships geared towards those of Native Hawaiian Ancestry:

- Hawaiian Homes Commission Scholarship Program
- Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (Papa Ola Lokahi)
- Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club Scholarship
- Liko Aʻe Native Hawaiian Scholarship Program
- Hawaiʻi Community Foundation
  - Blossom Kalama Evans Scholarship Fund
  - Ida M. Pope Memorial Scholarship
  - Kaʻiulani Home for Girls Trust Scholarship
  - Office of Hawaiian Affairs Scholarship Fund
- Kamehameha Schools (Scholarships offered for preschool, K-12, and post-high)
- Alu Like’s Hana Lima Scholarship
- University of Hawaiʻi system scholarships
  - Kuaʻana Native Hawaiian Development Services
  - Manawa Kūpono

Be sure to conduct your own searches for other scholarship programs as well.