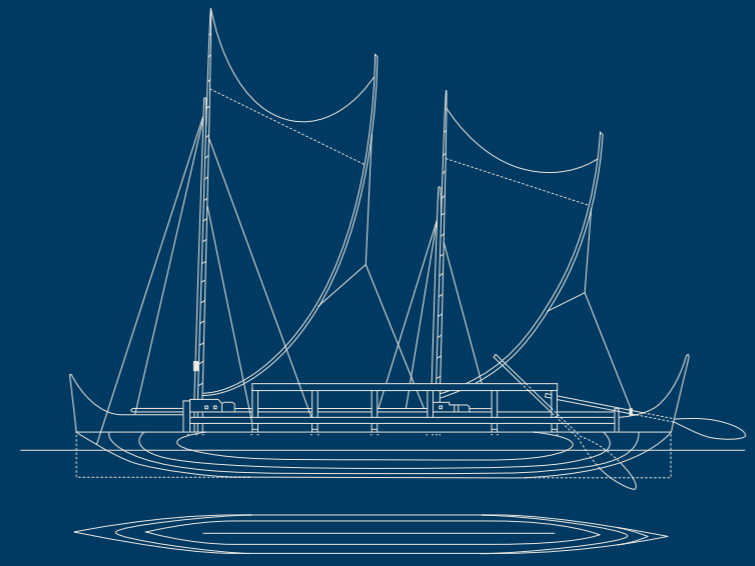
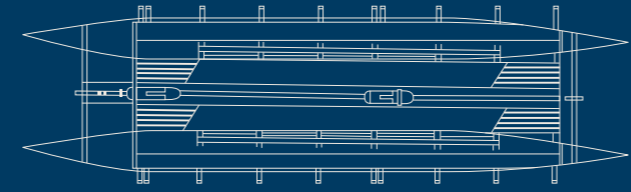
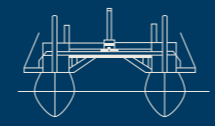


The ancient arts of navigation and voyaging that brought the people of Hawai'i to their island homes are being revived. As part of a wider movement to reintroduce traditional ways, Native Hawaiians are mastering the knowledge and skills of their elders. By restoring their heritage, this new generation of voyagers seeks to heal the people.

Length overall 62'4"  
 Length LWL 54'0"  
 Beam 17'6"  
 Draft 2'6"  
 Total sail area 540 sq. ft.  
 Displacement 25,000 lbs.  
 (fully loaded)



*Ho'okāhi ka  
 'ilau like ana*

Wield the paddles together



# A VOYAGE TO HEALTH

Plans for the Hōkūle'a canoe, ca. 1973  
 Courtesy Polynesian Voyaging Society

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 National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health

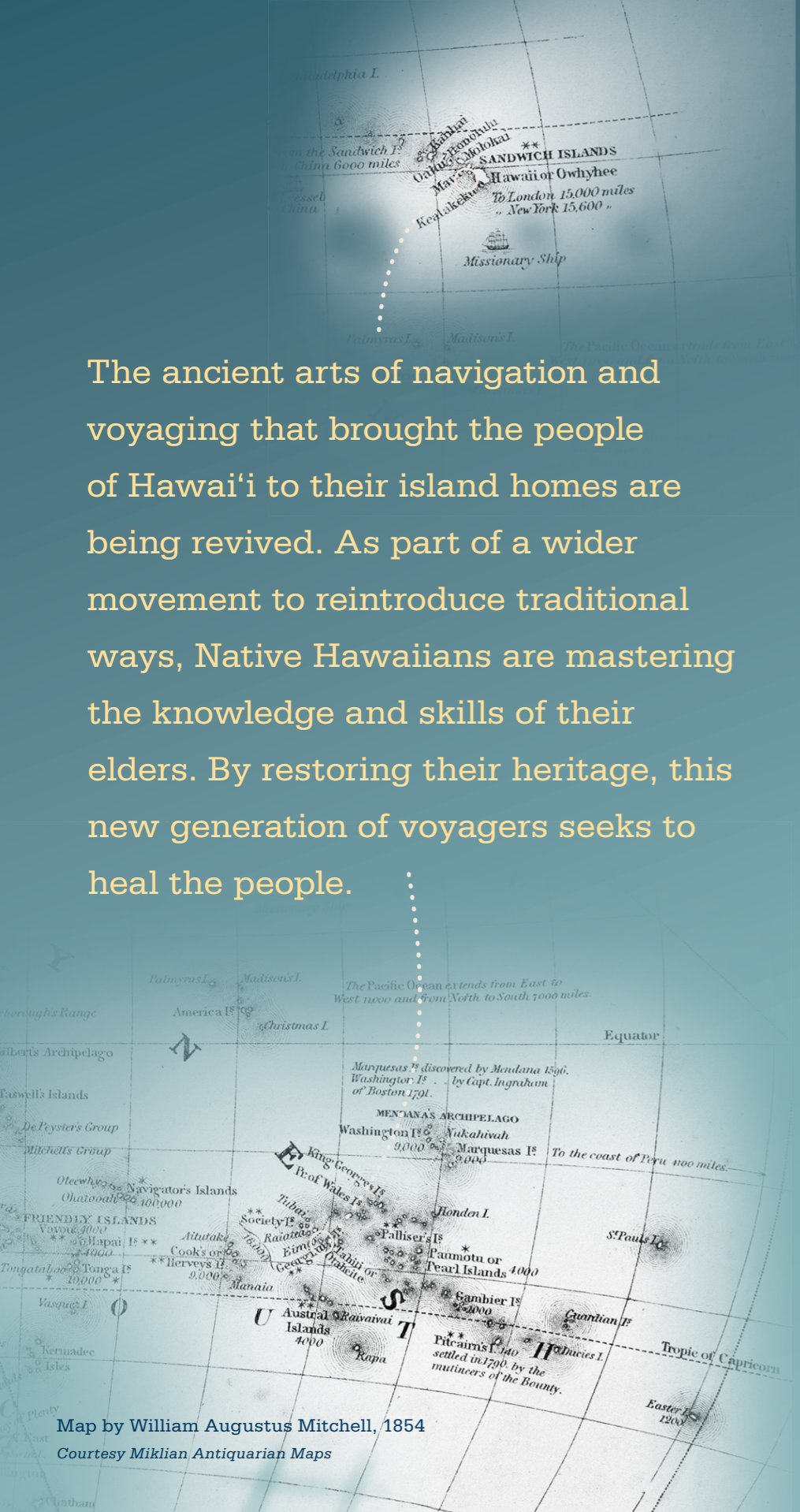
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 & HUMAN SERVICES

The voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a, ca. 1997  
 Courtesy Monte Costa



Map by William Augustus Mitchell, 1854  
 Courtesy Miklian Antiquarian Maps



Canoe paddling off the coast of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe, ca. 1987

*Courtesy Franco Salmoiraghi*

Kanaloa Kaho'olawe lies at the piko or center of the Hawaiian Islands, with Kaua'i the farthest north and Hawai'i island the farthest south. At sea level at Lae O Kealaikahiki (point of the pathway to Tahiti), navigators can fix the latitude of the island chain by observing the relative position of the north star and southern cross in relation to the horizon and key constellations, from February through June.

From Hakioawa bay, Kanaloa Kaho'olawe, looking toward Haleakala Maui at sunrise, 1979

*Courtesy Franco Salmoiraghi*



Star compass, 1980

*Courtesy Polynesian Voyaging Society*

Much of the valuable knowledge of voyaging was lost as a consequence of the suppression of traditional ways by American colonizers and missionaries, and by the invasion, claimed annexation, and occupation of Hawai'i by the United States. This also put Kanaloa Kaho'olawe in jeopardy. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, O'ahu in 1941 the U.S. government declared martial law in Hawai'i and took over the island for bombing exercises.



A bullet hole near a petroglyph, 1994

*Courtesy Franco Salmoiraghi*



Unexploded ordnance, 1994

*Courtesy Franco Salmoiraghi*



Ceremony on Kanaloa Kaho'olawe, 1976

*Courtesy Franco Salmoiraghi*

Over the next fifty years, many of the island's ancient petroglyphs and sacred sites were damaged by military training activities which scattered unexploded ordnance throughout the area. Overgrazing by feral goats further decimated the uninhabited land.

In January 1976, Native Hawaiians staged an occupation of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe to draw national attention to injustices suffered by Native Hawaiians because of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by U.S. Naval forces on January 17, 1893. They later formed the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (meaning family), to campaign against the bombing and military exercises. In 1980, the organization partially settled a civil suit with the U.S. Navy and was granted the right to regularly visit the island for cultural, religious, educational and scientific purposes.

The ongoing campaign to restore Kanaloa Kaho'olawe served as the unexpected catalyst of a Native Hawaiian cultural renaissance. In 1976, in an effort to reintroduce the lost art of Native Hawaiian voyaging, Nainoa Thompson began his search for a master navigator to learn from. He eventually persuaded Mau Pailug of Satawal, Federated States of Micronesia, to break with custom and teach an outsider the tradition of wayfinding without instrumentation. In 1980, Thompson became the first Hawaiian since the 14th century to practice wayfinding on long distance ocean voyages, when he navigated the canoe Hōkūle'a from Hawai'i to Tahiti and back. Since then, he has trained others, leading a revival of traditional voyaging arts throughout the Pacific.

Hōkūle'a returning from its first voyage to Tahiti, 1976

*Courtesy Monte Costa*



Nainoa Thompson and Mau Pailug, ca. 1998

*Courtesy Monte Costa*

Voyaging serves as a model for other efforts to improve the health of Native Hawaiians through the revitalization of cultural traditions. Next, Hōklūle'a and her sister vessels will circumnavigate the globe in an eight-year journey of learning. The mission is to navigate toward a healthy and sustainable future for the Hawaiian Islands, and for the earth, by sharing knowledge of our oceans, lands, and peoples. The core message is mālama honua, to care for Island Earth—the natural environment and all humankind.

