

# Haleakala Ranch

## celebrating 125 years

Exhibit documents the history of a 'community institution'

By CHRIS SUGIDONO, Staff Writer

**H**aleakala Ranch Co., with its origins dating back to the Hawaiian monarchy, will celebrate its 125th anniversary with an exhibit that includes hand-woven rawhide lariats and traditional boots worn by its original Spanish-trained "panio-k" cowboys.

"I haven't seen it completed yet, as it's still a work in progress," said ranch President Don Young in a phone interview last week. "But I believe it's going to be a combination of historical artifacts, photo boards and displays that will characterize the feel of some of the ranch property."

"I'm anxious to see it, and I'm sure it will be well done."

The exhibit opens today in the History Room of the Main House at the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center in Makawao. Hours are the same as the arts center, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is free.

Ranch officials hope to keep it open for at least a year, and "possibly longer," said Teri Freitas Gorman, who assists the ranch with community relations.

"It's been well over a year's worth of work to pull all of this information together," she said. "Being from Maui and being aware of the ranch ... it wasn't until I got involved and helped gather everything that I fully understood the commitment the family and ranch has had to the community. I really have a newfound appreciation of what it takes to run a ranch of that magnitude."

"Those scenic routes up to Haleakala wouldn't exist without the ranch's commitment to caring for the land," she said.

Along with old cowboy boots and rawhides, Gorman said, the saddle used by Samuel A. Baldwin — one of the founders of the ranch along with his brother, Harry A. Baldwin — will be on display, as well as a rain gauge more than 100 years old. She said the exhibit also will include many photographs and a timeline that tells the ranch's history.

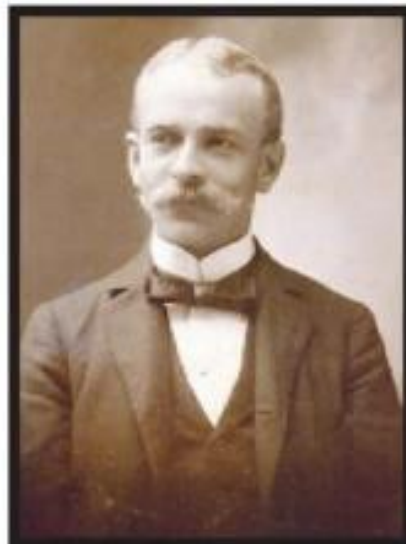
On Sept. 1, 1888, Haleakala Ranch was incorporated in the Kingdom of Hawaii under the reign of King David Kalakaua, according to a news release by the ranch.

Henry Perrine Baldwin, co-founder of Alexander & Baldwin, was one of its original shareholders in 1890 and bought 33,817 acres that included Haleakala Crater. Six years later, the ranch opened Maui's first local dairy, followed by hiring its first ranch manager, Louis von Tempelky, who started polo on the island in 1900.

Over the next decade, the ranch planted



Ranch hands relax on the steps of a residence in the early 1900s at Haleakala Ranch

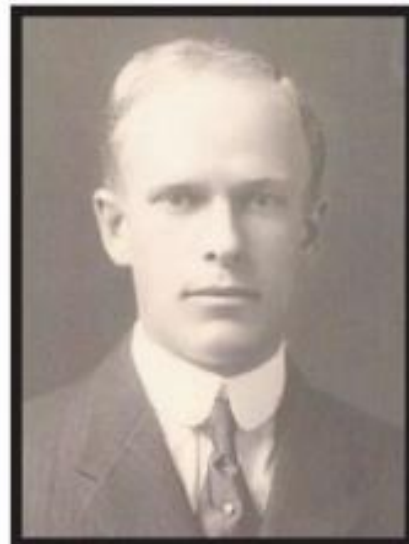


HARRY A. BALDWIN

10,000 trees and voluntarily fenced 7,000 acres as "forest reserve to preserve rainfall patterns and protect watersheds," the release said. It also said the ranch and Ralph Hosmer, known as the state's first territorial forester, "installed experimental timber tree plantings" that can still be found at Hosmer Grove.

As the ranch moved into the 20th century, Harry Baldwin became the ranch's first president, while his brother, Samuel, succeeded von Tempelky as ranch manager. The two sons of Henry Perrine Baldwin quickly began to grow pineapple for then-California Packing Corp. — now, Del Monte Foods — and consolidated their ownership in 1925.

According to Gorman, the brothers are "credited with building the ranch into the enduring community institution it is today."



SAMUEL A. BALDWIN

Their efforts proved to be most evident two years later, when the Territory of Hawaii acquired Haleakala Crater from the ranch, in order to create Haleakala National Park.

"Few people realize the ranch once owned more than 50 percent of the land that is now the national park," Young said of the ranch that received land at Kamaole and Kihel in exchange for the crater. "But the family always supported the creation of the national park. They always understood the special nature of Haleakala."

As one of their final acts, the brothers decided to spin pineapple operations to Maui Pineapple Co., which later became a subsidiary of Maui Land & Pineapple Co. before shutting down in 2009.

After their deaths in the 1940s and '50s, the  
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Baldwin brothers were succeeded by other managers, and dairy operations separated from the ranch.

By the 1970s, the ranch suffered from extended drought conditions and loss of cattle. During that time, Samuel Baldwin's son, Manduke, who became ranch president in 1968 after J. Walter Cameron, was succeeded by his son, Peter D. Baldwin.

The latest Baldwin would preside over the ranch for nearly 25 years before retiring and handing it to the first person outside the Baldwin family: Willard "Buzz" Stuka.

In his time, Stuka led the ranch to become a member of Maui Cattle Co. LLC and joined the Leeward Watershed Partnership to "help protect 43,000 acres of land from Makawao through Ulupalakua to Kaupo," the release said.

His time would be short, though, as Young, another Baldwin family outsider, would take over in 2006.

With more than 160 descendants on the Baldwin family tree, one member remains employed by the ranch: Scott McKay.

The ranch hand and great-grandson of Samuel Baldwin grew up in Olinda, next door to the ranch.

"I definitely grew up on the ranch," McKay said. "It's always been a pleasure and privilege of mine to go up there as a kid."

McKay, who was a landscaper before joining the ranch four years ago, said for a time he "always wanted to work for the ranch."

"When an opportunity came, I was fortunate to get a job that opened up," he said. "There's no freebies just for being family; you got to earn it."

Riding horses and herding cattle that span over five generations, McKay said he was thankful to be considered a cowboy at the ranch.

"Walking through the stables (that are) about 100 years old — it's pretty cool to think about all the guys that have been here before you and all their hard work is why it's still here," he said. "I consider it an honor to work for Haleakala Ranch."

Unlike McKay, the native Canadian Young was far from family and remembers being offered the position as president following Stuka's retirement.

"They were looking for someone to succeed him, and I appeared to be a fit," he said. "It was actually very similar to the core values the (Baldwin) family has as Maui Land & Pine (his previous employer) has. I found it rather . . . familiar, so the transition was relatively easy."

Young, however, specialized in finance and general management, and remembers the daily operations of his new job to be different.

"I had no ranching background," he said. "But luckily they had Scott (Meidell, general manager) and Greg (Friel, vice president of livestock) here because they had the ranching expertise."



A cowboy ropes a calf for branding around the turn of the century at Haleakala Ranch. The ranch is celebrating its 125th anniversary with a historical exhibit that opens today in the History Room of the Main House at the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center in Makawao. Admission is free, and the exhibit is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Meidell, who worked at Maui Land & Pineapple Co. for 15 years as a forestry technician before joining the ranch, spent 11 of those years at the Puu Kukui Watershed, where he came in contact with the ranch.

Working with the Nature Conservancy of Hawaii, the Oahu native said he was "somewhat familiar" with the history of the ranch, but "very cognizant" of its efforts toward forest protection, such as its work with the watershed.

"Since 1983, when the ranch signed a conservation easement of more than 5,200 acres of rather pristine rainforest . . . they have conveyed management rights and responsibilities to an organization with the commitment and expertise to do that type of work," he said of the ranch's collaboration with the conservatory over the watershed. "Since that time, the conservatory has done a tremendous job, which in turn has had a good overall impact on the watershed."

"To this day, the ranch continues to look for those types of initiatives."

When Meidell was approached about joining the ranch, he said it was already "well-known within the nature community."

"It was very attractive to me because that's how things are geared in my heart," he said of the job opening. "It was a natural progression (for me) to come to the ranch, and it's been a very rich opportunity."

The ranch's latest efforts in land conservation include battling invasive species such as Axis deer, gorse and Madagascan fireweed — all of which have compounded a severe drought that Maui has endured for the last seven years, Meidell said.

However, "in our 125-year history, this is certainly not the first or worst drought we've endured," he said. "In the annals of our history, I'm sure the Great Depression and other difficult times probably seemed pretty daunting to those sitting in these chairs."

In response to the various issues and steady decrease in ranch livestock, Young has introduced biological control measures to combat the invasive species, and has added other business ventures to produce additional revenue. These include licenses with tourism companies like Skyline Eco Adventures and land leases to agricultural businesses.

"Despite the challenges, I think we're confident that the ranch will not only be here, but continue to be successful — and ranching and livestock will very much be a part of that," Young said. "The outlook is extremely positive, and we're excited to continue for the next 125 years."

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