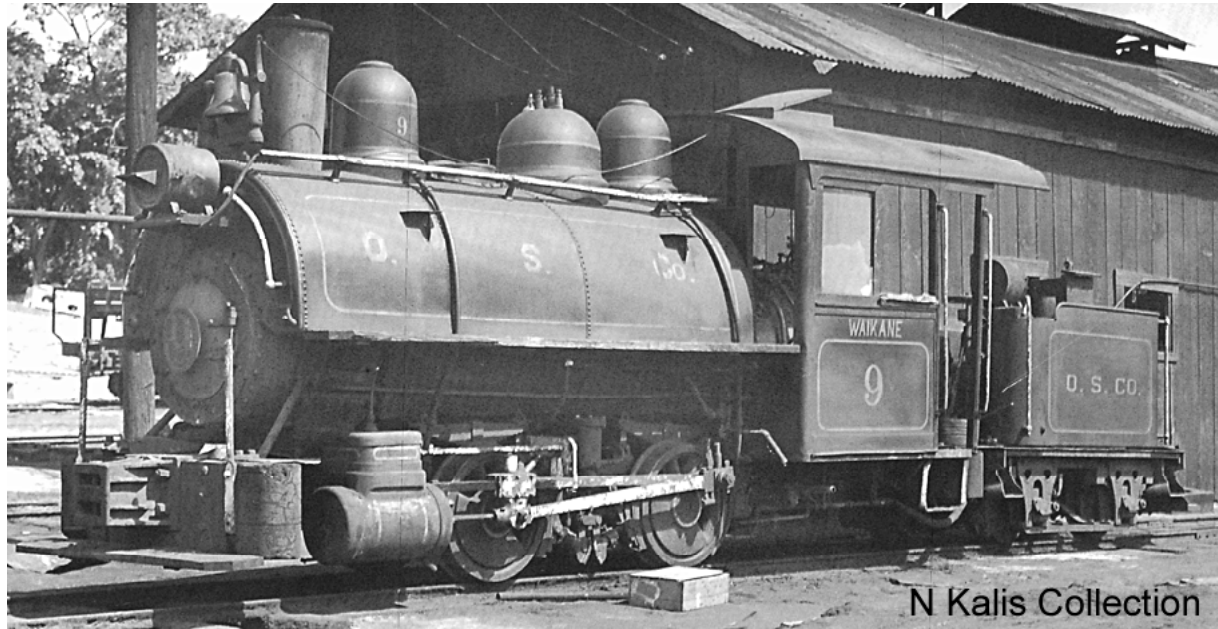




Oahu Sugar Company, Waikane Hawaii Nicholas Kalis, compiler



Oahu Sugar Company No 9 Waikane (0-4-0) and tender, HI. Nicholas Kalis Collection.

History

In 1894, Benjamin F. Dillingham wrote a prospectus which inspired the incorporation of the 10,000-acre Oahu Sugar Company. The company was to be situated on the slopes of the Waianae and Koolau mountains, east of Honolulu. The major obstacle confronting the young company was assuring a water supply to this arid land mostly covered with rocks, lantana and guava. After exhaustive studies of water resources, the Oahu Sugar Company was established in what was once a village called Aualii. Oahu Sugar Company first drilled for water and later constructed ditches to bring water down from the mountains. Eventually, Aualii became known as Waipahu, or, "gushing water" in Hawaiian. In 1899, OSC first harvested sugar cane. Oahu Sugar Co. expanded, reaching nearly 20 square miles. Ninety-four percent of the land used for cane was leased, usually for a term of fifty years, from various estates. The remaining land was fee simple. The major lessors were: Ii Estate; Oahu Railway and Land Co.; Bishop, Robinson and Campbell Estates.

Organizational Structure

AmFac and its predecessor, H. Hackfeld & Co., have served as factors for Oahu Sugar Co. since its inception. H. Hackfeld maintained branch offices in New York City and in San Francisco. The Company's managers from 1897-1940 were: A. Ahrens (1897-1904); E.K. Bull (1904-1919); J.B. Thomson (1919-1923); E.W. Greene (1923-1937); and Hand L'Orange (1937-1956).

Plantation Life

Skilled employees at Oahu Sugar Co. came primarily from Germany. As typical of plantations during this time period, OSC faced a shortage of unskilled laborers with the exception of a small number of Hawaiian workers. Most laborers came from the Philippines, Japan, China, Portugal, and Norway. Each employee received a house free of charge, complete with firewood, fuel, and water for domestic purposes. By the 1930s, garbage collection, street cleaning and sewage disposal were provided. The plantation store sold produce and retail goods to employees at cost. Other store buildings were rented to tenants of various nationalities to give employees a wide choice in the selection of goods.

OSC provided clubhouses, athletic fields, and playgrounds. Baseball was a favorite past time and OSC's team maintained an outstanding record in plantation league tournaments. The Company donated labor and materials to local schools. In 1920, a hospital was built and the services of a resident physician were provided free of charge to unskilled employees. There was a moderate charge to skilled employees and "outsiders", people not employed with OSC, who sought medical assistance. By 1925, the plantation population ranged between 9,500 and 10,000 people. With some 2,850 names on the payroll, an estimated three quarters of Waipahu residents earned a living connected to sugar production. Most work performed at OSC was done on the "contract" or piecework system. Cutting and piling cane was paid for by the ton; plowing and planting was by the acre; irrigation, cultivation, and general care of the fields was based on crop yield.



Milestones

Completing the Waiahole Tunnel through the Koolau Range, was a major Company achievement. In 1911, J.B. Lippincott proposed to OSC's Board the establishment of the Waiahole Water Company. Proposal accepted,

H.K. Bishop was appointed Chief Engineer of the project. The Waiahole Water Co. proposed collecting water from windward Oahu by means of tunnels, ditches, and pipes running to the leeward side. Construction, begun in 1911, was completed about 1916. It provided a three-mile tunnel and pumping plants with a capacity of 100 million gallons of water a day.

Right: Oahu Sugar Company stock certificate. Nicholas Kalis Collection

In 1907, OSC was the first sugar company in the world to install a 12 roller mill. The Company broke a world's record in 1928 by averaging 12.02 tons of commercial sugar per acre. Oahu Sugar Co. continued to deliver high yields in its more than 80 years of producing and manufacturing sugar.

Oahu Sugar Co. transformed an arid cattle range, into a highly productive agricultural area. Though hardships existed, people of all nationalities worked, lived, married and died together. Oahu Sugar Co. contributed not only to the technological advances of the sugar industry, but also to the colorful, multi-cultural and ethnic history of the Islands.

Chronology

- 1849 – German ship captain Heinrich Hackfeld docked his boat in Hawaii
- 1894 - Benjamin F. Dillingham founds Oahu Sugar Company on 20 acres of lands leased from James Campbell in the vicinity of Waipahu; elevation 10 feet Waipio Peninsula to 700 feet at Waiahole Ditch; 94% of land used for cane was leased. H. Hackfeld & Co. served as factors since its inception
- 1897 – Oahu Sugar Company incorporated; its Board of Directors named the sugar mill site to be at Waipahu
- 1897 - First locomotive Waipahu arrived
- 1897 – A. Ahrens becomes first manager
- 1899 – First sugar cane of OSC harvested
- 1900 – Sugar mill appears in photograph with 170-foot high smokestack (originally 225 feet tall); one of two, one was demolished in 1970
- 1900 – Portable Track cars acquired
- 1900 - Second and third locomotives Waikele and Waiawa respectively arrive
- 1908 - Fourth locomotive Waikane arrives in January Fifth Waikakalaua arrives in June

1910 – Field 19 Water Tower Acquired
 1912 – First plantation to install a 12 roller mill
 1913 – Construction started on water tunnels
 1916 - Tunnel brings millions of gallons of water from Windward Coast
 1917 – US Navy requisitioned Ford Island
 1917 – Rearrangement and enlargement of mill yard to provide sufficient track space for increased number of can cars required when operating two mills simultaneously.
 1917 - Sixth locomotive, Koalipea (0-6-0T) arrives
 1920s – New cane cars being added to keep up with increasing sugar production
 Right: Sugar cane weighing station. Uncertain when this type of cane wagon, typical of Hawaiian practice, was introduced. Nicholas Kalis Collection
 1920 – 45-lb rails imported to replace lighter rails
 1920 – Japanese strike in Oahu
 1921 – Oil Tank Car acquired (retired 1951)
 1921 - New shop building constructed “with facilities to overhaul locomotives and steam plows”
 1922 – Waiawa cut-off built
 1924 - Seventh and final locomotive Hoaeae (No. 8) arrives
 1924 – Field Superintendent Hans L'Orange convinced the company to give up several acres of cane field to create the Oahu Sugar Co. Field as a recreation area for Oahu Sugar Co. workers.
 1925 – Railroad signal acquired
 1925 – Population of plantation ranged between 9,500 – 10,000 people with 2,850 on payroll
 1926 – Mud Press Cars [Mud Press is juice sediment often used on the cane fields for fertilizer] and Gregg Flat Cars acquired
 1927 – Grade crossing eliminated at Government Road by which railroad crossed below the road; concrete bridge went over the cut
 1930s – OSC provided garbage collection, street cleaning and sewage disposal
 1931 – 984 cars total and one mile of permanent flume; mules and tractors haul cars over the portable tracks
 1936 – Grab loading method of filling rail car appears in photograph dated that year

1937 – Hans L'Orange becomes manager
 1938 – Weed Burn car acquired
 1939 - Railway reaches 60 miles of three-foot gauge track plus unspecified amount of portable track on which operated 939 plantation cars (860 four-ton cane cars, fifty flat cars, and 29 other cars
 World War II - around Waipahu alone over 2,800 acres commandeered from Oahu Sugar for POW Camp for German prisoners, airport assembly and staging areas for barges, pontoons, and landing craft and bombs and munitions were stored in cane fields and tunnels.
 1944 - (April) Kipapa Airport operational
 1944 – Ammunition trains run
 1946 – Low trestle on Oahu Sugar Company tracks appears in photograph of that year
 1946 – Oahu Sugar began using large cane trucks
 1947 – OR&L abandoned its main line at the end of this year
 1947 - Oahu Sugar Company absorbed Honolulu Plantation Company
 Late 1950 - Railway system eliminated
 1970 - Oahu Sugar acquired much of the land of closed Ewa Plantation
 1994 - Operations ended in anticipation of end in 1996 of agricultural leases



Believed to be Oahu Sugar weigh Station

Bibliography

Honouliuli Gulch and Associated Sites, Draft Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, May 2014.

Sugar Trains Pictorial Glenwood Publishers, 1975, Jesse C. Conde.

The Oahu Sugar Cane Plantation, Waipahu; John Wesley Coulter, in *Economic Geography*, 9:1 (Jan., 1933), pp. 60-71.

Hawaiian Railway Album WWII Photographs, Volume 3 – Plantation Railways on Oahu, The Railroad Press, 2007, Gale E Treiber

Editor's note: Images in this note supplied by N Kalis.



Aerial view, OSCO, 1966