



Proclamation

The paniolo, or the cowboys of Hawai‘i, date back to 1792, when British Captain George Vancouver brought cattle to our islands as gifts for King Kamehameha I. The first horses didn’t arrive until 1803. In 1832, King Kamehameha III invited cowboys and cattlemen from Mexico to teach the Hawaiians how to raise cattle and ride horses. These vaqueros became the first paniolo.

The paniolos represent a diverse variety of ethnicities including Native Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Russian and Portuguese.

Paniolos have become the “keepers of the language,” as one of the few groups who never stopped speaking the Native Hawaiian language. As a result, paniolos help contribute to the restoration and maintenance of Native Hawaiian traditions and culture.

Paniolos still work in Hawai‘i on ranches, such as the Parker Ranch on the Big Island. Founded in 1847, it is the second largest private ranch under single ownership in the United States and one of the country’s oldest and largest cattle ranches.

In 1908, Hawai‘i’s most famous paniolo, Ikua Purdy, competed in the Frontier Days World Championship in Wyoming. At the time, few people knew that Hawai‘i had cattle or the paniolo cowboys. Ikua won the weeklong competition. Two other paniolos, Archie Ka‘au‘a and Jack Low, won third and fourth place, stunning everyone and earning respect of cowboys from all over the United States and Europe.

Since its establishment in 1998, the Paniolo Preservation Society remains dedicated to preserving the proud paniolo tradition, artifacts and heritage as an important part of the history of Hawai‘i and the American West.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and I, JAMES R. “DUKE” AIONA Jr., Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, do hereby proclaim 2008 as the

YEAR OF THE PANIOLO

in Hawai‘i, and encourage the people of Hawai‘i to become educated and help keep the paniolo culture and traditions alive.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai‘i, this seventh day of November 2007.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai‘i

James R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai‘i