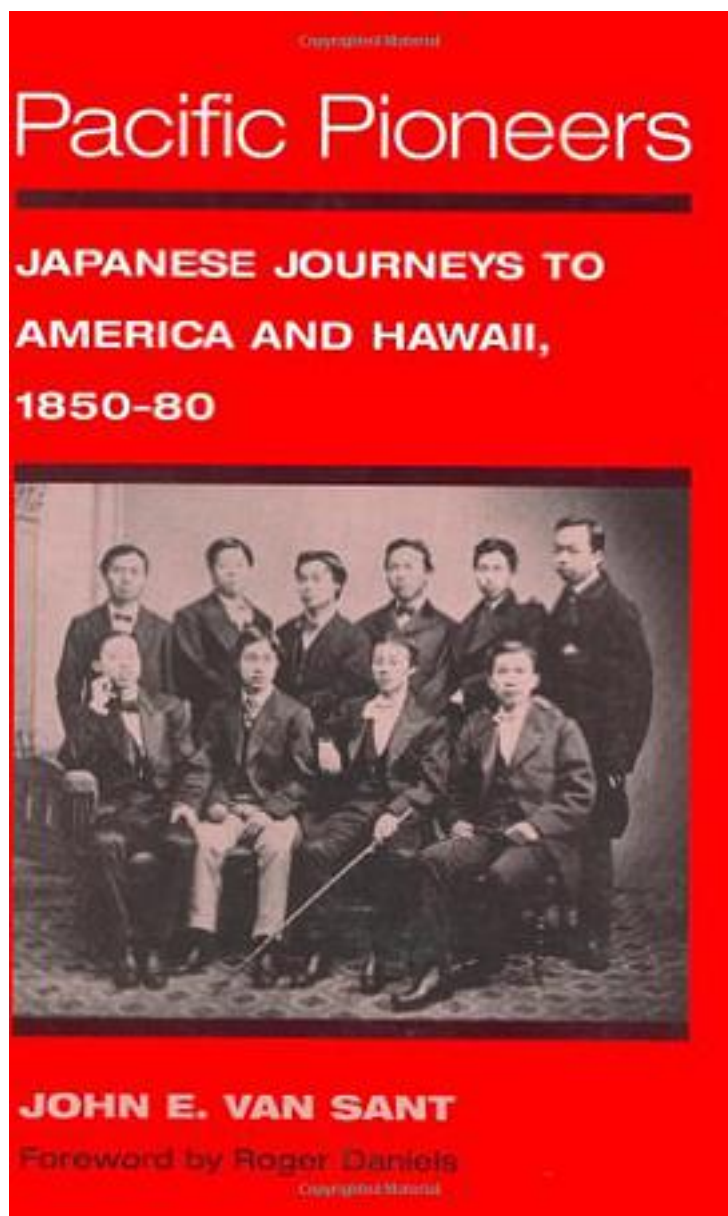


Pacific Pioneers



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著者:John E. Van Sant

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Shipwrecked sailors, samurai seeking a material and sometimes spiritual education, and laborers seeking to better their economic situation: these early Japanese travelers to the West occupy a little-known corner of Asian American studies. "Pacific Pioneers" profiles the first Japanese who resided in the United States or the Kingdom of Hawaii for a substantial period of time and the Westerners who influenced their experiences. Although Japanese immigrants did not start arriving in substantial numbers in the West until after 1880, in the previous thirty years a handful of key encounters helped shape relations between Japan and the United States. John E. Van Sant explores the motivations and accomplishments of these resourceful, sometimes visionary individuals who made important inroads into a culture quite different from their own and paved the way for the Issei and Nisei. "Pacific Pioneers" presents detailed biographical sketches of Japanese such as Joseph Heco, Niihama Jo, and the converts to the Brotherhood of the New Life and introduces the American benefactors, such as William Griffis, David Murray, and Thomas Lake Harris, who built relationships with their foreign visitors. Van Sant also examines the uneasy relations between Japanese laborers and sugar cane plantation magnates in Hawaii during this period and the short-lived Wakamatsu colony of Japanese tea and silk producers in California. A valuable addition to the literature, "Pacific Pioneers" brings to life a cast of colorful, long-forgotten characters while forging a critical link between Asian and Asian American studies.

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