

be made. *Sailing in the Wake of the Ancestors* makes defensible compromises while telling an important story.

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No Sword to Bury: Japanese Americans in Hawai'i during World II, by Franklin Odo. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004. ISBN 1-59213-207-3, 328 pages, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$39.95.

Franklin Odo's *No Sword to Bury, Japanese Americans in Hawai'i during World War II* is a long-anticipated work that should not disappoint its readers. The book is concerned with 169 nisei (second-generation Japanese American) University of Hawai'i students who after the Pearl Harbor attack immediately joined but six weeks later were summarily dismissed from the Hawai'i Territorial Guard because of their Japanese descent. Odo describes in detail how they offered their labor services to the military governor as a way of contributing to the war effort "as loyal Americans" and did construction and other projects for eleven months. In January 1943 when it was announced that the military was going to organize an all-Japanese American combat unit, the Varsity Victory Volunteers (vvv), as they called themselves, opted to disband; most of them joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and some of them were later selected for the Military Intelligence Service as Japanese-language specialists.

Extending beyond the vvv experience, *No Sword to Bury* is a significant contribution to our understanding and analysis of Japanese American history in Hawai'i, particularly of the nisei generation, and complements well other major works that appeared in the 1990s (eg, *The Japanese Conspiracy*, by Masayo Duus [1999]; *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, by Eileen Tamura [1994]; and *Cane Fires*, by Gary Okihiro [1991]). Odo's achievement lies in detailing the diverse lives and viewpoints of the vvv members in their own words through many revealing oral history interviews. In providing an economic and political context for the vvv initiative, *No Sword to Bury* includes chapters on the Japanese American community during its two very difficult decades prior to the war, and on the socioeconomic background of the issei (immigrant) parents of vvv members, since the latter, as college students, were hardly representative of the larger community.

The book also addresses much larger theoretical and substantive issues concerning Japanese Americans and race relations in the United States. As Odo argues, "The vvv was the leading wedge of a strategy that culminated in two related but distinct transformations in post-World War II America. The first was the establishment of a radically new multicultural democracy in Hawai'i. . . . The second was the incorporation of Japanese American 'success' into what has since become widely known as the 'model minority' thesis" (2-3). In this regard, one of the major arguments Odo develops challenges the generally accepted explanation of

Japanese American socioeconomic success as primarily due to the Japanese cultural values, or *kachikan*, that the immigrants brought with them and transmitted to their *nisei* children. Odo contends that these traditional values—including *enryo* (restraint), *gaman* (enduring adversity), *shikata ga nai* (fatalism), *kodomo no tame ni* (for the sake of the children), and an emphasis on education—have become stereotypically associated with Japanese Americans, although there is no reason to privilege them over other values that the *issei* and *nisei* followed. Odo thus maintains that the postwar socioeconomic success of Japanese Americans resulted in the development of the “*nisei myth*” that ahistorically attributed their upward mobility to the above-noted values, emphasizing passivity and self-discipline. Furthermore, this explanation of their success tends to affirm the “*model minority*” view of Japanese Americans, unfortunately a stereotype that many of the latter, including academics, continue to espouse.

Odo contends that a study of the Varsity Victory Volunteers is informative in four major areas: (1) the varied lives of the *nisei* men discussed prevents their being stereotyped; (2) the Varsity Victory Volunteers and its establishment illustrate the ways by which a “vulnerable” minority developed strategies for its advancement; (3) the vvv experience manifests the complexity of race relations in Hawai‘i before and after Pearl Harbor and the planning necessary to manage those relations; and (4) the Varsity Victory Volunteers is a case study of “racial formation or re-formation” (268). Thus through rich and at times

conflicting oral history data, the book presents a complex and varied portrait of the personal motivations and perspectives of individual vvv members. This stands in contrast to the popular view of the vvv, which tends to be based on the personal experiences and public statements of a few of its more vocal and better-known members. Odo reveals, for example, that less than one-half of the Japanese Americans in the Hawaii Territorial Guard actually volunteered for the Varsity Victory Volunteers, and that their motivations for joining included a variety of personal reasons besides demonstrating their loyalty to America.

In the book’s conclusion Odo maintains that “In Hawai‘i, in ways that could not have been replicated on the continent, the need to pursue an effective wartime strategy dictated an active policy of racial tolerance and inclusion. That policy overshadowed older traditions of *haole* supremacy” (270). However, the dominant policy during most of the war was martial law, which Okihiro argued in his book, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawai‘i, 1865–1945*, was “fundamentally an anti-Japanese act” (1991, 209). According to Okihiro, even though military rule applied to everyone in the islands, it had been planned since the early 1920s and was subsequently implemented “specifically to contain the ‘Japanese problem’” (1991, 209), and therefore it discriminated against Japanese Americans. The latter were subject to greater restrictions and sanctions than other people, including being barred from high-paying defense jobs with the US Navy,

and having several elected officials interned to remove them from office.

No Sword to Bury should be of interest to scholars and students of Japanese American and Asian American history, particularly regarding race relations, and to the general reader interested in the most significant event in Hawai'i during the last century and its tremendous impact on one of the major ethnic groups in the islands.

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Kahana: How the Land Was Lost, by Robert H Stauffer. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8248-2590-X; x + 265 pages, maps, tables, photographs, appendixes, notes, glossary, references, index. Cloth, us\$38.00.

Robert H Stauffer has been credited for uncovering “thousands of pages of old documents that a trust company clerk had saved from the trash bin, that had been given to the state archives in the late 1970s or early ‘80s by a local trust company” (Rob Perez, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 16 Nov 2003). These documents were foreclosure records linked to an 1874 nonjudicial foreclosure law enacted by the Hawaiian Kingdom Legislature. Stauffer was quoted as saying, “The 1874 law created a system in which lenders could foreclose on property without any judicial oversight” (Perez 2003, A-8). He attributes the loss of native Hawaiian lands in the nineteenth century to this law rather than to the 1848 Mahele (land

division), as commonly believed by most scholars today.

I found Stauffer's book to be riddled with opinions and incorrect information. As a former land title abstractor and a person who participated in international legal proceedings concerning the Hawaiian kingdom as an independent state, I have a working knowledge of what Stauffer covers in many parts of his book, and I found many of his assessments and explanations to be completely inaccurate. Without fully elucidating point by point—which would definitely turn out to be a lengthy article or even a book that I will need to write later—I will only identify two areas and briefly provide some counterpoints to Stauffer's contentions.

First: The intent of the 1874 nonjudicial foreclosure law was to relieve the justices of the Supreme Court from an excessive number of equity cases, which included, among other things, foreclosures. It was not a conspiracy by the haole (nonaboriginal Hawaiian nationals) to seize control of the native lands. Stauffer gives the impression that the passage of this statute, *An Act to Provide for the Sale of Mortgaged Property Without Suit and Decree of Sale* (1874), was orchestrated by a few haole and a naive Hawaiian Legislative Assembly, which comprised a majority of aboriginal Hawaiians. Stauffer states, “For all its broad effects, the law caused little notice at the time, and its passage can best be described as an act of stealth” (93). What Stauffer fails to explain is that this particular session of the legislature had to deal with budget constraints and the consolidation of governmental offices and