The 1981 designation of the Kaho‘olawe Island Archaeological District on the National Register of Historic Places represents a case in which recognition of significance by a government-mandated, national preservation body fostered a movement of cultural self-awareness to achieve strategic political goals, rather than only serving to identify or preserve a site of historic significance. This thesis also discusses the ways in which the battle for the National Register designation fostered the realization among Hawaiians that cultural reeducation was vital to community unification, and that the dreams of a sovereign nation would not be fulfilled until the community was inspired to create a new modern identity within the greater Hawaiian community. Presented within a historical framework, the thesis reveals how the Hawaiian success in reclaiming Kaho‘olawe was the result of political and cultural awareness that coincided with, and was strengthened by, the confluence of 1960s and 1970s national and international political, historical, social and environmental movements for change.