

**HAWAIIAN LEGENDS OF  
OLD HONOLULU**

**BY  
W. D. WESTERVELT**

**1915**

Hawaiian Legends Of Old Honolulu By W. D. Westervelt.

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## FOREWORD

The legends of a people are of interest to the scholar, the thinker, and the poet.

The legends tell us of the struggles, the triumphs, and the wanderings of the people, of their thoughts, their aspirations; in short, they give us a twilight history of the race.

As the geologist finds in the rocks the dim records of the beginnings of life on our planet, the first foreshadowings of the mighty forests that have since covered the lands, and of the countless forms of animal life that have at last culminated in Man, so does the historian discover in the legends of a people the dim traces of its origin and development till it comes out in the stronger light of the later day.

So it is with the legends of the Hawaiians, or of the Polynesian race. We see them, very indistinctly, starting from some distant home in Asia, finally reaching the Pacific Ocean, and then gradually spreading abroad over its islands till they dominate a large portion of its extent.

In bringing together this collection of Hawaiian legends, the author of this little book has conferred a great favor upon all those residents of Hawaii and of those visitors to its shores who may take an interest in its original inhabitants, once an exceedingly numerous people, but now a scattering remnant only. To that native race this little book will be at once a joy and a sorrow; to the heart of the *haole*, who has lived among them, known them intimately for thirty years or more (as has the writer of this Foreword), and learned to love them, this collection of the legends of old Honolulu brings a warm "Aloha!"

GEO. H. BARTON,

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## INTRODUCTION

The ancient Hawaiians were not inventive. They did not study new methods of house-building or farming. They did not seek new tools or new weapons. They could live comfortably as their ancestors lived. But they were imaginative and therefore told many a wonderful tale of gods and goblins and men. Some of these stories were centuries old, and were closely akin to legends told in Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and many other islands of the Pacific Ocean. Most of them were of course limited to the locality from which they came. The Honolulu legends belong to this class almost entirely, although a student of Polynesian mythology will find many traces of connecting links with the mythology of far distant islands.

The legends of Old Honolulu have been compiled from stories told by the old Hawaiians. Some of them came from those still living, but many have been found in the files of papers published from 1850 to 1870.

The first alphabet for Hawaiians was prepared in 1821. The Hawaiians were taught to read and write their histories and ancient stories as rapidly as possible. This was the result of the labors of the American missionaries. Some of the missionaries, notably Mr. Dibble, sent their pupils out to write down and preserve the old legends and traditions. Between thirty and forty years after the first lesson in the alphabet the Hawaiians were writing articles for papers published regularly in their own language--such as *Ka Hae Hawaii (The Hawaiian Flag)*, *Ke Kuokoa (The Independent)*, *Ka Hoku Pakipika (The Star of the Pacific)*. These were followed by many papers down to the present time edited solely by Hawaiians.

Careful research through these papers brings many stories of the past into the hands of students. It is chiefly in this way that these legends of Old Honolulu have been gathered together. This is the result of several years' work of note-taking and compilation.

These legends belong of course to Honolulu people, and will be chiefly interesting to them and those who are acquainted with the city and the

island of Oahu. It is hoped that the folk-lore lovers the world over will also enjoy comparing these tales with those of other lands.

Sometimes these old stories have been touched up and added to by the Hawaiian story-teller who has had contact with foreign literature, and the reader may trace the influence of modern ideas; but this does not occur frequently.

The legend of "Chief Man-eater" comes the nearest to historic times. Cannibalism was not a custom among the ancient Hawaiians. These are unquestionably sporadic cases handed down in legends.

These legends have been printed in the following papers and magazines: The Friend, The Paradise of the Pacific, The Mid-Pacific, Thrum's Hawaiian Annual, Historical Society Reports, The Advertiser and Star Bulletin, published in Honolulu.

THE AUTHOR.

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