



## NEWS RELEASE

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### CENTURIES OF CHANGE

The legacy of paniolo and plantations has spurred a proud local culture

MAUI, Hawai'i – In January 1778, Captain James Cook from Britain stopped at the Island of Kaua'i and sent word home of what he called the “Sandwich Islands.” After millennia of isolation, Hawai'i lay exposed to the world. Westerners arrived in ever larger numbers, excited by Hawai'i's natural and cultural wealth, but giving little in return. They brought diseases for which the Hawaiians had no immunity, plants and creatures that wiped out native species, new forms of warfare, and a new economy based on profit rather than sustainability. With the other islands, Maui Nui was swept into a storm of radical change.

In 1793 and 1794, Captain George Vancouver visited the islands to initiate trade with England. To ensure future supplies, he brought agricultural crops, cattle, and sheep. Horses arrived. The animals thrived on the islands' fertile volcanic slopes, and eventually gave rise to a daring ranching industry. Vaqueros from Spanish descent came to teach Hawaiian men the skills of saddle, lasso, and lariat. Over time, a new breed of cowboy evolved – the intrepid Hawaiian paniolo. Generous of heart, the paniolo was agile, skilled, rugged, passionate, fierce in the saddle, happy around the campfire, tender when playing his instrument of choice, the Madeiran 'ukulele or slack key guitar.

To this day, ranching remains a vital industry in Maui Nui, and, in recent years, the interest in locally raised, forage-fed beef has soared. Visitors can taste the final product in many restaurants, but better yet, they can experience the paniolo life first hand. Established in 1888, Haleakalā Ranch remains the oldest and largest family owned active cattle ranch in Maui. Spanning 30,000 splendid acres on the slopes of Haleakalā from cool mountain forest lands to desert like plains, it's home to sheep, cattle, even



goats. You'll drive through the ranch on your way to Haleakalā crater, or, for an authentic experience of the ranching life, visit on horseback with Pony Express. You'll ride through highlands with superb views of Central Maui, and the Maui coast while your guide will regale you with paniolo history. Maui ATV Adventures offers tours across the ranch's private trails as well with guides teaching guests about the history and geography of the ranch and its surroundings. You'll climb to 5,500 feet and find yourself right in the heart of rarely visited Maui ranchlands, in places that can only be reached via ATV or escorted, private tour by landowners.

Near Lāhaina in West Maui, Kahoma Ranch ATV Tours gives visitors dune buggies for a team ride through an active cattle pasture on the private dirt trails of a 600-acre property. Breathtaking views of the coastline with Lānaʻi and Molokaʻi in the distance complement your adventure as you navigate tight turns, a stream, puddles, and rocky roads.

Paniolo greet visitors at the family owned 3,000-acre Mendes Ranch at the northern tip of West Maui for a narrated horseback ride that meanders across rolling pastures to a rain forest with plunging waterfalls. Taste the ways of paniolo cooking with an optional barbecue lunch.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, large sugar and pineapple plantations started to emerge in Maui Nui. The privatization of Hawaiian lands enabled such land acquisitions while large agencies provided financing. Thousands of laborers arrived from China, the Portuguese Azores, Japan, Puerto Rico, Korea, and the Philippines. Around a shared language of music, food and sports, a multiethnic harmonious community evolved, truly a melting pot of traditions. The plantations altered the geography, demography and lifestyle of Hawaiʻi indelibly, and the legacy of the plantations lives on in the dynamic local culture it gave rise to. Kepaniwai Park's Heritage Gardens in ʻĪao Valley showcase Maui's diverse cultural heritage with gardens and structures typical of the main immigrant groups.

Eventually, the plantations were unable to compete on the global market and, one after the other, closed. Today, only Maui grows, harvests, and processes sugar cane. Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company in Puʻunēnē, produces Maui Brand Hawaiian Raw Sugar. Handcrafted one batch at a time, it also generates electricity.

Puʻunēnē was once a thriving plantation town. Established in 1980, housed in a renovated historic building that dates back to 1902, the 1,800-square-foot Alexander & Baldwin Sugar Museum is one of the few remaining structures that were part of this community and now charts the history and heritage of sugar in Maui with elaborate exhibits.



During the heyday of sugar, railroad trains with steam locomotives hauled sugar cane from the fields. Sounding their whistles, they chugged along narrow gauge tracks, picking up high-heeled passengers along the way. Eventually, trucks replaced trains. However, in West Maui, the legacy of the Lāhaina Kā‘anapali & Pacific Railroad remains dapperly alive with the Sugar Cane Train. It travels a six-mile stretch of track, crosses a 325-foot curved wooden trestle, and even has a narrator on board.

In 1922, James Dole bought the island of Lāna‘i with pineapples in mind. His Hawaiian Pineapple Company would become the largest plantation in the world. Although the pineapples phased out in the 1980s, small Lāna‘i City tells the story of a model plantation town with a tidy grid of streets, designed by Dole himself, and staging an annual Pineapple Festival. The Lāna‘i Culture and Heritage Center exhibits plantation era documents and family memorabilia portraying the island's cultures in transition during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Pineapples continue to grow in West Maui as a sweet hybrid known as Maui Gold. Led by island locals, the Maui Gold Pineapple Tour takes visitors to Honolua Pineapple Plantation and weaves in a colorful commentary about the legacy of the “King of Fruits,” the only such adventure in the nation. You are invited to harvest your own pineapple to take home.

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