

# *The History of* Princeville Ranch

Princeville Ranch, located on the scenic North Shore of Kaua`i, has roots which are intertwined with the early 19<sup>th</sup> century history of change in the Hanalei area. Traditional Hawaiian crops of taro, sweet potato and breadfruit made room for new economic ventures in cattle, silk, coffee, oranges, Irish potatoes, sugar and rice. Princeville lands were first grazed by cattle in 1831, when Richard Charlton, British Consul and advisor to Kamehameha II, brought one hundred head of longhorns from northern California. Charlton leased lands from Governor Kaikioewa, to be used as a cattle ranch between Hanalei and Kalihiwai.

When Charlton brought his herd to Hanalei, none of the Hawaiians there were trained to handle the big animals or “pipi”, as they were called. Horses had been introduced to Hawaii in 1804. Cattle had been brought to the Big Island by Vancouver in 1798, as a present to King Kamehameha. They were allowed to roam free and were protected by a strict kapu until 1820, when the king enlisted the aid of hunters like Samuel Parker to hunt the wild bullocks. Hides and meat were salted and eventually replaced sandalwood as barter goods for the kingdom.

In 1832, the king brought three Mexican vaqueros to the Big Island to train the natives in handling and domesticating the wide longhorns. Hawaiian cowboys were called “paniolos”, from the word “espagnoles” or Spanish. Eventually more vaqueros were brought to other islands, including Kaua`i. Charlton probably used vaqueros to assist with his herd and train his paniolos.

In 1845, Charlton conveyed his ranch to Ann Dudoit, wife of Captain James Dudoit, the first French consul to Hawaii. Upon retirement from government service in 1848, Dudoit moved his family to Hanalei and then to Kilauea, where he also ranched the ahupua`a of Namahana.

A bring local and mainland trade developed on Kaua`i. Salt beef for whalers and fresh beef for Honolulu were shipped from Hanalei in Dudoit’s brigantine, The John Dunlap. Oranges were grown in Hanalei, Lumahai and Wainiha in large quantities. Oranges and potatoes were packed in straw and shipped to San Francisco by schooner during the gold rush of the 1850’s.

Previously, in 1840, Charles Titcomb had started a silk plantation in the Hanalei Valley. He converted it to coffee in 1843 and planted sugar in 1847. In 1853, Robert Wylie, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Hawaiian kingdom, acquired a coffee plantation which he later converted to sugar. He named the plantation “Princeville”, in honor of little Prince Albert Edward Kauikeaouli, only son of Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma, after a visit by the royal family in 1860. In 1862, Wylie acquired Titcom’s “Emmaville” estate and much of the present ranch lands in the ahupua`a’s of Kalihikai and Kalihiwai. Sadly, Princeville Ranch’s namesake, little Prince Albert, died in 1862 at the age of four, breaking the hearts of the king, queen and their followers.

In 1867, Judge E. H. Allen and a group of businessmen bought Princeville from Wylie's estate. Sugar became unprofitable, due to insect damage and a lack of water to run the mill during drought. The last crop was harvested in 1893. Two years later, A. S. Wilcox acquired Princeville. He was the son of missionary Abner Wilcox and great great uncle of the Ranch's present date operator, Gale Carswell.

Records show that "the lower lands were rented out to Chinese rice planters and the upper lands between Hanalei and Kalihiwai were planted to imported grasses and restored to a cattle ranch." In 1916, Wilcox sold the lands to Lihue Plantation and ranch manager W. F. Sanborn. Lihue Plantation ran Princeville Ranch until 1969, adding pineapple and taro to the crops produced.

From 1969 to 1994, Princeville Ranch had four operators. In 1994, the lands were leased from Princeville Corporation (now Princeville Operating Company) by the Carswell family, who had operated a successful riding stables business there for 15 years. Donn Carswell had been Chief Engineer for the development of Princeville Resort from 1969 to 1980. When the Carswells took over, they converted the herd from Herefords to a Brangus cow-calf operation. Each year, 120 calves on retained ownership are sent to feed lots in Oregon and up to 100 are kept in Hanalei for replacement heifers and use in the Princeville Pride natural beef program.

Many people don't associate Hawaii with cattle ranching, yet the state has 900 ranches and 165,000 cattle and calves. Parker Ranch, on the Big Island of Hawaii, founded by bullock hunter John Parker, started with two acres and grew to over 200,000 acres. Today, Princeville Ranch occupies approximately 2,500 acres and is of similar herd size to 90% of the ranches in the United States. Cows, calves and grass-fed cattle number around 500.

With a tight cyclical cattle market and rising fixed costs, many ranchers have turned to diversification to preserve their ranches and way of life. Some have been hosting guests for many years in the traditional "dude ranch" setting. The popularity of eco-tourism has offered opportunities to expand into more broad-based vacation and retreat centers providing such activities as hiking, fishing, hunting, and trail riding.

Today, Princeville Ranch is still a family-run operation, with ties to Princeville's Wilcox family history and the more recent development of the area. Donn Carswell and daughter Karin Carswell Guest oversee ranch operations. Gale Carswell runs the horseback riding Business. Son David is a master horseman and proponent of natural horsemanship. He directs the horse and rider training programs, while also supporting all other aspect of the ranching business. David and his wife Denise Carswell own and operate Princeville Ranch Adventures, which offers hiking, kayaking and zip line tours in the lush tropical heart of the Ranch.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority has identified ecotourism and outdoor activities as important facets of Hawaii's visitor industry. Princeville Ranch provides environmentally sensitive outdoor adventures and education on area history, culture, flora and fauna. Since the early 1800's, the lands of Princeville have evolved and changed hands to meet the needs of the times. Today, Princeville Ranch is both a working cattle ranch, with deep historical roots, and a successful, diversified business contributing to the Princeville Resort and the island of Kauai.