

AN EARLY PREHISTORIC SITE AT BELLOWS BEACH, WAIMANALO, OAHU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

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Abstract:

A STRATIFIED prehistoric site located in sand dunes at Bellows Air Force Base on the windward coast of Oahu, Hawaiian Islands, was excavated during 1967. A living area containing pits and house remains dating from A.D. 600 was excavated according to natural layers. The artifacts are similar to those found from the South Point (Ka Lae) area of Hawaii and to early types from the Marquesas Islands. Osteometric data on five burials found in pits are presented. The remains of domesticated dogs and pigs, in addition to those of the Hawaiian rat, were recovered. It is thought that the O18 or Bellows Site was occupied by a co-residential domestic group relying on the sea and agricultural areas in Waimanalo Valley for their subsistence. During the winter of 1967, United States Air Force personnel at Bellows Air Force Base on windward Oahu notified the Bernice P. Bishop Museum that construction work in several areas of the base had unearthed human skeletons, thought to be prehistoric. Mr. Lloyd Soehren investigated the area on several occasions, suggesting that locations removed by several hundred meters from the shore of Waimanalo Bay appeared to be isolated burials, while the locus near the shore appeared to be a village site. A crew of volunteers began work on the supposed village for about eight week-ends in February and March, under the joint supervision of Mr. Soehren and the senior author. During the month of August, 1967, a portion of the site was excavated by a crew of about 10 for 14 working days as part of a field training program of the Summer Session of the University of Hawaii.

Highlights from the report by FSF:

Excavations in 1967 by the University of Hawaii, reported in *Archaeology & Physical Anthropology in Oceania*, found artifacts and remains “dating from AD 600” in the Sherwood Forest area. The site is described as “a permanent habitation,” occupied by a “domestic group relying on the sea and agricultural areas in Waimanalo Valley” for subsistence, and “representative of an incipient stage in the development of Hawaiian culture.” The authors cite the presence of human skeletons, and state that burial sites include “locations removed by several hundred meters from the shore of Waimanalo Bay... while the locus near the shore appeared to be a village site.” The report details an excavation covering “approximately 10% of the site” within a relatively small (12 by 20 meter) location in the Bellows area. It found 89 cultural artifacts, later given to the Bishop Museum, and documented “seven burials” in great detail. One burial “was left intact in an unexcavated portion (of the site) ... for future excavation.” The vast majority of the Sherwood area has never been excavated. The report describes the general area as “rich in archaeological materials” and containing other burial sites. This extremely sensitive archeological area deserves to be treated with far more cultural respect than to be paved over for 470 parking stalls and a sports complex. Note: the current plan also calls for boring holes **to ten feet deep**, but the excavation reported that in each case the human remains were found to have been buried “**up to one meter deep**.”

To read the full report, go to:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230766525_An_Early_Prehistoric_Site_at_Bellows_Beach_Waimanalo_Oahu_Hawaiian_Islands

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