

HAWAIIAN SUGAR PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION

PLANTATION ARCHIVES

Register of the

KAU SUGAR COMPANY  
(Hawaiian Agricultural Company)  
Pahala, Hawaii

1876-1945

Accession: 84-07  
48.0 cu. ft.  
June 1990

Processed by  
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## BRIEF HISTORY HAWAIIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY

Hawaiian Agricultural Company was located on the southwest coast of Hawaii at Pahala in the district of Kau. The plantation lay in the lava belt and had been described as “a fertile island in a lava desert.” The upper lands were rich in mineral properties necessary for abundant sugar yields. This soil was a result of the 1868 eruption of Mauna Loa. The force of a subsoil water deposit in a fissure sent a massive “mud flow” down the slopes of the valley for more than three miles. Thirty feet deep in the center, this mud flow poured over a thousand acres between Kapapala and Kaalaala, depositing soil 10-15 feet deep in many areas. High in sulfur content, this land contained the best sugar cane producing fields on the plantation.

Hawaiian Agricultural Company was established in 1876, following the Reciprocity Treaty. Peter C. Jones, Charles R. Bishop, J.D. Brewer, H.A.P. Carter and several others chose to take advantage of the economic situation and incorporate on December 22, 1876 under the name Hawaiian Agricultural Company.\* The newly formed company encountered financial difficulties and a shortage of labor. The labor problem was solved to some extent by individual planters, who worked on shares and employed Chinese, a few Japanese, and some Gilbert Islanders as workers. The first crop was taken off in 1880 and C. Brewer & Co. became the agents for the plantation in 1883.

Hawaiian Agricultural Company probably had the highest cane fields in the Islands. Because of its southern position on Hawaii, the plantation was able to cultivate cane up the 3,000-foot elevation. Yellow Bamboo, or “Whitney” cane, was considered the best cane for higher elevations, so the plantation placed its sole dependence on this sweet, soft-stick variety. As a result, the fields were left barren because of the ravages of leafhoppers in 1903. Manager W.G. Ogg was the first to diversify the cane varieties after the leafhopper episode. Harder, more resistant types of cane were planted.

There were also attempts to diversify with other crops. In 1898, the sisal boom had reached its height. In addition to cane, the plantation planted 500 acres of sisal. This was harvested and the average output of the plant was 10 tons per month of quality fiber. In 1904, Sea Islander cotton and wine grapes were tried unsuccessfully. Once again, the crops were wiped out by insects. Tobacco and pineapple were tried in 1906 and failed as ventures in diversification. In spite of these setbacks, the company managed to prosper and improvements became the keynote of Manager Ogg’s years. New buildings were erected and the mill’s capacity increased.

The original mill was brought from London in 1879 and was the largest in the islands at that time. But by 1914, it was necessary to increase it from a 9 roller mill to a 15 roller mill with a capacity of 45 tons of cane per hour. A new flume system and cane weighing

\*Hawaiian Agricultural Co. was often referred to as Pahala Pltn. with Hawaiian Agricultural Co. being its corporate name.

scheme were also installed. The flumes were arranged so that each contractor's cane could be weighed separately, instead of weighing every tenth bundle in the field and averaging the weight. The cane was flumed into cars and weighed on track scales. The Pahala mill also purchased cane from Wood Valley homesteaders, about 20 Hawaiians and Portuguese, who cultivated about 600 acres of land. This group of homesteaders was one of the most successful in the Territory.

By 1919, the plantation had 35 miles of flume system for transporting cane from the field to the mill. Since rainfall was erratic in the Kau area, they depended on mountain water for the fluming operations. The water was brought seven miles from the forest reserve through sixteen tunnels. By 1922, work on the Kaumaikēohu, Mudflow, Noguchi, Heio, and Weda tunnels amounted to 3,308 feet. Reservoirs were also constructed as part of the water conservation program. To supplement this water supply, plans were drawn up in 1944 to tap a supply of subterranean water. The project, the largest of its kind on any plantation, was completed in April 1947. It combined both tunneling and drilling techniques along with the installation of surface and deep well pumps to produce 3,500 gallons of water per minute. The water was stored in a reservoir for both domestic and factory use.

Money was also spent to improve the living conditions of the plantation laborers. During 1919, forty-three laborers' quarters were constructed and many others rebuilt. A type of laborers' home developed at Hawaiian Agricultural Company was adopted by the Hawaiian Board of Health as a model for other plantations. The laborers' villages were built on a unit system. For the single men a two-room house with individual stoves and wash facilities was erected. The laborer with a family was given a four-room house, also with individual kitchens and wash houses. In the unit plan, five of these houses were placed in a row, with three adjacent rows of dwellings. These rows of houses were separated by a 30-foot roadway. By 1941, the plantation had twelve of these villages with 346 family homes and 176 houses for single men. Since the plantation was in an isolated district, better living conditions were offered as an inducement to recruit laborers.

In addition to clubhouses, theatres, and other recreational facilities, the plantation had excellent medical facilities. Dispensaries were located in the camps and the hospital was one of four in the Territory rated Class A along with Queens, Hilo Memorial, and Kahuku.

A dairy supplied camps with milk and butter through the stores, which were conveniently located in each village. The dairy produced approximately 70 gallons daily and also supplied milk to the public schools.

The Kapapala Ranch was a separate operation from the plantation, although it was owned as a subsidiary company by Hawaiian Agricultural Co. About 800 head of steers were raised on the ranch along with a dairy herd of approximately 100 Holsteins mixed with Hereford. Berkshire and Duroc hogs were also raised. The plantation bought livestock on the hoof from the ranch and slaughtered twice a week to supply beef and pork at cost to employees.

Throughout the years, in spite of labor shortages, epidemics, floods, and earthquakes, production remained fairly constant. Construction of new roads, airplane spraying herbicides, chain-net side unloading system, and other improvements played a part in the progress of the plantation.

In 1972, C. Brewer & Co. decided to consolidate the Hawaiian Agricultural Company with Hutchinson Sugar Plantation Company. The new entity was named Kau Sugar Company.

### MANAGERS

R.A. Lyman	1876 –1877
George A. Wilfong	1877 – 1881
Wm. W. Goodale	1881 –1882
Daniel Foster	1882 – 1890
E.W. Fuller	1890 – 1995
C.M. Walton	1895 – 1903
John M. Sherman	1903 – 1904
Wm. G. Ogg	1904 – 1916
James Campsie	1917 – 1937
William Campsie	1937 – 1939
Wm. Cushnie	1939 – 1944
John F. Ramsay	1945 – ?

Kau Sugar Company

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## HSPA PLANTATION ARCHIVES

### Hawaiian Agricultural Company Scope and Contents

#### UNPROCESSED RECORDS, BACKGROUND

During January 1990, records from Kau Sugar Company, consisting of 83 boxes and 156 volumes, were removed from storage, fumigated and brought into the Archives. Hawaiian Agricultural Company material accounted for approximately 57 boxes and 35 volumes, while the Hutchinson Sugar Plantation Company comprised the remainder. By mid-June 1990, processing of both plantations was finished and records were ready for use by researchers.

#### PROCESSED RECORDS, NOTES

The Kau Sugar Company records consist of materials generated by two predecessor companies: Hawaiian Agricultural Co. and Hutchinson Sugar Plantation Co. The Hawaiian Agricultural Company records are organized into the following series or categories:

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

#### Correspondence

1906-1945. This series contains extensive correspondence with the agency, C. Brewer & Co. Letters from C. Brewer & Co. include weekly letters, a few directors letters and rainfall reports. Other subjects of this correspondence are land matters, mill operations, and equipment and supplies for the entire plantation. Box ½ includes numerous references to World War I. Most of this correspondence is contained in letter press books, including an index at the back of each book. Letters to C. Brewer & Co., also contained in letter press books, include weekly letters, directors letters, mill reports, monthly statements and correspondence pertaining to plantation operations and responses to World War I.

The Gartly Correspondence and the General Correspondence include material concerning machinery, mill and field operations, water investigation, job applications, and requests from Japanese and Filipino workers to travel to Japan and the Philippines and return to Hawaii. References are made to the impact of both wars on the plantation. Arrangement is roughly alphabetical.

HSPA Labor & Statistics Correspondence includes names, bango numbers, plantation and ship name of Filipino laborers returning to the Philippines. Also included are applications at HSPA for plantation work. HSPA policies relative to family transportation are found in this correspondence. (Boxes 23-25). HSPA circular letters are also included.

Resumes of the Directors' Meetings – 1937-1939 (KAU 8/5) contain a wide variety of information regarding the plantation including appropriations for housing improvements, grab harvesting, budgets, C&H agreement, short biography of William Campsie, donations, and land matters.

#### Financial Records

1876-1944. The Cash Books, V.1-12, provide the names of the contractors who provided gangs to plant, cultivate, and harvest cane, as do the Contractors' Earning & Planters' Ledger records. Trial Balances, V.32-35, provide summary figures of plantation finances.

#### Personnel & Payroll

1916-1922. These records are very sparse for this plantation. No individual worker's names are available, as PV.1 & 2 identify workers only by bango numbers. Pay rates for various jobs are described in PV.1.

#### Production Records

1907-1928. The Production Records are a source of shipping information as well as tons of sugar sold and shipped from Hawaiian Agricultural Co.

#### Miscellaneous

1906-1942. The Blueprints include camp maps and machinery. The Luna's Report covers the stables as well as field information.