



The True Story of Kaluaikoolau: As Told by His Wife, Piilani

Piilani Kaluaikoolau

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The story of Kaluaikoolau (or Koolau) is one of Kauai's great legends. In 1892, after learning that he and his young son had contracted leprosy, Koolau fled with his family deep into Kalalau Valley. In June 1893 Koolau shot and killed a sheriff and two Provisional Government soldiers who had been sent to arrest him. He vowed never to be taken alive and became a powerful symbol of resistance for many Hawaiians in the years following the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani.

The story of Koolau's last years, as narrated by his devoted wife, Piilani, was published in Hawaiian in 1906. In this volume, the Hawaiian text is preceded by an English translation that successfully retains the poetic imagery and figurative language of the original. Many writers have attempted to tell Koolau's story, but none have been able to match the simple grace and poignancy of Piilani's narrative. It is one of only a handful of historical accounts by a native Hawaiian.



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