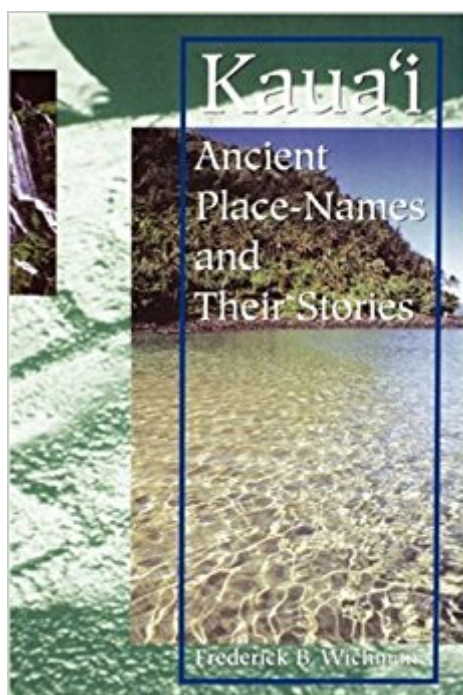


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Kauai: Ancient Place-Names And Their Stories (Latitude 20 Books)



Synopsis

From the green and fertile lands of Kauai Kuapapa (ancient Kauai) came the most beautiful chiefesses, the bravest heroes, the strongest warriors, and the fiercest giants. It was a land of dauntless raiders who boldly sailed out to sea while others crept cautiously from island to island. Gods and demi-gods participated in the everyday life of the people, and the places where they lived, fought, and loved were remembered and celebrated. Gathered here for the first time are the delightful stories behind the place-names of ancient Kauai. Over a period of almost two thousand years, each ridge, mountain, valley, and stream was named, as were unusual rocks, groves of trees - every corner of the island on which people lived and worked. The names tied people to the land and to places where maui ola, the sacred essence of life, was to be found. Today these names serve as colorful windows on the past, telling of the rich and wondrous heritage of the people of Kauai Kuapapa.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"An eye-opening tour of old-time Kauai. . . . A great resource and a great read."

An interesting take on the oral history of Kauai. The mainstream scholars can't stand oral history but much of this book holds up to the oral tradition of Kauai.

Interesting historical perspective passed down through generations and put into print

Bruce Wichman is a descendant of a family that has made a hobby of collecting old legends of Hawaii. They are interesting to read but coincide little with historical fact from archeological and other evidence. So read them as magical stories. The problems of interpreting legends and myths are much greater than the author seems to realize. Without a written language, the information relies upon human memory and oral transmission primarily in chants over centuries. The olelo or text has word formulas the meaning of which was apparently less than clear to this author; the symbolic associations were and still are open to subjective interpretation which he does not appreciate; and the kaona or hidden meanings that gave the chants much of their mystic quality remain largely hidden to this day even to Native Hawaiians. The sound patterns and body language used in telling the tales are missing from the written records he used. The legends do tell us something about the early Hawaiians, however: their love of natural beauty; their respect for nature; the awe they felt at the mystery and magnificence of natural forces; and about their deep interest in gods, chiefs and heroes. But for the author to believe they are factual and then take the additional step of using them to establish place names goes too far. A few place names were in fact derived from legends of major events that took place at the sites, but this is true in only a few examples. The author fails to point out these few.

A well researched and presented book from an authority on Hawaiian legends and history. The author has had alot of access to local family history which has been passed down through the generations. Only a real kama'aina (One who was born and raised among the native Hawaiian people) would be knowledgeable in this area. People interested in the study of the local culture will find this book a rewarding and accurate resource for information about Hawaii's legends and their relationship to the named places.

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