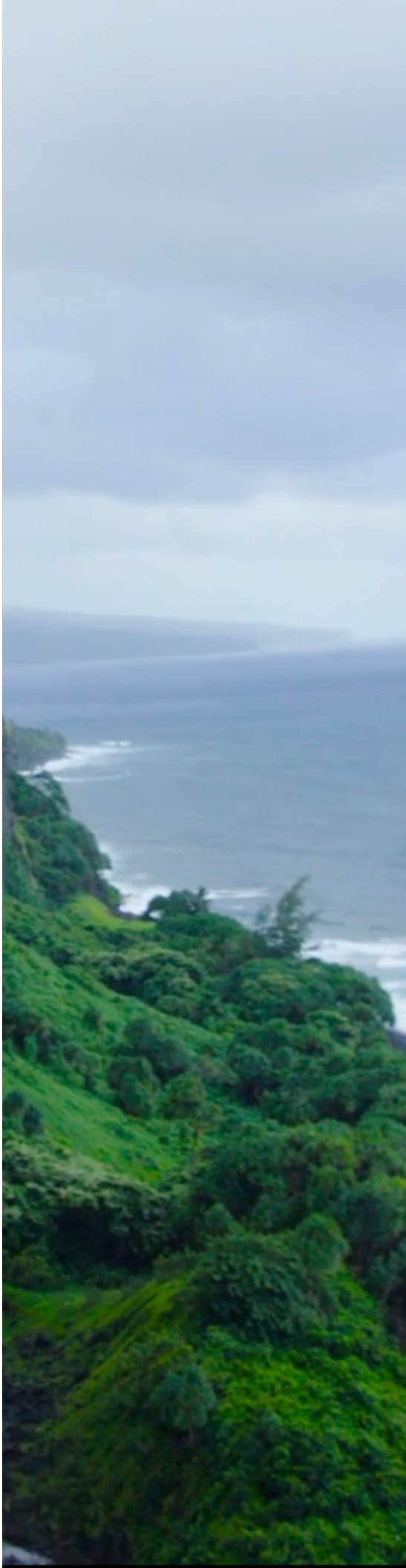


From survivor to scholar...  
He **CHANGED** Hawai'i  
**FOREVER**



**ŌPŪKAHAIA**  
HAWAII LEGACY SERIES

**PRESS RELEASE**



This Saturday, April 4th, the Hawai'i Legacy Series: 'Ōpūkaha'ia documentary is being released on TV and online, showing the true story of a young man's journey that changed Hawai'i forever.

This first Hawai'i Legacy Series documentary tells of 'Ōpūkaha'ia, the lone survivor from a village killed in King Kamehameha's conquests. He swam away to a trading ship in 1807 and voyaged for two years.

Kahu Kealoha Keopua, of Kailua-Kona describes the inner turmoil 'Ōpūkaha'ia likely felt: "Standing by the shores of Kealakekua Bay, looking at that boat, I think he saw one more shot at finding hope. And the only way to find it was to get out."

Alone in frigid foreign surroundings, 'Ōpūkaha'ia was adopted into a family and became a scholar. Shocked by his untimely death and inspired by 'Ōpūkaha'ia's writings, three Hawaiians and 14 New Englanders then sailed across the globe on the brig, the Thaddeus, as the first missionary team to Hawai'i.

His once-forgotten life story is told in interviews with authors, artists, kupuna (elders) and descendants of Hawaiian leaders who retraced Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia's journey to New England two centuries later, in October 2019.

A young musician featured in the documentary, Keikialoha Kaohelaulii-Kahokuloa, described the trip, saying: "We're getting along, we're talking story, listening about each other's past...not only exchanging information but exchanging lives."





Leimana Mau of Maui said: "Late 1975 I came upon some information about Henry Opukahaia And I was mesmerized as I had just a snippet of who he was and his journey. It's just amazing for me walking where Henry came as a young lad, totally out of his culture, out of his environment."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events planned to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Thaddeus have been either postponed or cancelled. However, with broadcast and online streaming and downloads, the filmmakers hope to share 'Ōpūkaha'ia's story with a new generation.

Cultural Advisor, Leina'ala Fruen, said of 'Ōpūkaha'ia's story: "It has to be part of the Hawaiian curriculum because it's a heroic story."

Hula performer and percussionist, Chenia Patu, said: "I wasn't taught so much of Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia in my school... There's so much of the past that we shouldn't forget but we should just remember. And, from that memory, we should find a way to move on and move forward."

Documentary director, Jeff Rogers, and Assistant Director, Kalepo Brown reside in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Hawai'i Legacy Series is produced by Michael and Shari Lienau with non-profit, LifeNet Media Resources.

The film airs Saturday, April 4th on KALO TV and is available to rent or buy at:

<http://vimeo.com/ondemand/hawaiilegacy>