

Bill Fernandez. Makani Kai Media, \$19.95 paper (250p) ISBN 978-1-4793-8491-4

In this candid memoir, Hawaii native Fernandez (Rainbows over Kapa'a) describes his hometown and the effects of the war on his childhood on the ethnically diverse island of Kaua'i. ... weaves childhood adventures with historical references, begins in peacetime...blissfully unaware of global troubles...Growing up surrounded by more than 20 ethnic groups, Fernandez explains "the Hawaiian way" of sharing "what you had with friends or strangers,"...without expectation of reward had led to Hawaiians living in poverty." Colorful recollections of learning how to swim, searching for a skyrocket-flying Santa Claus, learning about life while polishing shoes for American soldiers, and his parents' investment in a New York-style theater ...depicts wartime changes...after the attack on Pearl Harbor: conflicts and tension between residents and their Japanese neighbors who feared internment; and the effect of soldiers in town...an honest retelling of one native's experience during the war, and will be of particular interest to those interested in Hawaiian history.

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### “Kaua’i Kid” Returns With World War II-era Memoir”

Former Sunnyvale, CA, mayor and Santa Clara County, CA, judge **Bill Fernandez** has happily settled into his second career as novelist and memoirist, writing from his family home in Kapa‘a, Kaua‘i, about growing up on the Garden Isle in the '30s and '40s.

The latest installment of his memoirs, “Kaua‘i Kids in Peace and War,”...[describes] his barefoot adventures in the racially diverse community independent of the plantation system. Part Native Hawaiian, young Fernandez had family, friends and neighbors from Chinese, Okinawan, Filipino, Japanese, German, Portuguese, French, Irish and Russian backgrounds, as well as Native Hawaiian, who created ... ”a sharing society, all struggling, all helping each other.”

“When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor a hundred miles away on a beautiful December morning ... radios went silent. A Japanese plane landed on a nearby island. Fear of invasion by Japan gripped defenseless Kaua‘i and life was no longer carefree. Blackouts, shelling by Japanese, gas masks, a sense of being very much alone and unprotected dominated life.”

Yet there were other challenges...first spearfishing attempts when he made his own spear from fencing wire. He feared sharks, of course, but went into the water anyway...“Fifty yards away, knifing towards me through an ocean flat as a pancake sliced a fin as big as a black sail...I was not up to facing a full grown shark with a wire spear. Though I beat the water with all the strength I could muster, I knew I would not make it before the fatal strike. I released my fish cord, heedless of prior warnings not to feed the shark. “They go into a frenzy,” Jack had explained. Exhausted, I stopped splashing water and turned to meet my fate. Oh joy, the fin had disappeared.”

...A Stanford alumnus... he’s President of the Kaua‘i Historical Society. Fernandez was also recently appointed by the governor to the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Commission.

[Bill] recently started composing Hawaiian poetry in the form of *oli* (chants), although like most of his generation he was not encouraged to speak Hawaiian while growing up. With his wife, **Judie**, he has created four slide-show talks explaining the Native Hawaiian history up to the modern sovereignty movements, which the *oli* help bring to life. [www.kauaibillfernandez.com](http://www.kauaibillfernandez.com)

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