

Hawai'i: The California Connection

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"2001: A Space Odyssey" is not merely a play on words from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film classic "2001: A Space Odyssey," but the theme representing next year's journey to our 50th state for the Society for Range Management's 54th Annual Meetings. The theme of an odyssey, a long adventurous journey, speaks also to the historical connections between Hawai'i and California. Before the Gold Rush of 1849 changed California and the rest of the world, there was arguably more commerce and communication between what would become the Golden State and the Aloha State than with the rest of the United States.

The Spanish explorer Cabrillo sailed to Alta California in 1542, but California's first Spanish mission at San Diego (1769), and first civil settlement at San Jose (1777), were established just prior to Captain Cook's first visit to the "Sandwich Islands" in 1778. The complex indigenous cultures of Hawai'i and California each had a long history of natural resource management and use, and in each case, indigenous life and the environment was profoundly changed by European contact (see Maly and Wilcox, and Shlisky, this issue). European expansion also meant that global patterns of trade and development forged connections between Hawai'i and California.

By 1800, the Hawaiian islands were rapidly becoming a favored stopping-over point for seafaring merchants transporting sea otter pelts from the Pacific Northwest to China in trade for spices and silk. King Kamehameha I, Ali'i (leader) of the Big Island of Hawai'i, acquired a small schooner complete with arms and seamen in 1790 and began to consolidate his power throughout the islands. Asian goods were being traded for manufactured items from Europe and its colonies. Reportedly, the hunger for foreign manufactures among Hawai'i's aristocracy led to the depletion of Hawai'i's sandalwood forests, as the wood was used for trade (see Erdman et al. this issue). Demand for salt beef and other island products that could be sold to pay back foreign debt grew rapidly in the 1820's.

The salt beef industry stemmed from a California connection. British Captain George Vancouver brought five cows, two ewes, and one ram from Monterey

(Alta California) as a gift to King Kamehameha on the sloop *HMS Discovery* in 1793. As some of the animals died *en route*, Vancouver brought more livestock from near Santa Barbara about a year later. Kamehameha I let the livestock run and placed a ten-year taboo on killing cattle on pain of death. The King was reportedly less impressed by the first horses to arrive, brought in by American Captain Richard J. Cleveland aboard the brig *Leila Byrd* from near San Quentin, Alta California, and San Borgia in Baja California in 1803.

As the herds grew in unchecked numbers, the interchange of people between Hawai'i and other parts of the world also grew. Hawaiians gained a solid reputation as sailors in the fur trade and were eagerly sought by sea captains. In 1811, 23 Hawaiians left on the *Tonquin* for three years' work for the Pacific Fur Company out of Astoria. Captain John Sutter (on whose California property gold was discovered in 1848) left Honolulu in 1839 with eight Hawaiian men and two women to help build his agricultural empire in Alta California. Richard Henry Dana, Jr. wrote of several months spent curing cowhides with the Kanakas (native Hawaiians) at San Diego and San Pedro in 1835, in his classic narrative of pre-gold California "Two Years Before the Mast." So many native sailors left, usually in close-knit social groups, that in 1841 a law was passed forbidding captains of foreign vessels from taking Hawaiian sailors from Hawai'i without permission from the island governor, and a \$200 bond for their safe return within two years

(Figure 1). Edward Vischer, a Bavarian merchant, wrote of Kanaka sailors in 1842 while aboard the schooner *California*: "They row uniformly, steadily, and untiringly, and are extremely dexterous in bringing a sloop safely and undamaged through breakers which no European would dare to cross." By 1844, 300 to 400 islanders worked for the Hudson's Bay Company along the Columbia River. In 1847, 40 Hawaiians made up about 10% of San Francisco's pre-Gold Rush population.

The 1820's marked the arrival of both Christian missionaries to



Fig.1. Two Hawaiian men in a canoe, ca 1890. Courtesy of The Bishop Museum.

the islands and New England whalers, with continued visits for re-supply, ship repair, and recreation from other seafaring merchants. James Michener's popular novel "Hawai'i," and the 1966 movie starring Julie Andrews and Max Von Sydow, depict the conflict between the missionaries and visiting sailors who had varying interpretations of what kind of "paradise" was to be found in the islands. California's first printing press was originally shipped to Hawai'i to publish the secular views of merchants and traders to counter negative reports from missionaries stationed in Honolulu. The press arrived in Monterey, California, in 1833 aboard the *Lagoda* and was used in California to print government documents (Mexican), school books and later California's first newspaper, the *Californian*, as well as the Sacramento *Placer Times*, the Stockton *Times* and the *Sonora Herald*.

Meanwhile, "back at the ranch," wild livestock populations were getting so numerous on the slopes of Mauna Kea that in 1832 King Kamehameha III sent a royal emissary to California to bring back Mexican, Indian and Spanish vaqueros to teach Hawaiians how to control the wild beasts. These first cowboys, surnamed Kossuth, Louzeida, and Ramon, were the first recorded "paniolo" in Hawai'i (see Starrs, this issue). The origin of paniolo is generally considered to derive from Espanol (Spaniard), or Hispaniola (the Caribbean colony), but other suggested origins include panuelo (Spanish for handkerchief) or even Hawaiian terms meaning "hold firmly and sway gracefully." John Palmer Parker, Kamehameha's official bullock hunter from New England, started his cattle ranch on leased royal land near Mauna Kea in 1837, but didn't obtain title to a small parcel near Waimea until 1847, after the introduction of a land policy often referred to as the "Great Mahele."

This land disposal program (1845) apportioned land formerly held by the monarch to commoners, but resulted in foreign ownership of much of Hawai'i and the eventual demise of Hawaiian sovereignty. The stories of foreign-owned sugar and pineapple plantations (see Dinstell, this issue), importation of



Fig. 2. Loading cattle, *Kawaihae*, ca 1920's–1930's. Courtesy of Bishop Museum.

Chinese and Japanese laborers, the overthrow of the last Hawaiian monarch Queen Liliuokalani in 1894, transpacific air races, the role of Pearl Harbor and World War II, statehood, and the development of the tourism industry are beyond the scope of this article, but are fascinating historical events in their own right.

What traces of the early odysseys between Hawai'i, California and the rest of the world remain? Global trade in manufactured goods and information no longer relies completely on a safe seaport in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The sandalwood was depleted, silk was replaced by rayon or polyester, and the whaling industry was harpooned permanently by exploitation of petroleum resources (with much of the whaling fleet being destroyed shortly after the American Civil War). Missionaries still wander over the globe, increasingly via satellite transmission. But what of the paniolos?

One of the most notable and poignant odysseys of the Hawaiian paniolo was organized by Eben "Rawhide Ben" Low, a rodeo champ from the Parker Ranch. He arranged a trip to the 1908 Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming accompanied by his brother John, half-brother Archie Kaaua, and cousin Ikuu Purdy. These paniolos had learned to rope half

wild beasts while galloping across flesh-slicing lava fields and driving cattle through shark-infested waters out to boats for eventual shipment out of Honolulu (Figure 2). Ikuu thrilled the crowds and took the World Championship in roping, and Archie took second place. Paniolos have been written of and visited by Mark Twain, Will Rogers, and other famous western figures. As with the icons of the buckaroo/vaquero, and the cowboy, the paniolo is increasingly revered as a keeper of culture, language and skills from times past. They wear traditional flowers as leis and hatbands and have a rich musical tradition. Speaking of musical traditions, have you ever thought about what the initials in the commercial jingle for "C&H Pure Cane Sugar from Hawai'i" stand for?

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