

**RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1851-1941**

INTRODUCTION

The described records of the Department of Public Safety span the years from 1851 to 1941. They consist of logbooks, journals, and other records created or collected by the Warden of Oahu Prison, his predecessors and his staff, pursuant to their statutory functions.

Approximately 37 linear feet of Oahu Prison records in the Archives were reappraised in 1996. Most of these records were received from Oahu Prison in two accessions in 1947 and 1949. 14.61 linear feet in 112 bound volumes were appraised for permanent retention, have been arranged, and are described herein. The remaining records were returned to the Department of Public Safety in 1996 and 1997 or discarded.

Some of the records contain information which is restricted under one or more chapters of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Access to these records may be granted following screening to prevent disclosure of confidential information.

AGENCY HISTORY

The First Act of Kamehameha III, An Act to Organize the Executive Ministry, signed by the King on October 29, 1845, established the position of Minister of the Interior and made him responsible "for the faithful and lawful execution of the duties comprised in the first part of" the Second Act of Kamehameha III, An Act to Organize the Executive Departments of the Hawaiian Islands, signed on April 27, 1846. Among the duties thus assigned to the Minister of the Interior were those in Chapter III "Of Internal Improvements," Article IV "Of Prisons and Houses of Correction" to manage the prisons of the Kingdom. In Part V, Chapter I "Of the Executive Judicial Officers," of the same act, the post of Marshal of the Kingdom was established. The Marshal was made responsible, inter alia, for the safekeeping of all prisoners.

The duties relative to prisons and prisoners of both the Minister of the Interior and the Marshal were promulgated in more detail in the Civil Code of 1859. By Section 206, the Minister of the Interior was made responsible for erecting prisons, jails, etc., and was given authority "to prescribe rules and regulations for their government and discipline." By section 207, the Marshal was made responsible for the safekeeping of all prisoners and for the nomination and appointment of jailers and other prison officials. It is clear from the statute that the Marshal was subordinate to, i.e., "reported to" the Minister of the Interior.

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The overall responsibility for prisons remained with the Minister of the Interior until 1890, when it was transferred by Act 3 to the Attorney General, along with authority over the Marshal. Meanwhile, an intervening supervisory level, the Board of Prison Inspectors, also under the Minister of the Interior, had been created in 1888 to "supervise the discipline and government" of the prisons. The wording of the statute was such that the actual lines of authority among the Minister, the Board and the Marshal weren't clear even when the last named was still under the Minister of the Interior, and those lines became very fuzzy afterwards, because Act 3 left the Board of Prison Inspectors under the Minister of the Interior. The command lines weren't explicitly changed until the Organic Act went into effect in 1900, and the Attorney General was given the "powers and duties of the Minister of the Interior over Prisons, Prisoners and Prison Inspectors." The same act renamed the Marshal as the High Sheriff.

By Act 41 of 1905, a Board of Prison Inspectors was created in each judicial circuit. Each board had the same duties and responsibilities within its circuit as the original board had had throughout Hawaii. Once again, the relationship of the boards both to the Attorney General and to the High Sheriff were not explicitly defined, but in practice, the High Sheriff reported to the board for the First Circuit, the county (deputy) sheriffs reported to the boards in the respective other circuits, and the boards reported to the Governor.

Act 125 of 1931 specifically designated the High Sheriff as the Warden of Oahu Prison. At the same time, Act 129 created the Board of Prisoner Directors, to supersede and assume the duties of the Board of Prison Inspectors of the First Judicial Circuit. In addition, the new board was to supervise the boards of the remaining circuits.

Act 17 of the 2nd Special Session of 1932 explicitly vested the Board of Prison Directors with responsibility for "the entire government, control and supervision of all territorial prisons and prison camps." Concurrently, it created the position of Warden of Oahu Prison and removed responsibility for prison management from the High Sheriff.

Act 203 of 1939 created the Department of Institutions to manage various territorial facilities, including Oahu Prison. The boards of prison inspectors and the Board of Prison Directors were disestablished and the new department assumed responsibility for their functions.

Act 1 of the 1st Special Session, 1959, the Statehood Reorganization Act, disestablished the Department of Institutions and assigned responsibility for its functions to various newly created state departments. Responsibility for correctional institutions was assigned to the Department of Social Services. Shortly thereafter, in about 1961, Oahu Prison was renamed Hawaii

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State Prison. In 1980 it was given its current name, Oahu Community Correctional Center.

Act 338 of 1987 created the Department of Corrections, which assumed responsibility for the state prison system. However, this department was very short-lived. By Act 211 of 1989, which went into effect July 1, 1990, the Department of Corrections was disbanded and most of its functions, including managing the prisons and correctional centers, passed to the new Department of Public Safety.

Sources: Hawaii Statute Laws, 1845-46
The Civil Code of the Hawaiian Islands, 1859
Session Laws, 1888
The Civil Laws of the Hawaiian Islands, 1897
The Organic Act, 1900
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1905
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1931
Session Laws of Hawaii, 2nd Special Session, 1932
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1939
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1st Special Session, 1959
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1987
Session Laws of Hawaii, 1989
Records of the Boards of Prison Inspectors
Records of the Department of Institutions
Annual Reports of the Department of Institutions
Annual Reports of the Department of Social Services

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The described records of the Department of Public Safety document the day-to-day operations of prisons in Hawaii from 1851 to 1941. The form and content of most of these records have been prescribed by law since promulgation of the Civil Code of the Hawaiian Islands in 1859. Section 208 required that the Marshal "cause to be kept, in every prison, a journal, in which shall be regularly entered the reception, discharge, death, pardon, or escape of any prisoners; and also all punishments that are inflicted for a breach of prison discipline, as they occur, and all other occurrences of note that concern the state of the prison." Section 209 required that the "sex, age, height and personal description" of prisoners be entered into the journal. The statutory requirement for the Marshal and his successors, including the High Sheriff of the Territory and the Warden of Oahu Prison, to maintain a journal has remained in effect since 1859. Even the specific information to be recorded has remained relatively constant. The only records described herein which were not created because of a legal requirement are the minutes kept by the Prisoners' Executive Committee.

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The records have been divided into four series: Series 297, Minutes of the Executive Committee; Series 298, Records of Prisoners Received and Discharged; Series 299, Records of Prisoners' Descriptions; and Series 310, Daily Record.

The most significant decision taken concerning the records received from Oahu Prison was to reappraise them using modern archival criteria. The reappraisal identified 21 series of records, of which 17 series, totalling approximately 23 linear feet did not meet criteria for permanent retention. These records were offered to the Department of Public Safety, the offer was accepted, and the records were transferred to the Department in several increments. Processing of the remaining records was limited to cleaning and tying weakened volumes with twill tape.

The strengths of these records are their long and relatively continuous documentation of the prison management function, and their role as a source of voluminous raw data for historical and sociological research. The only weaknesses are the short time span covered by the minutes of the Executive Committee and a ten-year gap (1895-1904) in the Records of Prisoners Descriptions.

For related material, see:

The records of the **Boards of Prison Inspectors** and of the **Department of Institutions** for information which complements the contents of records described in this finding aid.

The records of **Quasi-Judicial Executive Actions** for documentation of the process of administration of paroles and pardons of prisoners, commutations of sentences, etc.

The Subject files of the **Department of the Interior**, the records of the **Attorney General**, including the **Police Records** and the records of the several **governors** for correspondence, memoranda and other records dealing with prisons and prisoners generally.

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SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

- 297 **MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** 1917-1919. 2 volumes, 0.13 linear feet.

Arranged chronologically.

Documents meetings of the Prisoners' Executive Committee of Oahu Prison. Created by the committee secretary in carrying out one of the duties of his office. No statutory basis for the committee has been discovered; it was probably provided for by administrative rule or other sub-statutory authority.

Contains material normally found in minutes, such as reading of minutes of previous meeting; summary of debate on agenda items; results of votes; and time adjourned.

The strength of this series is the view it provides of prison life that may be unavailable elsewhere. Its weakness is that it covers a very short period of time.

Access is unrestricted.

- 298 **RECORDS OF PRISONERS RECEIVED AND DISCHARGED.** 1863-1916. 24 volumes, parts of 3 other volumes and 6 index volumes, 3.82 linear feet.

Arranged chronologically.

Created by employees of Oahu Jail/Prison or other sub-units of the prison system to record information about prisoners received and discharged each month.

Contains data on individual prisoners, which the prisons were required by law to record, including name, race, offense, date of conviction, date received, date released, reason released, days served, fines and costs.

The strengths of this series are the basis it provides for sociological research into such things as the ethnic makeup of the prison population, the kinds of offenses of which prisoners had been convicted, etc., and the long timespan covered by the records.

The information in this series complements the information in Series 299, Records of Prisoners' Descriptions.

Access is unrestricted.

- 299 **RECORDS OF PRISONERS' DESCRIPTIONS.** 1859-1915. 6 volumes and part of another, 0.91 linear feet.

Arranged chronologically.

Created by employees of Oahu Jail/Prison or Hilo Jail to record information about the physical appearance of prisoners, mostly in pre-printed columnar format.

Contains data on individual prisoners, which the prisons were required by law to record, including name, height, hair color, eye color, age, distinguishing marks and scars, residence, offense, whether or not married, occupation, and place of birth. One volume contains photographs.

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The strengths of this series are the basis it provides for research into such things as the social background of the prison population, the kinds of offenses of which prisoners had been convicted, etc., and the long timespan covered by the records.

The information in this series complements the information in Series 298, Records of Prisoners Received and Discharged. Access is unrestricted.

310 DAILY RECORD. 1851-1854; 1858-1860; 1862-1941. 74 volumes, 9.75 linear feet.

Arranged chronologically by beginning date of volume; there is some overlap of dates between volumes.

Created under at least eight different names by supervisory employees of the Fort, Oahu Jail/Prison, or sub-units of the jail/prison system to fulfill the statutory requirement to record "occurrences of note." Consists of daily summaries of more detailed information recorded by lower-level employees such as guards on post. Format for recording information varied over the years. Provides an overview of daily prison operations.

Content underwent initial evolution, but soon became fairly constant. Each day's record eventually came to contain a tabular statistical summary of the prison population, including data on ethnicity, prisoners sick, and reasons for confinement; as well as a record of significant events such as new confinements, releases, escapes, captures, pardons, executions, incidents of misconduct and consequences.

The strengths of this series are its statistics on the prison population, the insight it provides into the types of problems encountered in prison operations and the long timespan covered by the records. There are no records for 1861.

The information in this series is supplemented by the detailed information about individual prisoners in Series 298, Records of Prisoners Received and Discharged, and Series 299, Records of Prisoners' Descriptions.

Records 80 years old or less may contain information which is restricted under one or more chapters of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. Access to these records may be granted following screening by an archivist to insure that confidential information is not disclosed. Access to records more than 80 years old is unrestricted (HRS §94-7).

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RECORDS CONTAINER LIST

<u>SER</u> <u>NO.</u>	<u>VOL</u> <u>NO.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
297		MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
	1	[Minutes, January 2, 1917-July 25, 1918]
	2	[Minutes, August 1, 1918-February 8, 1919]
298		RECORDS OF PRISONERS RECEIVED AND DISCHARGED
	1	[Records of Prisoners Received, 1863-1875]
	1A	[Records of Prisoners Received from Courts on Oahu, January 1, 1864-October 10, 1872]
	1B	Oahu Prison [January 3, 1870-December 18, 1880]
	2	<u>See 299 vol 3</u>
	3	[Oahu Prison Record Book, January 3, 1881-January 15, 1885]
	4	Book, Committed [January 21, 1885-August 11, 1893]
	4A	Commutation Book [Hilo Jail, November 12, 1889- March 22, 1894]
	4B	[Records of Prisoners Received and Discharged and Prisoners Accounts, January 1898-December, 1899]
	4I	[Index to 298 vol 4]
	5	No. 1 Receiving Book [July 28, 1890-February 23, 1900]
	5I	[Index to 298 vol 5]
	6	No. 2 Received Book [June 19, 1892-January 25, 1904]
	6I	[Index to 298 vol 6]
	7	<u>See 310 vol 30</u>
	8	<u>See 310 vol 32</u>
	9	Committed Book "A" [November 22, 1899-January 22, 1903; from unknown sub-unit of prison system]
	10	Statistics Book - Oahu Prison [January, 1900- August, 1901]
	11	[Prison Register, January, 1901-September, 1902; from Wailuku Prison; file folder]
	12	[Oahu Prison Receiving Book, April 15, 1901- October 21, 1907]
	13	[Statistics Book, Oahu Prison, January 1902- February, 1905]
	14	Committed Book "B" [August 31, 1902-June 26, 1909; from unknown sub-unit of prison system]
	15	No. 3 Receiving Book [January 25, 1904-May 25, 1905; pages 1-9 are lacking]
	15I	[Index to 298 vol 15]
298	16	Statistics Book - Oahu Prison [January, 1905- January , 1907]

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<u>SER NO.</u>	<u>VOL NO.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
298		RECORDS OF PRISONERS RECEIVED AND DISCHARGED
	17	No. 4 Receiving Book [May 31, 1905-December 29, 1908]
	17I	[Index to 298 vol 17]
	18	[Statistics Book, Oahu Prison, January, 1907-December, 1908]
	19	[Statistics Book, Oahu Prison, January, 1909-April, 1910]
	20	Statistics Book - Oahu Prison] January, 1911-January, 1913]
	21	[Description Book, Hilo, 1913-1915; volume includes 299 vol 5]
	22	Receiving Book [1915-1915; from Volcano Road Jail]
	23	Statistics Book - Oahu Prison [January, 1913-December, 1916]
	24	[Index to unidentified R.B.] [Received Book]
299		RECORDS OF PRISONERS' DESCRIPTIONS
	1	Records [August 6, 1859-March 20, 1872]
	2	Oahu Prison Description Book [April 1, 1872-April 10, 1887]
	2A	[Oahu Prison Description Book, 1887-1889]
	3	Commutation Book Hawaii Prison 1874- [June 27, 1874-September 15, 1894; includes 298 vol 2]
	3A	[Description Book, 1898-1904]
	4	Description Book [July 11, 1905-May 27, 1915; from Hilo Jail; includes photos]
	5	[See 298 vol 21]
310		DAILY RECORD
	1	Seamen's Shipping Book [September 15, 1851-August 30, 1852; also contains information about ships' deserters, 1857-1859]
	2	Honolulu Fort [November 6, 1852-August 8, 1853; in Hawaiian]
	3	[Daily Record, August 9, 1853-November 10, 1854; in Hawaiian]
	4	Journal [March 25, 1858-October 23, 1859]
	5	Journal [October 24, 1859-December 31, 1860]
	6	Journal [January 1, 1862-November 30, 1862]
	7	Journal [December 1, 1862-March 31, 1865]
	8	Prison Record [April 1, 1865-February 15, 1868]
	9	[Daily Record, April 1, 1868-October 31, 1870]
	10	Prison Record [November 1, 1870-December 31, 1873]
	11	Journal [January 1, 1874-December 31, 1875]
310	12	[Native Record, January 1, 1874-December 19, 1875; in Hawaiian]

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SER NO.	VOL NO.	TITLE
310		DAILY RECORD
	13	Record Book, Daily [January 1, 1876-January 29, 1878]
	14	[Native Record, January 1, 1876-March 31, 1878; in Hawaiian]
	15	Journal, Oahu Prison [January 1, 1878-December 31, 1879]
	16	[Native Record, April 1, 1878-June 30, 1880; in Hawaiian]
310	17	Oahu Prison Journal [January 1, 1880-December 31, 1881]
	18	[Daily Record, July 1, 1880-August 31, 1882; in Hawaiian]
	19	Oahu Prison Journal [January 1, 1882-February 20, 1884]
	20	[Daily Record, September 1, 1882-October 5, 1884; in Hawaiian]
	21	[Daily Record, February 21, 1884-March 31, 1888]
	22	Journal [April 1, 1888-March 31, 1890]
	23	Day Book [September 24, 1888-July 29, 1889]
	24	[Daily Record, April 1, 1890-December 31, 1890]
	25	Oahu Prison Journal [April 1, 1890-March 31, 1892]
	26	Prison Journal [April 1, 1892-May 12, 1894]
	27	Daily Record [April 1, 1894-February 4, 1896]
	28	Prison Records [April 1, 1894-October 31, 1896; from Hilo and Hamakua Road Jail]
	29	Daily Record [January 1, 1896-December 15, 1897]
	30	[Daily Record Book, November 1, 1896-June 30, 1899; from Hilo and Hamakua Road Jail; includes 298 vol 7]
	31	Daily Record [December 16, 1897-December 31, 1899]
	32	Record [July 1, 1899-March 23, 1902; from Hilo and Hamakua Road Jail; includes 298 vol 8]
	33	Daily Record [January 1, 1900-August 11, 1901]
	34	Daily Record [August 12, 1900-July 31, 1902]
	35	[Daily Record, August 1, 1902-July 24, 1903]
	36	Daily Record [July 25, 1903-July 16, 1904]
	37	Daily Record [July 17, 1904-July 11, 1905]
	38	Daily Record [July 12, 1905-July 6, 1906]
	39	Daily Record [July 1, 1906-June 30, 1907]
	40	Daily Record [July 1, 1907-June 30, 1908]
	41	Daily Record Oahu Jail [July 1, 1908-June 30, 1909]
	42	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1909-June 30, 1910]
310	43	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1910-June 30, 1911]

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<u>SER NO.</u>	<u>VOL NO.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
310		DAILY RECORD
	44	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1911-June 30, 1912]
	45	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1912-June 30, 1913]
	46	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1913-June 30, 1914]
	47	Daily Record Oahu Prison [July 1, 1914-December 31, 1914]
	48	Daily Record 1915 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1915-December 31, 1915]
	49	Daily Record 1916 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1916-December 31, 1916]
	50	Daily Record 1917 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1917-December 31, 1917]
	51	Daily Record 1918 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1918-December 31, 1918]
	52	Daily Record 1919 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1919-December 31, 1919]
	53	Daily Record 1920 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1920-December 31, 1920]
	54	Daily Record 1921 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1921-December 31, 1921]
	55	Daily Record 1922 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1922-December 31, 1922]
	56	Daily Record 1923 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1923-December 31, 1923]
	57	Daily Record 1924 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1924-December 31, 1924]
	58	Daily Record 1925 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1925-December 31, 1925]
	59	Daily Record 1926 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1926-December 31, 1926]
	60	Daily Record 1927 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1927-December 31, 1927]
	61	Daily Record 1928 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1928-December 31, 1928]
	62	Daily Record 1929 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1929-December 31, 1929]
	63	Daily Record 1930 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1930-December 31, 1930]
	64	Daily Record 1931 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1931-December 31, 1931]
	65	Daily Record 1932 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1932-December 31, 1932]
310	66	Daily Record 1933 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1933-December 31, 1933]

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<u>SER</u> <u>NO.</u>	<u>VOL</u> <u>NO.</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
310		DAILY RECORD
	67	Daily Record 1934 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1934- December 31, 1934]
	68	Daily Record 1935 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1935- December 31, 1935]
	69	Daily Record 1936 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1936- December 31, 1936]
	70	Daily Record 1937 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1937- December 31, 1937]
	71	Daily Record 1938 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1938- December 31, 1938]
	72	Daily Record 1939 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1939- December 31, 1939]
	73	Daily Record 1940 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1940- December 31, 1940]
310	74	Daily Record 1941 Oahu Prison [January 1, 1941- December 31, 1941]

Prepared by A. Hoof
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