

HAWAIIAN SUGAR PLANTER'S ASSOCIATION

PLANTATION ARCHIVES

Register of the

EWA PLANTATION COMPANY

Ewa, Oahu

1891-1960

5 cu. ft.
July, 1994

Processed By
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EWA PLANTATION COMPANY HISTORY

With the prospect of irrigation water available from underground sources, Ewa Plantation Company was incorporated in 1890. Mr. B.F. Dillingham sublet more than 11,000 acres of land to the newly formed company, considering the future hauling business a necessary factor in the success of his Oahu Railway plans.

Clearing the land began on January 6, 1890 with 15 men, two horses and nine mules. The first seed cane, the Lahaina variety, was planted two months later. During the first year of operation, 22 wells were bored and 775 acres were planted at Honouliuli and Ewa. In April of 1890, the first Japanese laborers arrived at Ewa Plantation.

Excavation for the mill began in January 1891 and in the same year the high lift pump began bringing water into a reservoir.

The first crop, harvested in 1892, produced 2,849 tons of sugar. By 1923 Ewa Plantation was the first sugar company in the world to raise ten tons of sugar per acre and, by 1933, the plantation produced over 61,000 tons of sugar a year.

By 1910 the Ewa Plantation Company community of 2,500 people contained several laborers camps, the plantation store, kindergarten, clubhouse, hospital and dispensary, and several outlying camps.

Approximately 30 miles of railroad track serviced the plantation. Sugar from the mill was conveyed by the Oahu Railway and Land Company to Honolulu Harbor or shipping.

There were 16 artesian wells scattered over the plantation in 1919 and, by 1933, 69 artesian and five surface wells provided water to 24 pumps. Ewa Plantation had experimented with various methods of distributing irrigation water, one of which, the Ewa Border Method, was used on numerous other plantations.

Ewa Plantation was considered one of the most prosperous plantations in Hawaii and in 1931 a new 50 year lease was executed, completing the agreement with Oahu Railway and Land Company and beginning an association with the James Campbell Estate.

A new hospital was built in 1935, part of an exemplary health care system which included kindergartens, child health clinics, and nutrition studies.

By 1936 Ewa Plantation Company was the first plantation to have a fully mechanized harvesting operation and by 1946 tests were made to convert the hauling of cane from railroads to large trucks.

Ewa Plantation Company

Due to the proximity of Pearl Harbor, Ewa Plantation Company suffered some damage from machine gun fire and anti-aircraft shells during the December 7, 1941 air attack. With the entry of the United States into World War II, the Army took possession of over 500,000 acres of Ewa Plantation land. As with all Hawaii sugar companies, Ewa Plantation's most serious wartime problem was a shortage of laborers.

By 1951 a good sugar crop and substantial investment in new equipment and development had mitigated the effects of the war and a labor strike in 1946, and a record crop was produced.

In 1962 Castle and Cooke Ltd. Purchased majority control of Ewa Plantation Company stock and in 1970 Ewa Plantation Company merged with Oahu Sugar Company in Waipahu, Oahu.

Managers of Ewa Plantation Company were:

W.J. Lowrie	1891-1898
G.F. Renton, Sr.	1899-1920
G.F. Renton, Jr.	1921-1937
J.D. Bond	1937-1945
J.N. Orrick	1945-1962
Edward C. Bryan	1962-1970

HSPA PLANTATION ARCHIVES

Ewa Plantation Company Scope and Content Notes

BACKGROUND, UNPROCESSED RECORDS

The five cubic feet of volumes, which make up the Ewa Plantation Company collection were discovered at the offices of Dole Packaged Foods Company in 1993. They were given to HSPA in 1993 to become a part of the Plantation Archives

PROCESSED RECORDS, NOTES

While the Ewa Plantation collection is limited almost exclusively to financial volumes, it is a valuable collection because so few Ewa Plantation records exist in any other repositories. The General Ledgers and the General Journals begin in 1891. Vol. 12 and Vol. 23 are both first volumes in the bookkeeping history of Ewa Plantation. The first Cash Book, Vol. 1, is probably the second volume of the subseries. The Cash Books, Journals and Accounts Ledgers cover 30 to 50 years of Ewa Plantation history. The Ledgers, Vol. 32 and Vol. 24, cover only 12 years. Transfer Binders, Trial Balance books and Agents Accounts cover similar short periods. The Manager's Correspondence, Vol. 31, covers 17 early years of Ewa Plantation and includes the manager's monthly and annual reports. Other subjects included are land and water matters, labor strikes, Japanese laborers, and the Oahu Land and Railway Company. The earliest records in this collection are financial volumes from 1891 and the Trial Balances from 1960 are the latest. There is a gap between 1944 and 1960.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Ewa Plantation Company collection:

Strengths: - The General Journals form a complete financial record from 1891 to 1943 and the Cash Books are almost as complete, beginning in 1898 and ending in 1933. The Accounts Ledgers cover nearly 30 years and the Agents Accounts illustrate purchases made by the agents from 1901 to 1910.

Weaknesses: - The lack of any correspondence except the manager's correspondence between 1903 and 1920. The short run of General Ledgers is also a weakness of this collection.