
Paniolo Legends

Hawaii's cowboy culture dates back two centuries and is as alive today as ever, thanks to paniolo on all islands ~ living links to this unique culture and to grassroots values...Democratic values.



In 1908 Ikua Purdy, our own Hawaiian Cowboy Hall of Fame legend, lassoed his steer in 56 seconds, winning the world's rodeo steer roping championship. Unlike his competitors, he wore Spanish vaquero inspired chaps, rode a borrowed horse, and his hat sported a flower lei. His prowess with the *kaula ili*, or rawhide lariat, was well known here in the islands, but in Cheyenne, Wyoming, before 30,000 spectators, it stunned the competition – who had never seen anything like it.

Purdy continued working another three decades, mostly as foreman on Maui's Ulupalakua Ranch. He and his wife, Keala, had 12 children. This cowboy legend died on July 4, 1945 and is buried at Ulupalakua. He left behind a large Hawaiian family, many still involved in ranching, and remains an important part of the foundation of grassroots Democracy in Hawaii – in which the welfare of the majority of citizens and residents is the overarching concern, over the interests of a special few.

Hawaii's cowboy tradition goes back to 1793, when King Kamehameha I placed a *kapu* on the slaughter of cows in an attempt to spur the native cattle industry. In 1804 the first horses were brought to Hawaii. The word for a Hawaiian cowboy, *paniolo*, is an adaptation of *español*, used to describe Spanish vaqueros – who first taught islanders to ride and rope.

Hawaiian paniolo use tools and techniques not seen since the days of the Spanish in Mexico and colonial California. Hawaiian craftsmen adapted the vaqueros' tools, enlarging the saddlehorn, for example, to accommodate more rope – the better to lasso wild longhorns. Hawaiian saddles are designed to dry out fast; until the 1940s paniolo round up cattle and drove them to harbors, where they would be hoisted onto a ship's cargo deck by rope slings.

Another living legend, Clyde (Kindy) Sproat, a slack-key pioneer, shares a slice of history singing the paniolo song "Waiomina". It tells of Purdy and the other two Hawaiian cowboys who went to Cheyenne and won praise and respect for Hawaii. Cowboys also play ukuleles and uphold a unique tradition, wearing leis on their hatbands woven out of feathers, shells or flowers – gathered from the land on which they worked.

Fifty years ago Makawao was still a paniolo town with horses tied to hitching posts, and cowboy supplies available: kerosene, horseshoes, saddles and other staples. Take a peek around this charming town today and find cowboy goods and cowboy art...and remember the rich heritage that Purdy and other paniolos bequeathed to our island culture.

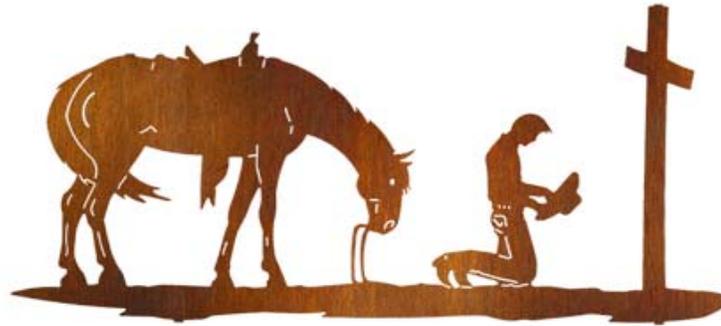
Makawao's annual parade and rodeo celebrates the paniolo of Hawaii and their timeless traditions and values. From its start, the local Democratic Party included paniolo because it has always had a big tent, welcoming people from all walks of life. The only requirement is that you love others, value community, and share our ideals. Today, the Democratic Party of Maui continues to be a place where people can unite. Paniolo still remove their hats at the mention of their names, and today we remove our hat in appreciation and celebration of Hawaii's cowboys. They remind us of values that work and have generational meaning, values to celebrate – Paniolo values, island values, Democratic values.

www.mauidemocrats.org

"I'm not a member of any organized political party," humorist and cowboy Will Rogers once said. "I'm a Democrat."

A Cowboy's Prayer

Author Unknown



**I'm not too good at prayin', Lord
You may not know me well.
I haven't been inside a church,
In quite a long, long spell.**

**But You may still have seen me,
Here on this dusty trail,
Herdin' after cattle
Through the mud and rain and hail.**

**And as I ride I give you thanks
For the miracles I see ~
The clear blue sky, the vistas grand,
That reach clear out to sea.**

**I give thanks for soft green grass
That feeds the cattle we tend;
It gives my bed some comfort
When the day is at an end.**

**With each hill and valley,
Along each dusty mile,
I find some beauty You created
And cannot help but smile.**

**Lord, help me live a truer life
As I ride the country hills
Tending all Your creatures
And taking all my spills.**

**I pray that I might live my life
In ways that bring You joy.
But if I slip up now and then,
Forgive this poor cowboy.**

**I'm far from being a preacher, Lord,
But I offer my humble prayer
That love and kindness be my guide
As I'm ridin' here and there.**

CELEBRATING PANIOLO VALUES

~

THE MAUI DEMOCRATIC PARTY