



# THE WOMAN BEHIND ANNA RANCH

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Surprisingly petite in stature, but robust in determination, the driving force behind Anna Ranch in Waimea was a woman whose captivating contradictions and colorful personality knew no bounds.

Born Anna Leialoha Lindsey in 1900, it is said Anna was born on horseback after her mother carried the newborn home from the hospital in Hilo to Waimea in her saddle bag. As a young girl Anna was expected to work the family ranch alongside her brothers and dad by day and tend to the womanly duties with her mother by night. This unique upbringing created an elegant tomboy whose tea collection was as grand as her assortment of riding boots. Anna was resolute and refined, gallant and classy, fearless and fashionable.

Known for conquering challenges, mingling with royalty and giving generously, here are four things you should know about Anna Perry-Fiske, the late owner of Anna Ranch in Waimea on Hawaii Island:



### 1. Anna was unstoppable

Divorced and living at home at the time of her father's passing in 1939, Anna took over the family's cattle ranch despite being a woman and having an older brother. The cards were heavily stacked against Anna given World War II was underway, blackout restrictions enforced across the island, meat rationed, cattle prices frozen and her family ranch near bankruptcy with just \$95 to its name.

Even this was no match for Anna's gutsy determination! One of the many stories of her undeniable resolve is how Anna would have a cowboy sit on the hood of her car with a lantern so she could see and continue meat deliveries to her father's accounts in Hilo during the war-induced, island-wide blackout restrictions.



### 2. She took life by the horns

Anna worked the ranch alone every day for years, unable to afford to hire help. In 1943, she married her second husband Lyman Perry-Fiske, and the two began to work the ranch together. Soon their early mornings and unwavering dedication paid off. Anna began to take interest in cross-breeding cattle to beef up her stock. She became the first rancher to introduce both charolais and brahman cattle to Hawaii Island, as well as breed charbray, the offspring of a charolais and brahman. In her 40s while on a breeding trip to California, one unsuspecting breeder dared Anna to sit bareback on a pretty mean brahman bull. He obviously didn't know who he was daring and was rather surprised with this tiny dynamo jumped on with a gleeful grin stretching from ear to ear. Clearly one never to shy away from a challenge, Anna rode horses and branded well into her 80s.

### 3. "Queen of Pa'u"

As a girl, Anna's mother taught her how to wrap and ride in the style known as pa'u (skirt). Pa'u is a riding style from old Hawaii where females ride a horse astride, or straddle, while wearing a protective covering made from a single piece of fabric, approximately 10 yards in length, which is elegantly wrapped around the rider down to the stirrups to protect their fancy garments from getting dirty while riding to an event or gathering.

Uniquely Hawaiian, this regal riding style perfectly blended Anna's life-long passions of horsemanship and pageantry. In 1972, Anna became the first person to introduce pa'u riding outside of the islands when she served as the grand marshal of the Rose Parade in Pasadena, CA. A few years later, she accepted a second invitation to ride pa'u in the Calgary Stampede in Canada. Today, Anna is still known as the "Queen of Pa'u" for her mastery and ambassadorship of this beautiful Hawaiian tradition.

### 4. Anna had heart

From 1963 to 1983, Anna hosted "Old Hawaii on Horseback", a charitable event for the Hawaii Heart Association, held on the front lawn of her ranch. This fundraiser was an elaborate reenactment of Hawaii's history told through costumed riders on horseback. One year 5,000 people attended this beloved event which Anna created to honor her mother, who died from heart disease in 1940, just months after Anna's father passed. True to form, "Old Hawaii on Horseback" was grand and regal; and in 1984, Anna was honored as the nation's foremost individual fundraiser by the American Heart Association.

Thanks to Anna's foresight and generosity, Anna Ranch and her family home built in 1910 are both preserved and open to the public through the establishment of a non-profit trust. For these reasons and countless more, Anna's life and legacy continue to spark awe and appreciation more than twenty years after her passing in 1995 at the age of 95.



#### Anna Ranch Heritage Center in Waimea, HI [www.annaranch.org](http://www.annaranch.org)

Anna Ranch Heritage Center, a National Historic Site, is a non-profit, working ranch that shares the story of fearless Hawaiian ranch owner Anna Perry-Fiske. Guided tours of Anna's historical home are by reservation, with a self-guided Discovery Tour, gardens and Kitchen Gift Shop also available. Anna Ranch also serves as a venue for weddings, meetings and events.

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