

The New York Times

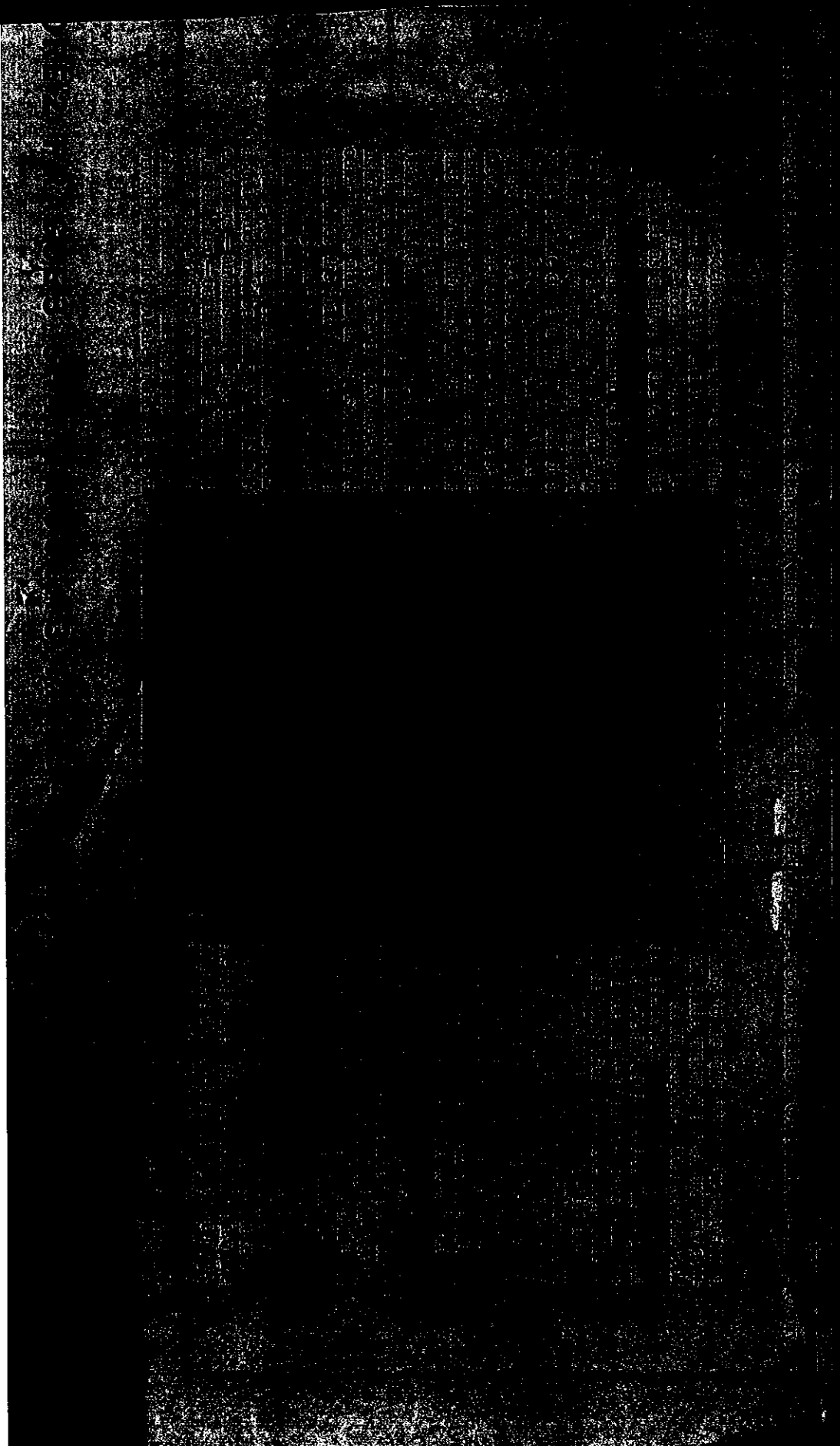
Travel

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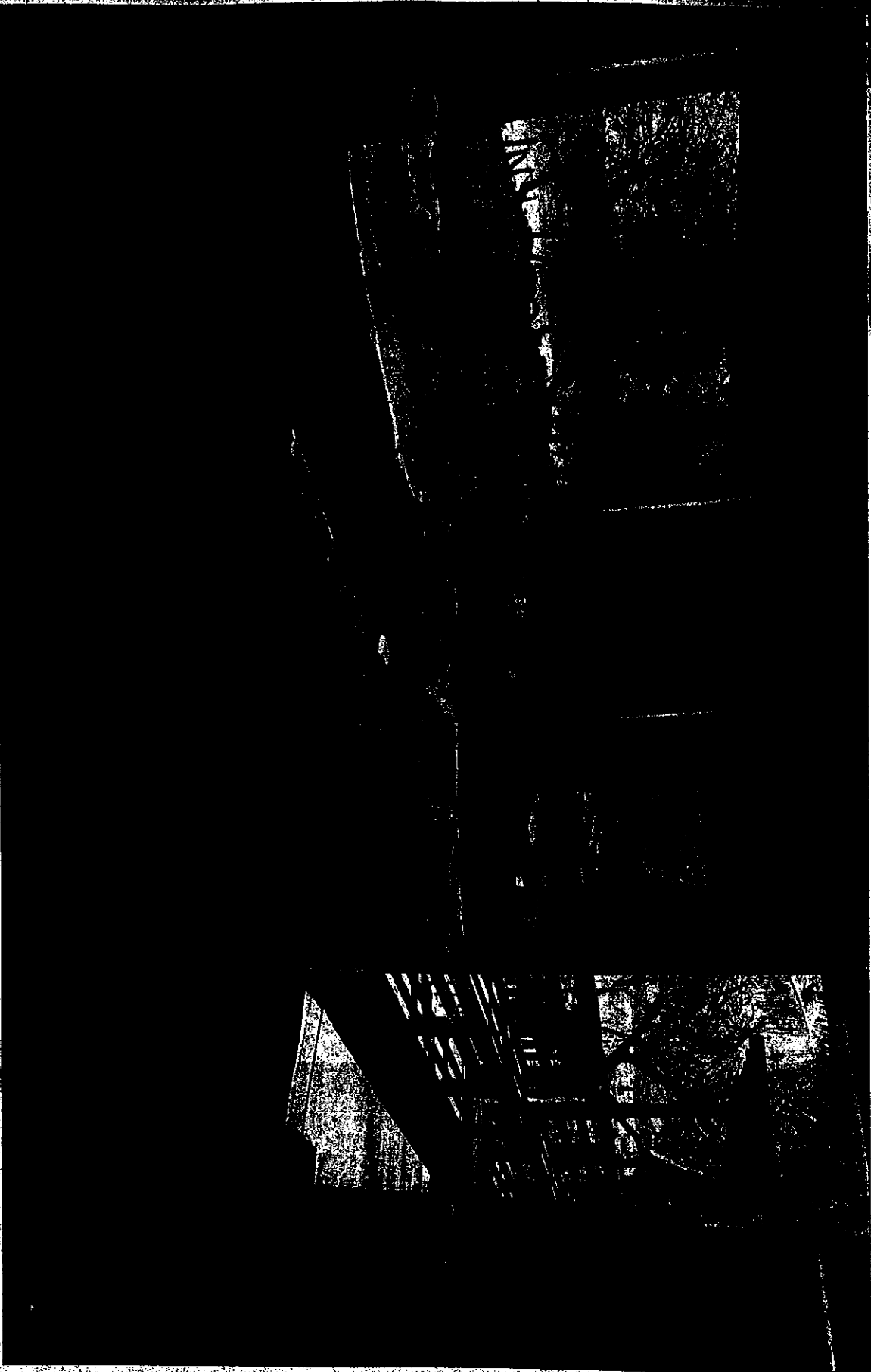
Mr. Gray and Mrs. White are on their way to the city of New York.

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Faithful to Its Roots



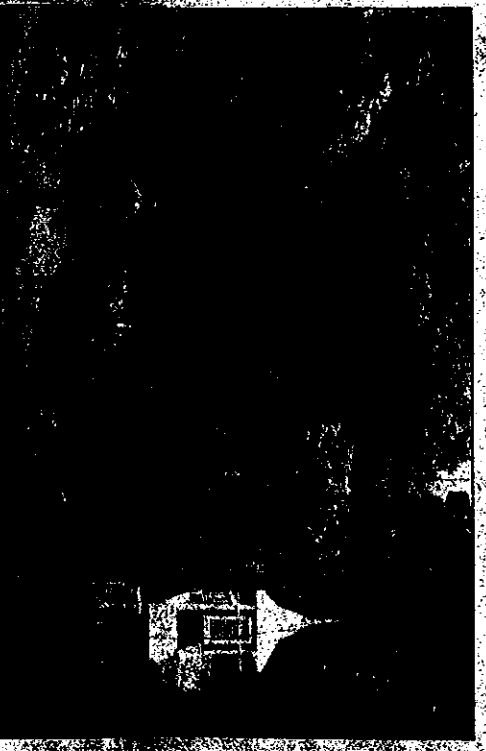
Molokai, Island of Splendid



ABOVE: A canvas bungalow at the Molokai Ranch Beach Village on Kaupoa Beach.

RIGHT: Hiking a trail in the Halawa Valley on the east end of the island. FAR RIGHT: View of Kalaupapa Peninsula. BELOW: RIGHT FROM TOP: A road sign discourages outside developers. In Kaunakakai, Molokai's main town.

BELOW FAR RIGHT: Grave site of Father Damien, who spent years treating the sick at the leper colony, now Kalaupapa National Historical Park, on the peninsula.



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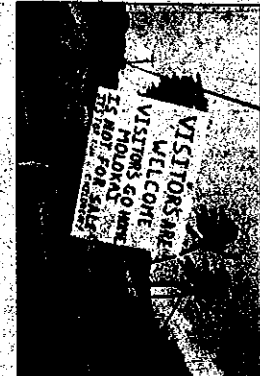
gold, rocky pond at our feet. The only sounds were the water and the birds; there was not even a peep within miles, and it seemed fair to think at that moment, our small group counted for the entire population of east Molokai.

It is an island of splendid isolation from the resorts of Maui or the hustle of Honolulu. It does not seem to compete with, say, the surf-sporting north shore or the snorkeling south shore. Instead, it offers a quiet, unspoiled wilderness. The island is crisscrossed with dirt roads and along with the volcanic cliffs are the remains of a once-thriving sugar plantation. Ben, the guide, says that the lights here are the only ones on the island.

was both memorable and devastatingly effective. And there seems to be more proof here posted with signs warning "Kapu" — a forbidding "keep out" directive to potential trespassers that literally translates as forbidden, or taboo — than anywhere else in Hawaii. While the signs are really directed at the marijuana growers who have found prosperity by squatting in the isolation of the lush valley jungles, they certainly add to the sense of forbiddance.

"We've seen what happened to Waikiki, we've seen what's happened to Maui and what's happened to Kauai and what has happened on the Big Island and we want no part of it," said Walter Ritte Jr., a Hawaiian activist who has led many of the protests. "They've given our best resources to the tourism industry and asked us to change the sheets. We've lost our cultural resources all because of this huge money-making thing called tourism."

So it is that tourism has been on a steady decline for a decade: 74,082 visitors flew to Molokai last year, a 20 percent drop from 2003, in a year when Hawaiian Air abolished its service here, according to the Molokai Visitors Association. Now, the only way to



the midst of talking about the considerable allure of this island, a sign posted on the road discouraged further development. We see a sign that says "VISITORS WELCOME" and "VISITORS GO HERE TO BUY FOODS FOR SALE". We see a sign that says "VISITORS WELCOME" and "VISITORS GO HERE TO BUY FOODS FOR SALE". We see a sign that says "VISITORS WELCOME" and "VISITORS GO HERE TO BUY FOODS FOR SALE".

lemon, only if you're young. The island is a beautiful place, and it's a shame that it's being developed so quickly. We see a sign that says "VISITORS WELCOME" and "VISITORS GO HERE TO BUY FOODS FOR SALE". We see a sign that says "VISITORS WELCOME" and "VISITORS GO HERE TO BUY FOODS FOR SALE".