



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz



August 2024

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Island News Since construction continues to take up a good portion of the dock, it is important to remind the ranger doing dock announcements that if you are volunteering that day to do programs, you will be starting your program under the guard tower and to let visitors know this. It's also a good idea to stand outside the entrance to the picnic area under the guard tower to let visitors know you will be starting your program from there. Labor Day weekend will be especially busy, so extra volunteers will be needed.

Dates to Remember

August 3-4, 2024

Living History Days
at Fort Point

September 2, 2024

Labor Day

Fort Point Living history Days, August 3 & 4

On Saturday and Sunday, Fort Point will host Living History Days. The main events will take place on Saturday, with re-enactors of the 20th Maine staying overnight at the fort and taking part in the flag rising ceremony on Sunday morning. Events on Saturday include tours of the fort, music played by the Fort Point Brass Band, cannon and military drills, weapons exhibits, and cooking demonstrations. There will also be a display about the U.S. Balloon Corps and medicines of the 1860s, as well as lectures about California and the Civil War and the Battle of Mobile Bay.



This event is sponsored by FOCWA, the National Park Service, the 20th Maine, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and the American Civil War Association. The hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and admission is free.

Hawaiians in the Civil War

At the time of the Civil War, Hawaii (then known as the Sandwich Islands) was a kingdom ruled by King Kamehameha IV, and the islands were the "Crossroads of the Pacific". Ships involved in the trade with China, and especially whaling ships, would anchor either at Honolulu

or most commonly at Lahaina on the island of Maui. By the 1850s four hundred ships a year - mostly whalers - would visit Lahaina to stock up on water and provisions.¹ Native Hawaiians, known to be excellent sailors, were often recruited as crew for American whaling ships out of Boston.

When the American Civil War started, this became big news in the islands (the literacy rate was 90%) and Hawaiians were passionately against slavery.²

However, the king declared the islands to be neutral to avoid any conflict with the United States or the Confederacy.

Nevertheless, Hawaiian men who had worked on whaling ships, or who had been taught by missionaries from Boston, volunteered to join the U.S. Navy.³

There were also Hawaiians who were crewmen aboard the *CSS Shenandoah*, the Confederate raider that attacked American whaling ships off the coast of Alaska in 1865. (This is the ship that threatened San Francisco in the last year of the war.) It is hard to know just how many joined the navy or army of either side, or what their actual names were because when enlisting, their names were often changed. A man whose Hawaiian name might be Kamakawiwo'ole would be changed to "Joseph Kanaka" or simply "John Boy".⁴

An American businessman in Hilo organized a unit of native Hawaiian infantry to serve on the mainland, but were disbanded by the king because of his neutrality proclamation.⁵ Nevertheless, there were 119 native or Hawaiian-born men that have been recorded as combatants during the Civil War, serving as soldiers or sailors. Among them was J.R. Kealoha, who was a member of the 41st Colored Infantry and who fought at the battles of Petersburg and Appomattox. His grave finally received a headstone in a small cemetery in Honolulu in 2014.



The Hawaiian flag was created by King Kamehameha I to show the islands' ties to Britain and the United States. The stripes represent the 8 Hawaiian islands.

Resources

<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/upload/More-Info-on-Asians-Pacific-Islanders-in-the-Civil-War-Alphabetically-by-Name.pdf>

Podcast <https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/offshore-aws-dotorg/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/28024226/S4-Episode-3-Hawaiiis-Sons-of-the-Civil-War.mp3>

"Native Hawaiians Served on Both Sides During the Civil War" by William Cole in *Honolulu Advertiser.com*, May 31, 2010

¹ "History of Maui" in Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Maui

² "The Surprising History of Hawaiians in the Civil War" by Clair Caulfield in *Honolulu Civil Beat*, May 31, 2020

³ It should be noted that Hawaiians had served in the U.S. Navy since the War of 1812

⁴ Caulfield, op. cit.

⁵ Wikipedia, op. cit.