



The First Strange Place: The Alchemy of Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii

Beth Bailey, David Farber

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For close to a million soldiers, sailors and marines on their way to participate in World War II, Hawaii was, as the forward base and staging area for all Pacific operations, their "first strange place". What they found there was a complex crucible in which radically diverse elements - social, racial and sexual - were mingled and transmuted in the heat and strain of war. Drawing on a reservoir of documents, diaries, memoirs and interviews with men and women who were there, the authors recreate the dense, lush atmosphere of wartime Hawaii in this text. Hawaii was also the first place on another kind of journey - the long and troubled journey toward the new American society that began to emerge in the post-war era. Unlike the largely rigid and static social order of pre-war America, this was to be a highly mobile and volatile society of mixed racial and cultural influences, in which, above all, women and minorities would increasingly demand and receive equal status. In this text, Bailey and Farber show how these changes were tested and explored in the highly-charged environment of wartime Hawaii.

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