

HAWAIIAN SUGAR PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION

PLANTATION ARCHIVES

Register of the
Hawaiian Irrigation Company
Honokaa, Hawaii
1905-1960

Accession 84-09
12 cu. ft.
December 1989

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HAWAIIAN IRRIGATION COMPANY, LTD.

The Hawaii Irrigation Company was originally known as the Hamakua Ditch Company, Ltd., which was incorporated on February 9, 1904. John T. McCrosson was the company's promoter, Jorgen Jorgensen was the engineer, and Messrs. Lewis and Company were the agents. Among the local bond subscribers were F.A. Schaefer & Co., Honokaa Sugar Co., Pacific Sugar Mill, Allen & Robinson, H. Hackfeld, Mr. Ahrens and Mr. Jorgensen. Sometime between August 1908 and April 1909, the Hamakua Ditch Company changed its name to Hawaiian Irrigation Company, Ltd.* Hawaiian Irrigation Company changed its agency from Lewis & Co. to Theo. H. Davies & Co. on November 29, 1909. At that time Davies also made the company a \$150,000 loan and so in essence became the new owners of the company.

The purpose of the Hawaiian Irrigation Company was to provide water for irrigation and fluming to the plantations on the Hamakua Coast, primarily Honokaa Sugar Co., Pacific Sugar Mill, and Paauhau Plantation. As a result of the 1902 Arthur S. Tuttle report commissioned by the Bishop Museum to study the feasibility of bringing water to the Hamakua area, two major ditches were proposed--the Upper Ditch and the Lower Ditch.

The construction work on the Upper Ditch appears to have commenced in April 1906. The Ditch was completed in January of 1907 and was initially able to deliver 15 MGD (million gallons per day). Four reservoirs were completed by the end of 1910. The original contract of January 24, 1906 for water distribution was with Honokaa Sugar Company. Pacific Sugar Mill and Paauhau Sugar Company were included in the 1910 agreement.

The water sources were the Kawainui and the Alakahi streams, as well as general runoff from the watershed into the ditch. The Upper Ditch was approximately 23 miles in length and some 15 miles of it ran through Honokaa Sugar Co. and Pacific Sugar Mill land. Originally the Upper Ditch consisted of dirt ditches and galvanized flumes patched with lumber. This was a continual source of frustration, as much water was lost through leakage. When the plantations took over the management of the ditch in 1915, reconstruction work was carried out. The total cost of the Upper Ditch stands on the books in December 31, 1920 as \$359,500.43.

Lower Ditch construction began in June 1907, but serious construction work did not start until September 1908. The ditch was opened on July 1, 1910 with a delivery of 30 MGD. The Lower Ditch contract was originally with Paauhau Sugar Plantation Company, Honokaa Sugar Company and Pacific Sugar Mill in 1905.

*See Irrigation Systems of Hawaii's Sugar Plantations by Carol Wilcox for an explanation regarding the name change.

The water sources were the Kawainui, Alakahi, Koeawi, and later, the Waimea streams. The original length of the Lower Ditch was approximately 24 miles. Later on it was extended about 5 miles to supply water to Puulo Plantation. The initial cost of the Lower Ditch was \$795,214. In all probability, this figure includes tunnel construction costs. The tunnel of the Lower Ditch, traveling the 8.9 miles from the Kawainui intake to the weir at Kukuihaele, was one of the longest in Hawaii. The fact that it took only slightly over a year to build makes its construction an outstanding achievement. It was further distinguished by being quite large, approximately 10 X 12 feet in diameter. In 1920, another tunnel was constructed through Lalakea Gulch. Records seem to indicate that the tunnels were built by Japanese contract laborers. William J. Payne was in charge of all tunneling and acted as the engineer/manager of the company until 1915.

Once the Lower Ditch was finished, a series of arguments and litigations began with Honokaa Sugar Co. and Pacific Sugar Mill over the measurement of water and what each company was being charged. After lengthy negotiation, Hawaiian Irrigation Co. shut off the water in May 1909. Although the company was forced to resume delivery again, bad feelings prevailed. Another controversy over the reservoirs arose and Hawaiian Irrigation Co. initiated action against the two plantations in July of 1914. By February of 1915, Hawaiian Irrigation Co. was taken over by new management, essentially that of Honokaa Sugar Co. AT the time of the takeover the agency agreement was transferred from Theo. H. Davies & Co. to F.A. Schaefer & Co., the agents and major stockholders for Honokaa Sugar Co. and Pacific Sugar Mill.

In March of 1915, the management of the Waipio Rice Mill was also turned over to the new proprietors of Hawaiian Irrigation Co. as the result of lease agreements. Before the ditches had been built, right-of-ways were obtained. The Upper Ditch crossed Parker land, government land, and Ahuola Homestead land. In the case of the Lower Ditch, it involved Bishop Museum Lands. The right-of-ways were purchased for as much as \$6,000 a year, as in the case of the Waipio Valley from Bishop Museum, to as little as a water use fee of .5 MGD in the case of Parker, or all the water one could carry "by bucket no pipe", as in the case of the homestead lands.

Under Lease No.14 certain lands were rented in Waipio Valley from the Bishop Museum. This lease was a stipulation to the granting of lease No. 20 which was necessary to protect the water rights. The land under Lease No. 14 was sublet for rice growing and taro cultivation in an effort to recoup part of the rental fee. At this point, the company became involved in the growing and selling of rice. A rice mill was operated and became a source of revenue. There were also a few small independent poi factories located in the valley. The records also reflect other attempts regarding diversified agriculture in the valley.

In 1960, Honokaa Sugar Co. bought the remaining outstanding shares of the Hawaiian Irrigation Company, which amounted to 2% from Paauhau Sugar Company, making Hawaiian Irrigation Company a wholly owned subsidiary of what is now Hamakua Sugar Company. The records reveal the workings of the early irrigation company and offer insight into its relationship with the plantation it served.

HSPA PLANTATION ARCHIVES

Hawaiian Irrigation Company Scope and Contents

BACKGROUND, UNPROCESSED RECORDS

During October 1987, all Hamakua Sugar Company records, which included the Hawaiian Irrigation Company materials, were removed from storage, fumigated and brought into the Archives. Processing of the Hawaiian Irrigation Company records was completed in December 1989.

NOTES, PROCESSED RECORDS

The Hawaiian Irrigation Company records are organized in the following series or major categories:

- Corporate Records
- Correspondence
- Financial Records
- Personnel & Payroll
- Miscellaneous

The correspondence series covers nearly 10 years, from 1917, approximately when F.A. Schaefer & Co. took over as agents, to the merger of Pacific Sugar Mill and Honokaa Sugar Company in 1926. The financial records are extensive, spanning over 50 years, 1906-1960. Payroll and personnel information is very scant, a small amount being found in the early cash books and in a single payroll book which covers bonuses for salaried employees between 1930 and 1939.

Corporate Records

1905-1921. The Agreements, 1905-1911, include water contracts with Honokaa Sugar Company, Pacific Sugar Mill, and Paauhau Sugar Plantation. The Audit, 1921, is a good source of information relating to the history of the company and the cost of construction of the ditches.

Correspondence

1914-1926. The majority of correspondence is to and from F.A. Schaefer & Co. and concerns routine matters such as water from contracts, right-of-ways for ditches, the Waipio Valley lease from Bishop Museum, rice production in Waipio Valley, and construction of ditches and tunnels.

Scope and Contents (Continued)

Financial Records

1906-1960. The Cash Books are generally divided by Upper and Lower Ditch volumes. The early volumes, to approximately 1917, include some payroll information. The Distribution Books show expense distribution by accounts to the upper and lower ditches. Both the General Journals and General Ledgers cover nearly 40 years, 1906 to 1939 and 1944. The Improvement Books, V.146-147, include information re costs for construction and improvement for approximately 40 years, 1922-1960. The Monthly Statements, 1915-1940, cover expenditures, stock and animal accounts, labor, revenue, ditch flow and loss, rainfall, and reports by the engineer and superintendent, including information about the Waipio Rice Mill. The Sundry Creditors records, 52/15-16, include samples of vouchers and bills for materials and supplies.

Personnel & Payroll

1930-1939. Payroll Book 1930-1939, PV.86, covers bonuses and days worked, listing names of salaried employees only.

Miscellaneous

1935-1938. Water Statistics, 55/6-9, provides daily information re gallons of water from various stations, amounts delivered, as well as rainfall amounts.