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Aloha 'aina (love of the land) is the drive behind many of the Big Island's triumphs – and many of its conflicts.

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Hawai'i, the Big Island Today

Aloha 'aina – 'love of the land' in Hawaiian – is a traditional Hawaiian attitude that now resonates with many. Hawai'i residents, whether *kama'aina* (born and raised here) or transplants, and visitors too, value the island. But due to divergent interpretations, islanders sometimes clash. Major issues on Hawai'i include tourism and the economy, post-sugar agriculture and Native Hawaiian rights.

Best on Film

Song of South Kona (1986) Miloli'i, the 'last Hawaiian fishing village,' and its people are revealed in this evocative documentary.

Black Widow (1987) Location buffs will appreciate the scenes in Hilo's Kaikodo Building in the movie's climax.

The Descendants (2011) Glimpse contemporary island life of a well-to-do Honolulu family.

Best in Print

Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers (Lois-Ann Yamanaka; 1996) Growing up local in 1970s Hilo, told with raw emotion in pidgin.

Pele, the Fire Goddess (Pua Kanaka'ole Kanahale and Dietrich Varez; 1991) Legend of Pele retold by a renowned *kumu hula* (hula teacher) and strikingly illustrated.

Kapoho: Memoir of a Modern Pompeii (Frances Kakugawa; 2011) Memories of Kapoho, demolished by lava when the author was 18.

Best in Music

Lei Pua Kenikeni (Mark Yamanaka; 2010) Falsetto vocalist with Japanese heritage and Hawaiian soul.

Hear (Brittini Paiva; 2005) This then-teenage prodigy plays ukulele, bass, guitar and keyboards.

Memories of You (Diana Aki; 1990) The 'songbird of Miloli'i' epitomizes the Hawaiian falsetto style.

Economic Recovery

Since the 1960s, Hawai'i's economy has rested primarily on tourism, an industry blamed for burdening infrastructure and natural resources, increasing traffic and disturbing residential neighborhoods. Tourism is subject to national economic trends. The 2008 recession hammered the influx of visitors for over five years: in 2013, Hawai'i saw 1.3 million visitors, down 25% from its 2007 peak of 1.6 million. But by 2016, Hawai'i's visitor counts recovered to 1.5 million. Even a dengue fever outbreak from late 2015 to early 2016 didn't deter travelers.

In another positive sign for tourism, Hawaiian Airlines launched a thrice-weekly Kona-Japan route in 2016. Japan Airlines had cut its route to Kona International Airport in 2010 – a blow, considering Japan's steady tourist stream. (Direct flights between Hilo and the mainland are still limited to one Los Angeles route.)

On the ground, Airbnb has proliferated across the island, creating a huge new pool of accommodations. While popular with travelers, some hotels and B&Bs complain about financial disparity. With their official permits, they pay higher property taxes in addition to business income taxes. Airbnb hosts? Maybe, maybe not.

During the recession, the island's overall unemployment rate hovered around 10% and home prices dropped, especially in Puna. By mid 2016, however, unemployment was down to 4%, slightly higher than the statewide 3.2% rate, but lower than the nationwide average of 4.5%.

Sustainable Agriculture

The end of Hawai'i's sugar industry in the mid 1990s came at a somewhat fortuitous time. By the early 2000s, a locavore movement was sprouting, in tandem