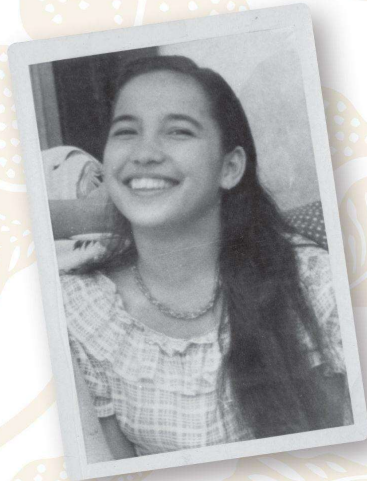


BLUE SKIES, TROUBLED WATERS



*An American Twin's WWII Odyssey
in Minahasa, Indonesia*

Martha Walandouw Lohn
AND Brian Kimmel

ATTN: Journalist, Producer, Editor, Book Reviewer

SUBJECTS: Asian American Pacific Islander AAPI Heritage Month (May), Authors, Books, Deportation, Historical Memoir / Memoir, Immigration, World War II / Pacific Theater. Indonesia, Elizabeth, NJ, and Seattle, WA.

AVAILABILITY: Seattle, WA and environs. Travel by arrangement.

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BOOK NEWS

Blue Skies, Troubled Waters: An American Twin's WWII Odyssey in Minahasa, Indonesia

By Martha Walandouw Lohn and [Brian Kimmel](#)

Historical Memoir / Memoir

Together Mapalus Press, April 29, 2025

Courage battles despair in this story as seen through the eyes of an American twin girl deported to Indonesia with her family at the start of WWII. Not long after settling in their new home, Japan's forces invade, and the family is imprisoned as civilian prisoners of war.

Blue Skies, Troubled Waters, tells the remarkable true story of twin sisters Ath and Kath, born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1933, whose family is uprooted and deported to the jungles of Indonesia due to their father's undocumented status. Their new life is quickly shattered when, in 1942, Japan invades, and the family is imprisoned as civilian prisoners of war.

Through the eyes of these young girls, we witness a tale of resilience, hope, and the strength of family amidst the chaos of World War II. The twins' journey mirrors the courage of a village united against unimaginable hardship, revealing how bonds of love and community can endure even the most harrowing of times.

Co-authored by her grandson, this memoir blends personal narrative with newly uncovered historical records, maps, and photographs, bringing to life a forgotten chapter of history and the enduring spirit of survival.

[WATCH THE AUTHOR](#) Introduces the book and himself (1 min.)

WATCH Brian Kimmel interviewed, “From Deportation to Occupation, a World War II Odyssey from America to Indonesia and Back” on

[LISTEN AND BE HEARD](#)



About the Authors

Brian Kimmel (pronouns: he/dia) is a second generation multi-heritage Indonesian American, and third grandchild to Pacific Northwest author, Martha Walandouw Lohn. He co-authored Lohn's memoir, *Blue Skies, Troubled Waters: An American Twin's Odyssey in WWII Minahasa, Indonesia*, and edited the first Indonesian language version.

As a child, Kimmel's earliest memories revolved around the melodies that filled his home, handed down from generations of musicians, singers, and storytellers. A poet, memoirist, lyricist, composer, musician, scholar-practitioner, and Buddhist teacher ordained by Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Thích Nhất Hạnh, Kimmel guest lectures and recitals internationally. He incorporates into his offerings, decades of engagement with deep songs and light-hearted banter.

He has published articles with *The Lion's Roar*, *The Mindfulness Bell*, *Under 35 Project*, *Buddhism & Culture*, and chapters in *Transcending: Trans Buddhist Voices*, *One Buddha is Not Enough*, and *Dancing with The Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism*. He lives with his spouse in Seattle, home to the Coast Salish, and works as a mental health counselor, supervisor, and educator for the Brian Kimmel Guidance Center.

Martha Walandouw Lohn was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey to a naturalized American Polish Mama who escaped the Russian occupation of Poland in the 1920s and an undocumented Minahasan-Indonesian Papa who disembarked a Dutch military ship in New York and never reboarded—Lohn is not just an author; she's a living testament to resilience and the human spirit.

As a survivor of World War II's Japanese occupation of Indonesia, formerly known as the Dutch East Indies, and as a child who saw her father getting deported from the United States, Lohn's experiences have become a wellspring of inspiration for her writing. Her evocative storytelling captures the nuances of history, weaving together the threads of personal experience with the grand tapestry of global events.

She is an avid gardener. Much like the strong ties she has cultivated with family, both by blood and by heart, anything she puts into the ground — even a twig — will grow and flower. She is a mother, a grandmother, and a great grandmother of multi-heritage descendants and a Tanta (Auntie) and great Tanta to many family members in the United States, the Netherlands, and Indonesia. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her family, and has continued to find inspiration, healing and hope through gardening.

Advance Praise:

"...A unique perspective on a pivotal moment in history through the eyes of those who lived it, resulting in a history-rich narrative that will appeal to fans of World War II literature and Asian-American narratives alike."

—James Weiskittel, [IndieReader](#)

“In today’s climate, where refugees and immigrants around the world are once again facing persecution and displacement, this story feels more relevant than ever.” —**Ellen Laura, Author**

“Ath and her family’s story remain relevant to our times, demonstrating how our stories intertwine across the world, and how the tremors of history continue to shape lives today.” —**Jeddie Sophronius, author of *Interrogation Records***

“Sparkling with energetic, visual prose, this page-turner invites us into a child's direct experience of World War II in what is now Indonesia (then a Dutch colony)...Today’s readers will benefit from this history as we face into our own generation’s world-wide struggles with immigration, deportation, violent warfare, racial hatred, oppressive governments, and changing weather patterns. There is much for us to learn from this touching and remarkable gift from the heart.” —**Louise Dunlap, elder, teacher, and author of *Inherited Silence: Listening to the Land, Healing the Colonizer Mind***

“If I had to use one word to describe *Blue Skies, Troubled Waters*, it would be Love.” —**Martha Cinader, Host, *Listen & Be Heard***

Brian Kimmel Can Discuss:

How did this book come about? Tell us about the journey from the first recounting of your grandmother’s story to the book now being launched?

What was the enhancement that you made with this book and how have you contributed to it?

Tell us a little more about the Indonesian term for mutual aid? How is this relevant to current times, and how was it modeled in your grandmother’s story?

Can you tell us a little about the preface of this book, how did you choose it, and can you sing it for us?

Tell us about your grandma? What does she say about her book?

Events:

Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Tacoma Dome, Tacoma, WA, February 15, 2025

Association for Asian Studies Conference, Columbus, OH, March 13 - 16, 2025

Association of Writers and Publishers Conference, Los Angeles, CA, March 26 – 29, 2025

Bakudapa! Manado Brunch with author, Brian Kimmel, Los Angeles, SoCal Indo, The Deco Building, March 30, 2025

Washington Library Association, Book Bash! Reading and Signing, Tacoma, WA, April 11, 2025

Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound, Together Mapalus: A Day of Mindfulness and Talk On Mutual Aid, Seattle, WA or by Zoom, Saturday, April 19, 2025

Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound, Healing the Legacies of Global War and Occupations: Reading and teaching with co-author of *Blue Skies, Troubled Waters: An American Twin's WWII Odyssey in Minahasa, Indonesia* and Dharma teacher, Brian Kimmel, Seattle, WA and by Zoom, Monday, April 21, 2025

Village Books, Bellingham, WA, April 26, 2025 @3pm

The Armory at Seattle Center, AAHPI Celebration, May 3, 2025

Keraton Fest at UW, ISAUW (Indonesian Student Association), Seattle, WA, May 3, 2025

Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Tacoma, WA, with King's Books and Indonesian Cultural Association, May 4, 2025 @2pm

Elliott Bay Book Company, Seattle, WA, Indonesian treats and reading, May 8, 2025 at 7pm

United Methodist Church of Snohomish, Interfaith Gathering with Indonesian food, fashion, music and sharing with Pacific Northwest co-authors of *Blues Skies, Troubled Waters: An American Twin's Odyssey through WWII Minahasa, Indonesia*. May 17, 2025

AIFIS-MSU Conference on Indonesian Studies, virtual, June 17 - 21, 2025 (to be confirmed)

Gapura, Philadelphia, PA, June, TBD

American Library Association Conference, Book display, postcards, and signing
Philadelphia, PA, June 26 - 30, 2025; June 29, 2025, 12:30pm book signing

Pacific Northwest Library Association Conference, Virtual, Presenter, August 7 - 9, 2025 (to be confirmed)

World Village with Indo Idaho, Boise, Idaho, Sept 4 – 6, 2025

Archipelago Imports, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Sept 14 (to be confirmed)

PNBA Trade Show, Spokane, Spokane, WA, Sept 28 - 30, 2025 (to be confirmed)

Write On The Sound, Edmonds, WA, Book Signing, October 3 – 5, 2025 (to be confirmed)

Minahasan Highlands Tour, A curated small group tour with co-author of *Blues Skies, Troubled Waters* to sites in the book including: Manado, Kakas, Tondano and Bitung.
February 2026

BOOK INFORMATION:

Title: **Blue Skies, Troubled Waters: An American Twin's WWII
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