

HONOLULU PARK COMMISSION
1896-1913

Act 53, Session Laws 1896, called for the Kapiolani Park Association to transfer the control and management of Kapiolani Park along with its leases to the Honolulu Park Commission which was specifically created for this purpose. The Commission was composed of six members: Cecil Brown, E. S. Cunha, and William Irwin were elected by the Kapiolani Park Association to represent it while Paul Isenberg Jr., Lorrin A. Thurston, and Frank Hustace were appointed by Sanford Dole, President of the Republic of Hawaii. William Irwin was elected chairman at the first meeting held on November 4, 1896.

In 1904, Governor Robert Carter reorganized the membership of the Commission and also included the Superintendent of Public Works as an ex-officio member in compliance with the Appropriation Bill of 1901, which allotted \$12,000 to the Commission. The new Commissioners elected Archibald S. Cleghorn, former president of the Kapiolani Park Association, as their chairman on February 4, 1904. He passed away 6 years later and was succeeded by William Giffard.

Prior to 1901, the Territorial Legislature had appropriated funds to the Honolulu Park Commission and continued to do so until 1905. These funds were supplemented by private donations and revenue received from selling firewood chopped from park trees and licenses to individuals for cutting grass or gathering algaroba beans.

Territorial appropriations were discontinued in June, 1905, and from July, 1905, Oahu County (later City and County of Honolulu) began to grant subsidies averaging about \$700 a month to the Commission. In July 1906, the Honolulu Board of Supervisors entrusted certain lots in Waikiki known as the Kunst Estate to the Commission for use as a public park subject to the same terms and regulations as governed Kapiolani Park and also passed a resolution appointing the Honolulu Park Commissioners along with its ex-officio member, the Superintendent of Public Works, County Park Commissioners. Although members of the Commission were now County Park Commissioners and the Commission received financial support primarily from the County instead of the Territory, the governor still retained his appointive power over the Honolulu Park Commission.

H. McCullom served as Superintendent of the Park under the Honolulu Park Commission, followed by E. M. Stone in 1900 and Alexander Young in 1902. They lived on the park grounds and were responsible for maintaining and improving the grounds and supervising the Asiatic and later prison labor in this task.

Some of the projects undertaken by the Honolulu Parks Commission, especially in the first decade of the 1900's, were the building of concession and bath houses, deliberating over requests for use of the grounds for baseball, racing and polo and building and expanding a plant nursery.

In 1913, the Territorial Legislature passed Act 163 which transferred control and management of Kapiolani Park from the Honolulu Park Commission to the City and County of Honolulu and repealed laws relating to it.

The minutes and correspondence of the Honolulu Park Commission from 1896 to 1902 are in the Kapiolani Park Association's Minutes and Correspondence book which is filed with that group's records. Materials covering the period from 1912 to 1913 are to be found in Governor Frear's files. The Honolulu Park Commission's records are:

Box
number
C&C4-1

- Folder #1 - Correspondence, 1903-1906
- " #2 - " , 1907-1908
- " #3 - " , 1909-1911
- " #4 - Deed
- " #5 - Minutes, 1903-1906
- " #6 - " , 1907-1911
- " #7 - Public Baths, 1908-1911
- " #8 - Report to the Legislature, 1905
- " #9 - Treasurer's Statements, 1903-1911

See Also: Governor George R. Carter's files - Territorial Departments, Parks.

Governor Walter F. Frear's files - Territorial Departments, Honolulu Park Commission.

Honolulu Park Commission. Report to the 1905 Legislature.

Subject Index - Honolulu Park Commission.