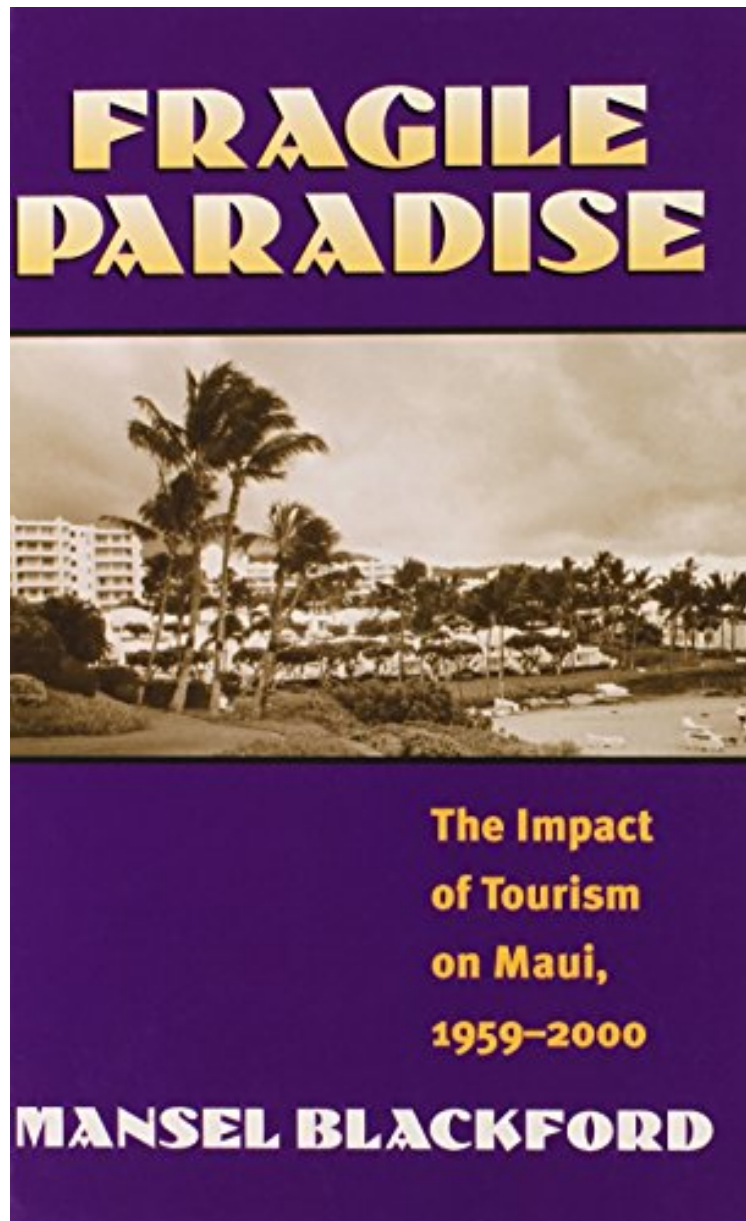


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## Fragile Paradise: The Impact of Tourism on Maui, 1959-2000

*Mansel Blackford*

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**Mansel Blackford : Fragile Paradise: The Impact of Tourism on Maui, 1959-2000** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fragile Paradise: The Impact of Tourism on Maui, 1959-2000:

With its white sandy beaches, lush green uplands, and near-perfect weather, the Hawaiian island of Maui is more than a picture postcard: it is a multi-million-dollar tourist attraction that repeatedly has been voted "best island in the world" by Conde Nast Traveler readers. Consider, then, the bumper sticker seen on residents' cars in recent years: "If it's tourist season, why can't we shoot them?" From its modest beginnings in the prewar era, tourism has become the most important segment of Maui's economy since the 1970s. But as Mansel Blackford shows, it is also a devil's bargain. By switching the island's income base from sugar cane to condos, tourism has offered a solution to economic problems but has also placed an unanticipated strain on Maui's infrastructure and made unexpected demands of its residents. Now as roads and sewers have reached their limits and escalating property values have ousted long-timers, the growth of the "visitor industry" has forced the people of Maui to make difficult choices about the future development of their island. *Fragile Paradise* chronicles the growth-and the growing pains-of the tourist economy on Maui. Blackford takes us into the heart of this island paradise to reveal the complexity of economic and environmental issues, especially as perceived by Maui's residents over the past four decades. He examines issues surrounding land-use policies, water development, electrical power generation, and transportation particularly the controversy over the expansion of the Kahului Airport. He then shows how these issues came together in the development of two communities: the booming resort area of South Maui and the agricultural Upcountry Maui. Blackford also reveals the human side of tourism, through interviews with islanders representing both sides of the growth issue. Blackford's study shows how people living on a far western American frontier view their economic and physical environments and how they have sought to shape them. By addressing a number of crucial issues, from race and ethnicity to "quality of life" environmentalism, it offers a microcosm of the tourism industry that has implications for other travel destinations and for the economic future of the Pacific Rim.

"Blackford brilliantly accomplishes what many historians attempt but few succeed in actually doing: he elucidates a general phenomenon through a microcosmic story. . . . He illuminates the collision between social and economic forces that are now engulfing the world, not as some abstraction, but as a day-to-day series of choices confronting real people." Thomas K. McCraw, author of *Creating Modern Capitalism* "A highly readable and fascinating model for the study of tropical tourism." Ann L. Rayson, author of *Modern Hawaiian History* "Imaginatively conceived, richly detailed, and lucidly written." Richard R. John, author of *Spreading the News* "A valuable work for malihini and kamaaina alike." Gail Ainsworth, author of *Maui Remembers: A Local History* From the Back Cover "Blackford brilliantly accomplishes what many historians attempt but few succeed in actually doing: he elucidates a general phenomenon through a microcosmic story. . . . He illuminates the collision between social and economic forces that are now engulfing the world, not as some abstraction, but as a day-to-day series of choices confronting real people."-- Thomas K. McCraw, author of *Creating Modern Capitalism* "A highly readable and fascinating model for the study of tropical tourism."-- Ann L. Rayson, author of *Modern Hawaiian History* "Imaginatively conceived, richly detailed, and lucidly written."-- Richard R. John, author of *Spreading the News* "A valuable work for malihini and kamaaina alike."-- Gail Ainsworth, author of *Maui Remembers: A Local History* About the Author Mansel Blackford is professor of history at Ohio State University and the author of numerous titles, including *A History of Small Business in America* and, most recently, *BF Goodrich: Tradition and Transformation, 1870-1995*, each of which was named an Outstanding Book of the Year by Choice.