

FINDING AID

for

AHUKINI HARBOR DEVELOPMENT

KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MS 46 – I

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Ahukini Harbor Development

2 folders

Abstract

This lease is a copy of the original signed by Lihue Plantation Company, providing for the development of Ahukini Landing into a harbor with full services – wharf, wharf shed, breakwater, with berthing space, and allows for a railway and its supporting structures, to facilitate the movement of goods and persons using the facility. The 50-year lease was signed on July 20, 1920 by Lyman H. Bigelow, the Chairman of the Board of Harbor Commissioners; Allen T. Bottomley, President and S.M. Lowrey, Treasurer of Lihue Plantation Company, and approved by C. J. McCarthy, Governor, Territory of Hawaii.

Historical Background

The Hawaiian Islands were used as a supply center for ships traveling the Pacific Ocean after Captain Cook’s discovery of the islands. Increased use over the next few decades due to the increase in the growth of the sugar industry: improvements in crop production, irrigation, use of steam engines, and the reciprocity treaty with the United States in 1875 made it evident that the “landings” used for transportation of goods were becoming inadequate. With more vessels visiting the island, there were more mishaps and shipwrecks. As some landings proved to be inadequate and dangerous, many were abandoned, increasing the use of the remaining few.

The U.S .Army Corps of Engineers surveyed facilities on Kaua’i beginning in 1909 and continuing well into 1910. The result was “the only harbors worthy of more careful study were Nawiliwili, Koloa and Hanapepe”*. Ahukini was not listed in the report, even though it was the first to be used as a deep-water port, and by 1898, the Lihue Plantation Company was using both Ahukini and Hanamaulu for shipping.

Ahukini Harbor was chosen by Lihue Plantation, and with the signing of this document, construction by the Ahukini Railroad Company (formed by Lihue Plantation Company to fulfill this need) supplied the site with a breakwater, concrete reinforced wharf, sugar warehouse, railhead with supporting structures.

The development of Port Allen and Nawiliwili helped Kaua’i to fulfill the shipping requirements for the expanding sugar industry. These three major ports handled shipments of 233,939 tons in 1927, rising to 384,511 tons by 1931.

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MS 46-I Ahukini Harbor, p. 3

Scope and Content

The lease is comprised of eight legal-sized sheets. The original copies are encased in Mylar. A second folder holds a photocopy for research use.

There are 20 articles.

Articles no. 1-4 cover the responsibilities of Lihue Plantation Company in constructing the wharf and its supporting structures according to plans already developed and approved by the Board of Harbor Commissioners. No. 5 specifies that maintenance will be provided by Lihue Plantation.

Article 6 insures that proper accounts will be kept, and nos. 7-8 allows for the collection of fees by Lihue Plantation Company. Nine insures that passengers will pass without charge, and that berthing of ships carrying passengers will be allowed.

Access to the wharf will be provided by a road, to be constructed by Lihue Plantation, and a railway, given access across Plantation lands, is addressed in articles 10 & 11.

Article 12 allows the Territory of Hawaii, with proper notification, to purchase the harbor from Lihue Plantation prior to the end of the 50-year lease for a reasonable sum. Lihue Plantation is authorized to make rules and regulations for use for the facility, inasmuch as they conform to general rules for wharves, is outlined in article 13.

The next group of articles: 14-17 outline the methods of revoking the lease due to failure to fill obligations, or if desired by Lihue Plantation, and provides for payment if this occurs; and for extending the length of the lease. Article 18 allows the Territory to obtain access to the wharf area across Lihue Plantation holdings upon expiration of the lease.

Article 19 states the lease shall run for 50 years, and in no. 20 that the lease cannot be transferred.

*Information on the historical landings on Kaua'i can be found in Ports of Kaua'i - a thesis submitted to the graduate school of the University of Hawaii...degree of Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies, June 1964 by Thomas Anthony Cajski. In addition, maps and other items on the Ahukini Wharf are available at the Library of the Kaua'i Historical Society.