PAC-POLY-Menehune

The Menehune were said to be superb craftspeople. Legends say that the Menehune built temples ([*heiau*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heiau)), [fishponds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Hawaiian_aquaculture), roads, [canoes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canoe), and houses. Some of these structures that Hawaiian folklore attributed to the Menehune still exist. They are said to have lived in [Hawaiʻi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii) before settlers arrived from [Polynesia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polynesia) many centuries ago.

In Beckwith's *Hawaiian Mythology*, there are references to several other forest dwelling races: the [*Nawao*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nawao), who were large-sized wild hunters descended from [Lua-nuʻu](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lua-nu'u&action=edit&redlink=1), the *mu* people, and the *wa* people.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-1)

Some early scholars theorized that there was a first settlement of Hawaiʻi, by settlers from the [Marquesas Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marquesas_Islands), and a second, from [Tahiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahiti). The Tahitian settlers oppressed the "commoners", the *manahune* in the [Tahitian language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahitian_language), who fled to the mountains and were called Menahune. Proponents of this theory point to an 1820 census of [Kauaʻi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kauai) by [Kaumualiʻi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaumualii), the ruling [*Aliʻi Aimoku*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alii) of the island, which listed 65 people as *menehune*.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-2)

Folklorist [Katharine Luomala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katharine_Luomala) believes that the legends of the *Menehune* are a post-European contact mythology created by adaptation of the term *manahune* (which by the time of the colonizing of the Hawaiian Islands by Europeans had acquired a meaning of "lowly people" or "low social status" and not diminutive in stature) to European legends of [brownies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brownie_(elf)).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-3) '"It is claimed that "Menehune *are not mentioned in pre-contact mythology, although this is unproven since it was clearly an oral mythology; the legendary "overnight" creation of the Alekoko fishpond, for example, finds its equivalent in the legend[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-4) about the creation of a corresponding structure on* [*Oʻahu*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oahu)*, which was supposedly indeed completed in a single day — not by* menehune *but, as a show of power, by a local* [aliʻi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alii) *who demanded every one of his subjects to appear at the construction site and assist in building.*

No physical evidence for the existence of a historical people that fits the description of the Menehune has been discovered.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-5)

* Menehune fishpond[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-6)[[*better source needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:NOTRS)] wall at [Niumalu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niumalu), Kauaʻi
* [Kīkīaola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kikiaola) ditch at [Waimea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waimea,_Kauai_County,_Hawaii), Kauaʻi
* [Necker Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necker_Island_(Northwestern_Hawaiian_Islands)) structures
* *Pa o ka menehune*, breakwater at [Kahaluʻu Bay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kahaluu_Bay).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune" \l "cite_note-7)
* [Ulupo Heiau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulupo_Heiau_State_Historic_Site) at Kailua, Oahu

 [*Homo floresiensis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo_floresiensis), a presumed extinct species of very small bipedal tool bearers in the genus *Homo* found in the South Pacific.

1.  Beckwith 1970, pp. 321-323
2.   Joesting 1987, pp. 20-22
3.   Luomala 1951
4.   Nordhoff 1874
5.   p. 142, Pukui, Mary Kawena, Elbert, Samuel H., and Mookini, Esther T. Mookini. *Place Names of Hawaii: Revised & Expanded Edition.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974.
6.   [Menehune Fishpond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menehune_Fishpond)
7.  [*"Hoʻihoʻi Kulana Wahi pana - Restoring Sacred Places"*](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/about/pdfs/kic_brochure.pdf) (PDF). brochure published by Kamehameha Investment Corporation. 2008*. Retrieved 2009-10-20*.

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* Schmitt, Robert C., "Early Hawaiian Statistics," *The American Statistician,* Vol. 35, No. 1, pages 1–3, February, 1981; [[2]](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1305(198102)35%3A1<1%3AEHS>2.0.CO%3B2-D) (Retrieved on 2008-02-16)