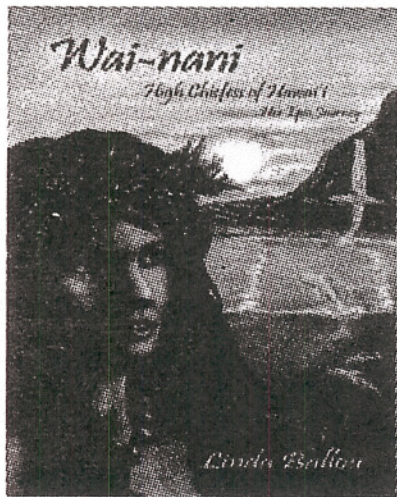


The Sherman Oaks ★ Studio City



Book Review

Wai-nani: High Chiefess of Hawai'i

Reviewed by Leslie Forbes Owens

“Wai-nani: High Chiefess of Hawai'i” is Studio City-based author Linda Ballou’s layered vision of ancient Hawaii in historical fiction.

Wai-nani’s character is based on the life of Ka’ahumanu, the favorite wife of King Kamehameha the Great, and the novel illustrates ancient Hawaiian culture, customs, and taboos through her eyes.

Combining Hawaiian vocabulary and vivid imagery, Ballou transports her readers to the islands, where the surf, sand and mountains come alive. (Even though Ballou employs a considerable Hawaiian vocabulary, the author thoughtfully includes a glossary of terms as well as historic citations, affirming her reverence for detail and accuracy.)

Mixing history, mythology and places familiar to Hawaiian travelers, the novel chronicles the development of Wai-nani from an athletic, tomboyish, teenage girl

into a wahine (woman), her travels, and the male barriers she encountered and broke.

For those who have visited the Hawaii, the islands’ familiar places are picturesquely drawn. Ballou’s writing is intense and colorful. Like the waves of the Pacific, the intensity of her images come pounding at every turn of the page, at times to the point of distraction.

If traveling to Hawaii is not within reach this summer, “Wai-nani: High Chiefess of Hawai'i” affords an opportunity to visit a land where fragrant plumeria flowers bloom, dancing dolphins play offshore, and a lost echo of sacred culture once more comes alive. (Star Publish, \$17.95)

NEWS