

# Images of Old Hawai'i

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April 2, 2018 by **Peter T Young**

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## Loading Cattle

"In 1777 there was not one cow, sheep, horse or goat anywhere in the area that is now the State of Hawaii. In fact, the only land mammals in the Islands were a small light weight pig, Poi Dogs (eating type), Polynesian rat, Hoary bat, and Hawaiians."

"All this was destined to change abruptly and dramatically. Goats were introduced to some of the Islands by Captain James Cook, who rediscovered them in 1778 ..."

"In two voyages, 1792 and 1793, Captain George Vancouver landed 7 cows, 1 heifer, 2 bull calves, and 1 bull on the Big Island. These animals were for the most part black longhorns: believed to be of the line that the Mexicans used for their bull-bear contest."

"The animals were obtained from what is now British Columbia and Monterey, Calif. In addition to the 11 longhorns, 7 rams, 9 ewes, and some goats were also presented to the ruling monarch, King Kamehameha."

"The King placed a kapu (taboo) against the killing of these animals, which were subsequently turned loose upon the unsuspecting vegetation. By 1830, the number of animals on the Big Island alone was estimated to be 20,000 cattle, 3,000 sheep, 1,200 horses (introduced in 1803) and numerous goats." (Smith)

"Beginning in 1786, ships trading in the Pacific had begun to stop in Hawaiian ports on a

regular basis. Their captains were very interested in securing fresh provisions, including water, salt, wood, vegetables, and meat."

"They also saw Hawaii as a good place to rest and recuperate, especially during the harsh winters of the northern seas. Captains found the protected, natural harbor at Honolulu the most accessible and, therefore, the most attractive in the islands. Thus, by 1810, Honolulu had already become a port of great commercial importance." (Strazar)

Salt meat could store longer than fresh – what about fresh meat for those in the Islands?

Refrigeration first came to Hawai'i in the middle of the nineteenth century. "The first Boston ice brought to these islands, was received on the 14th inst. (September 14, 1850) by brig Fortunio, Hasty, via San Francisco." (Polynesian, September 21, 1850)

Then, "(a) few tons of ice were brought to this port from San Francisco by the bark Harriet Bartlet, Capt Heeren, and a part sold by our friend Thompson, at auction, on Tuesday."

"This is the first importation of the kind, in any quantity, to this market, and but the beginning, it is to be hoped, of a regular supply of this luxury to the inhabitants of this city" (Polynesian, June 26, 1852)

Then, they started to make ice in the Islands. "Ice Manufacture. The establishment on the Esplanade for the manufacture of ice by chemical process, has been in operation during several days past. "

"Like all new beginnings, difficulties have had to be met and overcome, but yesterday the machinery was in the full tide of successful experiment, and to-day we expect to be able to see home-made ice."

"It is expected that enough will be manufactured to supply the demand for the city, and at such rates as will prevent the necessity of importing the luxury from California." (Pacific Commercial Advertiser, September 2, 1871)

"Before the days of refrigeration, cattle, for other than the local markets of each island, had to be shipped live to the island of O'ahu where, because of the larger population and accelerated development, the demand for fresh beef was always greater."

“The transporting of live cattle posed dramatic technical challenges that were complicated by the absence of deep-water wharfs where an inter-island schooner or steamer could dock for loading of cattle.”

“Ranchers, therefore, had to have their paniolo drag cattle out through the pounding surf to longboats that rowed out to the main steamer with cattle tied by the head to the gunwales.”

“Later solutions included a drop chute utilizing a trap door that released the cattle one by one to the sea where a rope would then be thrown to the waiting longboat.” (Strazar)

“The cattle at Napo‘opo‘o were driven and dragged into the water, a rope around the neck and a cowboy holding the animal’s tail .... Drawn alongside the small boat, another rope was secured to the horns and the one taken from the neck, the head being secured to the side of the boat.”

“They are tied very close together, perhaps eight or ten on either side, and in some cases the animals fought and pawed one another in the water. The small boat is drawn out to the steamer and some of the animals loaded by slings under the middle while others are drawn up by the horns.”

“A woman in Kona, and whose cattle these happened to be, was present and I spoke to her about the nonuse of slings. She said the ‘light’ cattle were always loaded that way and slings used for the heavy ones...” (National Humane Review, July 1919)

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## Comments

Thank you to Peter T. Young for sharing this information about the beginning of "Paniolo"