

Paniolo Daughter

Contributed by Admin
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Coming in the fall of 2010. One in a series of Molokai stories. Molokai pule-oo [of powerful prayer].

By 1850 white Europeans and Americans had wrested large acreages from native Hawaiians-some by marriage, some by subterfuge, some by virtual theft. And they blanketed those rolling acres with sugar cane, a plant they found growing upon their arrival. What they did not find was a ready supply of labor to do the terribly hot, hard and dirty work in the cane fields.

The native population, repeatedly scourged by the white man's diseases and abuse, had long ago found other more appealing employment as sailors and cowboys. The plantation owners turned to Asian labor recruited from among the displaced refugees of China's civil wars.

Most of these 'sojourners' as they were carefully called-suggesting that they would go back where they came from after their 'sojourn' among their betters--dutifully completed their minimal three year contract and returned to China. But a great many opted for the opportunities they saw in their new surroundings.

And this is the story of one of those adventurers left to his own resources at age 13, who became a paniolo, a cowboy, married into a prominent Hawaiian family and had seven children all of whom grew up to accomplish the American Dream--all the while leaving a succession of puzzling mysteries for his o-ha-na to unravel after his death.