



Reading: Paniolo Timeline

Copy and distribute this page to students. Guide students to take turns reading segments in order to learn a little more about the history of Paniolos in Hawai'i.

Ancient Hawai'i - No large land mammals.

1793 - Captain George Vancouver gifts a few cattle to Kamehameha I. It started a rich tradition of cowboy and ranch culture that is still visible today. However, the first cows and bulls fared poorly, either falling ill and dying or being quickly killed and eaten.

1794 - Vancouver landed additional cattle at Kealahou and strongly encouraged Kamehameha to place a 10-year kapu on them to allow the herd to grow.

1803 - American Richard Cleveland presented horses - a stallion and a mare - to Kamehameha.

1815 - The oldest and most famous of Hawaii's ranches is Parker Ranch on the Big Island. John Palmer Parker, a sailor from Massachusetts, settled in Hawai'i and worked for Kamehameha I as a bull hunter and keeper of royal fishponds. After marrying chiefess Keli'ikipikaneokaolohaka, he established a two-acre ranch on the slopes of Mauna Kea, buying the land from Kamehameha III and later expanding it with his wife's 640 acre inheritance. Parker's descendants continued to expand the ranch, eventually making it the largest ranch under individual ownership in the United States with 225,000 acres and 50,000 cattle.

1832 - Kamehameha III sent one of his high chiefs to California to hire cowboys who could round up wild cattle and teach Hawaiians cattle and horse handling skills. Three Mexican-Spanish vaquero (cowboys) began working on Hawai'i island, first breaking in horses to turn them into working animals, then rounding up and handling herds of cattle. Hawaiian paniolo traditions were strongly shaped by the Mexican vaquero heritage that stemmed originally from Spain.

Up to 1846 – The cattle grew into a huge problem and a dangerous nuisance. 25,000 wild cattle roamed at will and an additional 10,000 semi-domesticated cattle lived alongside humans. A wild bull or cow could weigh 1,200 to 1,500 pounds and had a six-foot horn spread. Huge herds destroyed native crops, ate the thatching on houses, and hurt, attacked and sometimes killed people.

In addition to causing erosion damage to the land, these animals also affected what foreign plants were brought to the Islands. While native koa, `ohia, uhiuhi, elama (native ebony), kauila, halapepe, `aiea, mamane and `iliahi began to disappear, other non-native species were planted as cattle feed.

After 1830 - The kapu was lifted and the hunting of wild cattle was encouraged. The king hired bull hunters from overseas to help. Many of these were former convicts from Botany Bay in Australia. Hunting sometimes ended in inadvertent tragedy. Bull traps caught unsuspecting humans with alarming frequency.

After 1905 - They introduced kiawe as another cattle feed, a shallow-rooted, thorny tree that is now ubiquitous.

1908 – At the Frontier Days celebration in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Hawaiian paniolos Ikuu Purdy, Archie Ka'au'a and Jack Low scored first, second and sixth place in the steer-roping competition.