

ACTIVITY: Crabbing

CASE: [GSAF 1953.09.02](#)

DATE: Wednesday September 2, 1953

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean at Waiiau, Pearl Harbor, O'ahu, Hawaii, USA.

NAME: Daniel Gonsalves

BACKGROUND

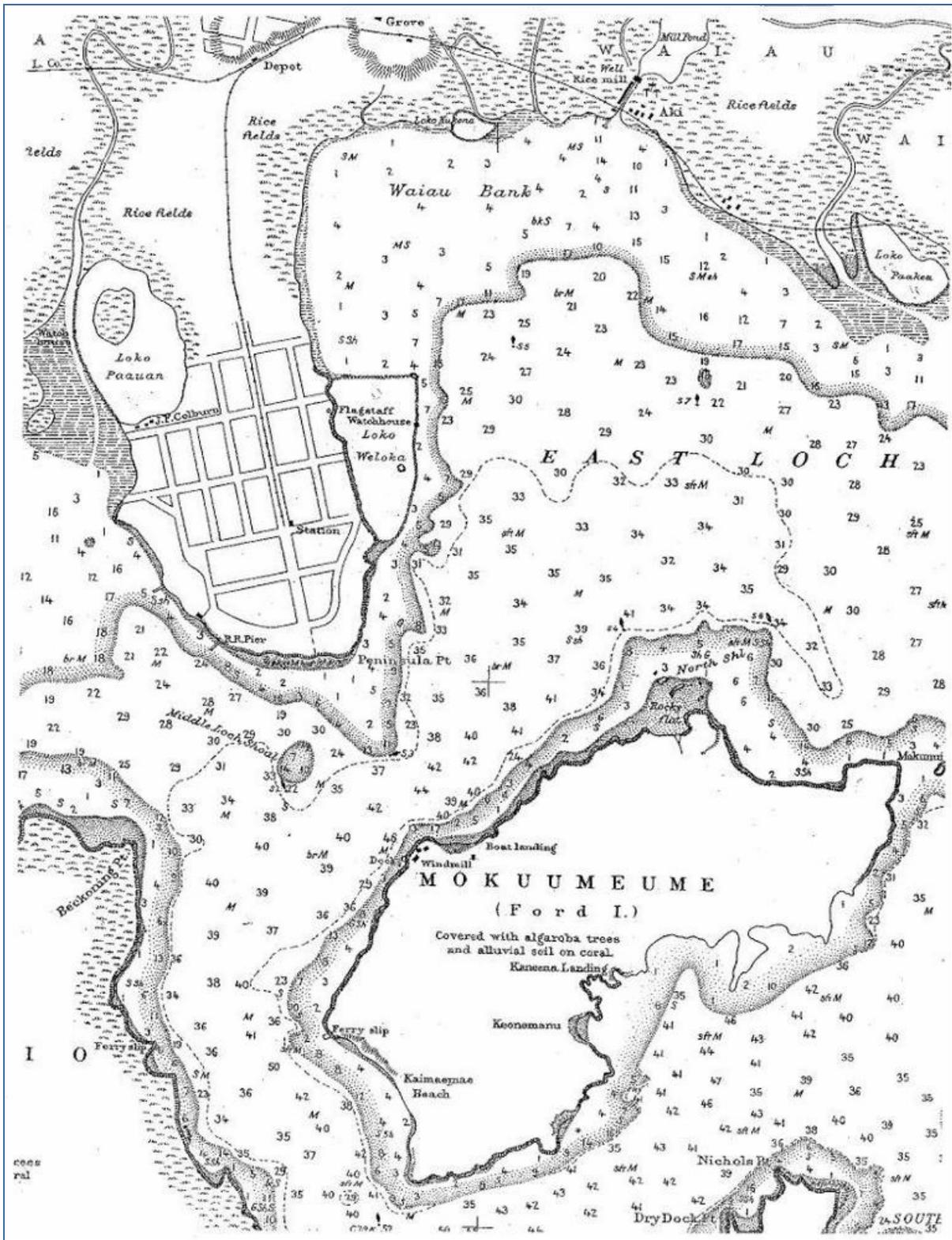
MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, August 31, 1953

NARRATIVE: No details

INJURY: His leg and foot were bitten.

SPECIES: The incident involved a 1.5 m [5'] hammerhead shark.

SOURCES: Honolulu Star Bulletin, September 2, 1953; G.H. Balazs; Jim Borg, page 73; Leighton Taylor (1993), pages.100-101



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The following description of Ka'ahupahau, the great shark protector of Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor) comes from the [Kapi'olani Community College website](#):

Ka'ahupahau

The guardian sharks of Pu'uloa were Ka'ahupahau and her brother Kahi'uka. Such guardian sharks, which inhabited the coastlines of all the islands, were benevolent gods who were cared for and worshiped by the people and who aided fishermen, protected the life of the seas, and drove off man-eating sharks. Ka'ahupahau may mean "Well-cared for Feather Cloak" (the feather cloak was a symbol of royalty). Kahi'uka means "Smiting Tail"; his shark tail was used to strike at enemy sharks; he also used his tail to strike fishermen as a warning that unfriendly sharks had entered Pu'uloa. Ka'ahupahau lived in an underwater cave in Honouliuli lagoon (West Loch). Kahi'uka lived in an underwater cave off Moku'ume'ume (Ford Island) near Keanapua'a Point at the entrance of East Loch; he also had the form of an underwater stone. (Sterling and Summers 54, 56). The following story by Pa'ahana Wiggin, published in 1926 (Pukui and Green), tells of Ka'ahupahau's defense of her waters against Mikololou, a man-eating shark from the Big Island:

Mikololou was a shark from Ka'u district on the island of Hawai'i (a). One day he and his shark friends, Kua, Keli'ikaua o Ka'u, Pakaiea, and Kalani, set out on a visit to O'ahu. On the way they fell in with other sharks all going in the same direction.

Arriving at Pu'uloa ("Long-Hill," Pearl Harbor), they encountered Ka'ahupahau, the female shark who guarded the entrance of Pearl Harbor. She had another body in the form of a net extremely difficult to tear, with which she captured all alien sharks who entered her harbor. Her brother Kahi'uka, "The-smiting-tail," struck at intruders with his tail, one side of which was larger than the other and very sharp (b). These two with their followers were not man-eating sharks and the people on land guarded them well, bringing them food and scraping their backs free of the barnacles that attached themselves there (c).

When the visitors arrived, one of them remarked, "Ah! what delicious-looking crabs you have here!" Now man-eating sharks speak of men as "crabs," and Ka'ahupahau knew at once that some of the strangers were man-eaters. But she could not distinguish between the good and the bad sharks, hence she changed into the form of a great net and hemmed in her visitors while the fishermen who answered her signal came to destroy them (d).

Keli'ikaua o Ka'u changed himself into a pao'o (a fish capable of leaping from one shoreline pool to another) and leaped out of the net. Kua changed into a lupe, or spotted sting-ray, and, weighing down the net on one side, helped his son Kalani and his nephew Pakaiea, who were half-human, to escape. But before anything more could be done, the fishermen hauled in the nets to shore and poor Mikololou was cast upon the shore with the evil doers, where they were left to die of the intense heat.

All were soon dead but Mikololou; though his body died his head lived on and as the fishermen passed to and from their work, his eyes followed them and tears rolled down his face. At last his tongue fell out. Some children playing nearby found it. They picked it up and cast it into the sea. Now Mikololou's spirit had passed out of his head into his tongue and as soon as he felt the water again he became a whole shark (e). With a triumphant flop of his tail, he headed for home to join his friends again. When Ka'ahupahau saw him, it was too late to prevent his departure.

"Mikololou lived through his tongue," or, as the Hawaiians say, "I ola o Mikololou i ka alelo." This saying implies that however much trouble one may have, there is always a way of escape. Ka'ahupahau no longer lives at Pu'uloa, coming and going with her twin sons Kupipi and Kumaninini. But when the United States government built a dry-dock for the navy just over the old home of Ka'ahupahau, the natives regarded the proceedings with superstitious fear. Scarcely was it completed after years of labor when the structure fell with a crash (f). Today a floating dock is

employed. Engineers say that there seem to be tremors of the earth at this point which prevent any structure from resting upon the bottom, but Hawaiians believe that "The-smiting-tail" still guards the blue lagoon at Pearl Harbor.

NOTES

"Mikololou" was published in Folk Tales from Hawaii in 1926 (reprinted in 1995; see Pukui and Green 102-104). Some of the notes that follow are by the editor of the original publication Martha W. Beckwith, indicated by her initials MWB in brackets. For another version of this story by E. Lahilahi Webb, see Thrum's More Hawaiian Folk Tales (307-8).

(a) Joseph Emerson says Mikololou's home at Pokini, Malilele pali, Ka'u [MWB; see Beckwith "Hawaiian Shark Aumakua"].

(b) In Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society, No. 2, page 10, Mr. Joseph Emerson gives a pleasant picture of "Ka'ahupahau and her brother Kahi'uka, the two famous shark-gods of the 'Ewa lagoon on this island. Their birth and childhood differed in no essential features from that of other Hawaiian children up to the time when, leaving the home of their parents, they wandered away one day and mysteriously disappeared. After a fruitless search, their parents were informed that they had been transformed into sharks. As such, they became the special object of worship for the people of the districts of 'Ewa and Wai'anae, with whom they maintained the pleasantest relations, and were henceforth regarded as their friends and benefactors." In Emerson's story, Mikololou is represented as a man-eater. He is lured up the Waipahu river and fed with 'awa until he can be easily snared in nets and dragged up on shore, whence he escapes. Ka'ahupahau had supposedly passed away when Emerson wrote (in 1892), but Kahi'uka still lived in the old cave by the sea. His last keeper, Kimona, sometimes found his fish-nets missing and knew that Kahi'uka had carried them upshore to a place of safety [MWB].

Kamakau says that Ka'ahupahau was an ancestral shark god, not a human who became a shark; she was a sister of Kamohoali'i (Ka Po'e 75).

(c) The following story is told of how Ka'ahupahau once broke the kapu against eating human beings, and later regretted it (Sterling and Summers 28, 54-56; Kamakau Ka Po'e 73, 76).

Papio was a beauty who loved to surf at Keahi, an area to the west of the entrance channel into Pu'uloa on the south shore of O'ahu. One day when she was going surfing, she happened to see Koihala, an elderly relative of Ka'ahupahau, making lei of kou (orange, tubular flowers), 'ilima, and ma'o (yellow flowers and green fruits). Koihala was going to feed her shark grandchildren Ka'ahupahau and Kahi'uka and give them the lei, so she was shocked at the rudeness of Papio's request and refused it and scolded her. Papio, a chiefess, threatened to burn the old woman to death and took a lei without permission when she returned from surfing. Papio then swam across the channel to a favorite bathing stone. As she washed her long hair in the water, Ka'ahupahau came and swallowed her head first and swam, with Papio's thighs sticking out of her mouth, to Puhi-laka Point, where she spewed out Papio's blood, turning the earth red.

Ka'ahupahau felt remorse over having killed Papio and established the law that no shark shall kill a human being in her waters. She also forbid those crossing her waters to wear lei, as her anger against Papio was caused by Papio's rude request for Koihala's lei. Kamakau notes that the law "that no shark must bite or attempt to eat a person in O'ahu waters" was firmly established in ancient times. "Only in recent times have sharks been known to bite people in O'ahu waters or to have devoured them" (73).

The high regard for human life embodied in this kapu banning man-eating among sharks is paralleled on land by kapu against cannibalism and human sacrifice on O'ahu. (See "Hanaaumoe" and "O'ahunui" in this collection.)

Ka'ahupahau was hospitable to sharks that were not man-eaters. A pleasant visit by a group of friendly sharks led by Ka'ehuikimano is described in "Ka'ehuikimanoopu'uloa," a translation published in Thrum's More Hawaiian Folk Tales (293-306) from an article that appeared in the newspaper Au Okoa, Nov. 24, 1870:

Pu'uloa, O'ahu, was the next destination. Reaching its entrance the party visited the pit of Komoawa, [or Kamoawa], a large shark who was Ka'ahupahau's watcher. [This cave, called Keaali'i, was at the entrance of Pu'uloa (Sterling and Summers 56).] Here the young shark introduced himself and announced the purpose of the journey, and his desire to meet the famous queen-shark, protector of O'ahu's waters. The watcher set off to give the message to the queen-shark then at Waiawa. He described the party of visitors as distinguished chiefs-five full-grown and one quite youthful. The queen-shark said: "That young shark can be none other than the child of Kapukapu and Holei." She sent greetings with the messenger, who was told to entertain the visitors in the outer cave, then to bring them up the lochs to meet the queen on the following day. The next day the group from Hawai'i was conducted to the headquarters of Ka'ahupahau by a circuitous course, the guard of each place en route joining the procession until everyone reached Honouliuli, the royal residence. The group was led by Honuiki, the queen's body-guard.

Ka'ahupahau was attended by her generals and staff. The strangers were all introduced to and made welcome by her, and after an agreeable reception, the guests were invited to join in a bathing party to the waters of Waipahu, the bathing place of the Waikele section, and also to the waters of Waimano, Waiau, etc. [The spring of Waipahu, "Exploding-waters," was located inland, a short ways up Kapakai Stream.] The strangers greatly enjoyed the bathing and praised the queen's refreshing provinces. The company then repaired to the royal cave at Honouliuli, where the visitors were supplied with soft coconut and 'awa.

During their stay, Kepanila, the king-shark of Hilo introduced the queen to the royal pastimes of hula and the games of kilu and pu'ili, with chants and songs known on Hawai'i from ancient time.

(d) In Webb's version (Thrum More Hawaiian Folk Tales), the nets are spread by the fishermen. The sharks tear through four nets, but the fifth is too strong for them. The number of nets probably corresponds to the ritual number five in the worship of the god Ku [MWB]. In her notes, Beckwith refers the reader to the old Hawaiian saying, "Alahula o Pu'uloa, he alahela na Ka'ahupahau," and interprets the saying as comparing the waving motion of a shark's tail to the love dance of the alahula and the snares of a siren to those by which the great shark entrapped unwary visitors. Mary Kawena Pukui gives a different interpretation of the saying in 'Olelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings, No. 105: "Alahula o Pu'uloa, he alahela na Ka'ahupahau": "Everywhere in Pu'uloa is the trail of Ka'ahupahau. Said of a person who goes everywhere, looking, peering, seeing all, or of a person familiar with every nook and corner of a place." Ka'ahupahau was noted for traveling about, vigilantly guarding her domain against man-eating invaders.

(e) In Webb's version Thrum More Hawaiian Folktales (308), a dog swallows the tongue. A little later the dog jumps into the sea for a swim and is transformed into the shark Mikololou [MWB]. As Mikololou returns home to Hawai'i, other sharks teased him for returning home with only his tongue (308).

(f) This incident happened about 1914. The government bore the cost of the failure and no blame was attached to the company who built the dock, but whether the old shark gods entered into the case I have never heard reported [MWB].

SOURCE: [The U.S. Navy in Hawaii, 1826-1945: An Administrative History](http://www.dmzhawaii.org/?page_id=451) from Navy archives, http://www.dmzhawaii.org/?page_id=451