

EATING EMPIRE, GOING LOCAL: FOOD, HEALTH, AND SOVEREIGNTY ON
POHNPEI, 1899-1986

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Eating Empire, Going Local centers the island of Pohnpei, Micronesia in a global story of colonial encounter and dietary change. It follows Pohnpeians and Pohnpei's outer Islanders in their encounters with Spain, Germany, Japan, and the United States, negotiating, adapting to, and resisting empire through food and food production. In the process, Pohnpei extended food's traditional role as locus of political influence and used it to navigate deceptively transformative interventions in ecology, consumption, the market, and the body. Food became Pohnpei's middle ground, one that ultimately fostered a sharp rise in rates of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. The chapters draw on global commodity histories that converge on the island, of coconuts, rice, imported foods, and breadfruit. These foods illuminate the local and global forces that have delivered public health impacts and new political entanglements to the island. *Eating Empire* uses food and the analytic lenses it enables – from ecology and race to domesticity and sovereignty – as a tool to reimagine Pohnpei's historical inter-imperial and contemporary political relationships from the bottom up.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAP	vii
PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1: IDEAL COCONUT COUNTRY: COMMODIFIED COCONUTS AND THE SCIENTIFIC PLANTATION	25
CHAPTER 2: THE RICE GRAIN AS RACIAL BORDERLAND: RACE, STATUS, AND BELONGING ON JAPANESE POHNPEI	53
CHAPTER 3: VITARELLI'S SPAGHETTI: IMPORTED FOODS, INDIGENOUS MODERNITIES, AND IMPERIAL ANXIETIES ON COLD WAR POHNPEI	104
CHAPTER 4: BREADFRUIT AND RICE: SOVEREIGNTY, SUBSISTENCE, AND THE RICE REVOLUTION	164
CONCLUSION: GOING LOCAL	215
REFERENCES	220
GLOSSARY	239

MAP



Map 1: Pohnpei, adapted from Riesenber, *Native Polity of Ponape*, 1968.

PREFACE

Casual chatter on Pohnpei often turns to the island's escalating rates of non-communicable disease, its numerous heavysset residents, the abrupt spike in both after the 1970s, and to years past when things were different. Older Pohnpeians and outer Islanders have often reminisced with me over the lean figures they saw in their youth, and of a time when they themselves felt healthier, or lighter. Those familiar with my work in the archives ask whether I have seen photographs of earlier times, when their ancestors were fitter, and stronger. "How have you seen how our bodies used to be," some ask, "and how thin we were?" Something has changed on Pohnpei. An indigenous food system that once promoted healthy bodies has been replaced with one that fosters a deadly growth in conditions like heart disease and hypertension, and by 2002 had left 73.1% of Pohnpei's adult population overweight or obese and 32.1% with diabetes.¹

The epidemic of non-communicable disease on Pohnpei is a matter of urgent community concern, as are NCD epidemics in indigenous communities across Oceania and North America. Those public health crises have also become a priority for national and international health organizations, and the Pacific Island Health Officers Association has even declared a "regional state of health emergency" across Micronesia and American Samoa.² But the historical transformations of island food systems and the

¹ These figures are based on a 2002 population-based cross-sectional survey of 1,638 Pohnpeian adults between 25 and 64 years of age. The 73.1% figure includes 30.5% adults classified as overweight and 42.6% as obese. Women were more likely than men to be diagnosed with diabetes, at rates of 37.1% and 26.4% respectively. 46.6% of the study population was diagnosed with hypercholesterolemia and 21.2% with high blood pressure, with a higher percentage of men (26.8%) than women (15.6%) having hypertension. Henry M. Ichiho, et al., "An Assessment of Non-Communicable Diseases, Diabetes, and Related Risk Factors in the Federated States of Micronesia, State of Pohnpei: A Systems Perspective." *Hawai'i Journal of Medicine & Public Health* 75, no. 5, Supplement 1 (May 2013), 51.

² Pacific Islands Health Officers Association. "Board Resolution #48-01: 'Declaring a Regional State of Health Emergency Due to the Epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases in the United States-Affiliated

growth of other risk factors for NCDs are more globally rooted, more fundamental to lived experience, and more far-reaching than treatment of the body alone can fully address, whether through nutrition education or medical interventions. Island food systems are intricate and porous, weaving together global economic forces with local environmental change, racial frictions, gender formations, colonial power relations, and the idiosyncratic cultural meanings that become entangled with individual foodstuffs. Once transformed, the impacts of those food systems can be just as extensive, from health to sovereignty, culture to economic development, social relations to identity.

In 2015, I visited the offices of Island Food Community to speak with the organization's director, Rainer Jimmy, about the reordering of Pohnpei's food system. Island Food's founding vision, to foster a "productive, environmentally sound island" where locally grown foods provide "food security, sustainable development, economic benefits, self-reliance, improved health, cultural preservation, and human dignity" suggests the scale of that reordering.³ But Jimmy thought back to his own childhood, when "people would wake up and get ready to go to their land, find food, and plant food." As the cash economy expanded in the 1960s and 1970s, people tended "not [to] stop [farming], but to ignore their land," trading subsistence crops for fast-cooking imports. "Maybe," Jimmy mused, "that was the reason there were not many NCDs. We would go up, spend the whole day cleaning, climbing, and then eating food. The land. We could live off the land."⁴

Pacific Islands," 2010. Accessed 15 October, 2017, http://www.pihoa.org/fullsite/newsroom/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/06/NCD_Emergency_Declaration.pdf.

³ Island Food Community of Pohnpei, "Articles of Incorporation" in *The Building of a New Nation... The Federated States of Micronesia*. Micronesian/Pacific Collection, College of Micronesia-FSM, 1.

⁴ Rainer Jimmy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 13 January 2015.

This evolving relationship between Pohnpei's land and its people has powerfully shaped the lives of its residents, but it precedes them as well. Most recently, that evolution was framed by four periods of colonial rule: by Spain from 1886 to 1899, Germany until 1914, Japan until 1945, and the United States until 1978. Over a few generations, as foreign flags were raised and lowered, Pohnpei's colonialities layered one on top of the other, becoming embedded into the fabric of the island with the colonial subjectivities that emerged alongside them. Together, those accumulated strata of colonial encounter formed the building blocks of modern Pohnpei. But with the accumulation of those encounters has come pain: pain to bodies, and to the food systems that sustain them. Brett Walker writes that all modern nations "require pain and acceptance of that pain from their subjects and citizenry," and that citizens experience the policies and priorities of their nations physiologically, at times with lethal consequences.⁵ Here I offer prehistories of the pain that Pohnpei's colonial encounters have brought to its people, and of the public health crises that now preoccupy a postcolonial state.

⁵ Brett Walker. *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 9, 11.

INTRODUCTION

Eating Empire, Going Local centers the island of Pohnpei in a global story of colonial encounter and dietary change. It follows Pohnpeians and Pohnpei's outer Islanders, engaging food and food production as political spaces through which they negotiated and resisted empire, extended food's traditional role as locus of political influence, and used it to navigate deceptively transformative interventions in ecology, consumption, the market, and the body. In the process food became Pohnpei's middle ground, a middle ground that ultimately fostered its rise in rates of non-communicable disease. The chapters draw on global commodity histories that converge on the island, of coconuts, rice, imported foods, and breadfruit, in order to illuminate the local and global forces that delivered these new political entanglements and public health impacts. *Eating Empire* uses food and the analytic lenses it enables – from ecology and race to domesticity and sovereignty – as a tool to reimagine Pohnpei's historical inter-imperial and contemporary political relationships from the bottom up.

The story of dietary change on Pohnpei is the story of an indigenous food system's transformation under a century of colonial rule. Epidemiologist Elise Dela Cruz-Talbert defines a food system as all the ways food is “grown, processed, transported, eaten, and disposed of,” each of which may vary widely by region, locality, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. Food systems are woven together by threads so diverse and interconnected that they exert pressures on us from all directions, seen and unseen, even as we retain agency to make choices within those systems. “Imagine,” Cruz-Talbert writes, “that you go with the flow of what your family and friends are eating, dine

in your neighborhood, and gravitate towards the foods you see or hear about on television. How would you be eating?”⁶

We might then ask how a Pohnpeian “going with the flow” would eat prior to colonization, how she would eat now, and what accounts for the extent of the change. In the early 19th century, just prior to Pohnpei’s first sustained contacts with whalers, beachcombers, and missionaries, most Pohnpeians ate a balanced diet of starchy staples like breadfruit and taro, seafood, fruits, sugarcane and, less commonly, ceremonial foods like dog. Absent natural disasters like drought or typhoon, families skillful and diligent enough to fish and farm found an abundance of healthy food, especially in the *rahk* season when breadfruit was most abundant. Today, those foods are still widely consumed. But the island’s commercial economy has also made staples like rice or flour and fatty, salty imports almost ubiquitous: from the groceries and restaurants of Kolonia on Pohnpei’s northern coast to the “local stores” of its rural municipalities and outer islands, from traditional feasts and office parties to school lunches and home meals.

Imported foods have become woven into Pohnpei’s food system, which is itself firmly embedded within the dense webs of social and political obligation that shape life on the island. Emelihter Kihleng’s 2008 poem “Pressure” suggests the scale of that embeddedness:

Mihna needs a case of ramen for the *kapasmwar*⁷
Nohnno Anako needs a 50 lb. bag of rice for the meal
*plus ehu kehs en malek*⁸
Soulik is in the hospital again (his liver)
my cousin Reileen just had a baby

⁶ Elise Leimomi Dela Cruz-Talbert. “How We Choose Our Food and How Our Food Chooses Us: Public Health” in *The Value of Hawai’i 2: Ancestral Roots, Oceanic Visions*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014), 153-154.

⁷ A feast for bestowing new titles in the chiefly system

⁸ One case of chicken

I need to bring hot dogs to the fundraiser
the car windshield is leaking
pay day isn't until Wednesday
I'm on my own⁹

Kihleng's speaker struggles to bridge her participation in the cash economy with her duty to show generosity to family, in part by converting her limited savings into gifts of purchased food. Pressures known to precolonial Pohnpei, like caring for new mothers and sick relatives, are added to the strains of wage work, and both exacerbated by unequal access to money. While the speaker is free to purchase or eat whatever she chooses, violating her obligations may jeopardize the family ties that root her in Pohnpei society.

Scholars have typically offered two explanations for how imported foods like white rice and hot dogs have come to be such essential components of so many indigenous communities. On the one hand, "dietary colonialism" has framed an array of interpretations that foreground the influence of colonial or global economic power. In 1975, for instance, the geographer T.G. McGee used dietary colonialism as a device to apply dependency theory to his reading of Pacific dietary change.¹⁰ "Food dependency" in Oceania, he argued, was a product of colonial cash cropping, the urbanization it produced, and the resulting spread of food imports from urban to rural areas, all of which culminated in Islanders being "forced away from the use of their own resources."¹¹ Three decades later, anthropologist Martha Ward likened Pohnpei's "dietary colonialism" to a

⁹ Emelihter Kihleng. *My Urohs*. (Honolulu: Kahuaomanoa Press, 2008), 42.

¹⁰ As Richard White suggests, the central concern of dependency theory during the 1970s and 1980s was "the process by which peripheral regions are incorporated into the global capitalist system and the 'structural distortions' – political, economic, and social – that result in these societies." For White's application of dependency theory to shifts in Choctaw, Pawnee, and Navajo food systems, see: Richard White. *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), xvi.

¹¹ T.G. McGee. *Food Dependency in the Pacific: A Preliminary Statement*. Working Paper/Development Studies Centre, Australian National University. (Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Pacific Studies, 1975), 4-6.

disease in the social body, attacking the United States for “‘force-feeding’ its own dysfunctional values about consumption to island societies who neither asked for nor needed such interventions.” “Obesity,” Ward argued, “is not an individual choice or a character defect; it is the system-wide availability of foods that entice, seduce, and fill with empty calories; it is schools that feed children turkey tails and Spam.” According to Ward, that system facilitated the transformation of certain food imports into “social and biological necessities, something at the root of what it means to be Pohnpeian.”¹²

Historian Tamara Levi’s recent work on rationing and indigenous peoples in the 19th century U.S. and South Australia finds fertile ground for this sort of top-down reading. Levi explores four communities where food rationing anchored coercive strategies to expand government access to indigenous lands. There, rations constrained behavior and enforced acculturation, while also helping governments avoid the sort of “straightforward exile or extermination” that might have violated “national ideologies encompassing humanitarian thought and Christian duty.”¹³ But on Pohnpei, deliberate colonial meddling in indigenous food systems can be difficult to locate. Rather than “force-feeding” food values to passive recipients, officials prioritized interventions in environments, societies, and economies they considered unrelated to food or diet, but which nonetheless helped transform Pohnpei’s food system over the course of a few generations. Ironically, some of the starkest transformations came at the behest of U.S. officials who also declaimed their support for the production and consumption of local foods, and defended their health benefits.

¹² Martha Ward. *Nest in the Wind: Adventures in Anthropology on a Tropical Island*. (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2005), 165-166.

¹³ Tamara Levi. *Food Control and Resistance: Rations and Indigenous Peoples in the United States and South Australia*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2016), 6-7.

On the other hand, nutrition researchers and healthcare professionals working in indigenous communities have typically foregrounded individual behaviors and eating choices, which are presumed to be at least partly changeable through education and counseling. While Pohnpei's first colonial healthcare systems were almost entirely concerned with infectious disease, its postwar governments have demonstrated a similar level of commitment to education-based nutrition programming. These interventions are not only within the reach of healthcare professionals, agriculturalists, and community advocates, whose influence rarely permits them to spearhead truly systemic reforms, they are also unlikely to upset capitalist commitments to consumer choice and free markets, or to subvert government authority by inducing radical social or economic change. In 1954, for instance, University of Hawai'i nutritionist Mary Murai carried out one of the Carolines' first large-scale nutrition studies, aiming to facilitate "educational and developmental programs conducive to improved conditions." But Murai's willingness to attribute some responsibility for the incipient nutrition crisis she found on Majuro Atoll to U.S. policymaking, and her assertion that "good food consumption depends on both education and economics," led officials to dismiss her work as "pessimistic" and decline to incorporate her recommendations as official policy.¹⁴

Charlotte Biltekoff has argued that dietary ideals in the postbellum U.S. convey two interlocking sets of social ideals: one that "communicates emerging cultural notions

¹⁴ Murai's study, which I discuss briefly in chapter three, included a number of more specious conclusions as well. Using nutrition standards established by the National Research Council, Murai seemed to judge most of the people she met on Chuuk Lagoon's Udot Island and Majuro as deficient in most of the categories measured. This ostensible undernourishment led her to prescribe increased consumption of a wider range of foods. Finding 97% of Majuro residents below NRC allowances for caloric intake, for instance, Murai recommended increased intake of fat and carbohydrates. Mary Murai. *Nutrition Study in Micronesia* (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 1954), 1, 90; Dorothy E. Richard, *United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, vol. 3 (Washington: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1957), 943-944.

of good citizenship and prepares people for new social and political realities,” and another that attempts to distinguish the character and identity of the American middle class and express its social concerns.¹⁵ On Pohnpei, as in the colonized islands to its east and west, food was invested with its own notions of good citizenship. German officials aimed to “educate” Islanders for capitalist labor by fostering plantation environments that regulated work and promoted import consumption. Japanese settlers and agriculturalists upheld rice as a metaphor for racial and national identity, using mutually reinforcing notions of “rice as our food” and “rice paddies as our land to shape social and agricultural policy.”¹⁶ American officials and healthcare professionals advocated nutrition interventions they hoped would result in “the people themselves deciding” to purchase healthier foods and then “of their own volition, requesting that these products be made available.”¹⁷ Pohnpeian sovereignty advocates warned that “our appetites are standing in the way of progress” toward political autonomy, championing the consumption of deeply rooted local foods like breadfruit over imports like rice.¹⁸

Each of these ideal Pohnpeian food citizenships was particular to time and place, influenced by colonizers’ national identities, prevailing global approaches to imperial rule, technologies of food production and distribution, environmental change, and the island’s own evolving strategies of adaptation and resistance to foreign control. But while the discourses that defined Pohnpei’s ideal colonial subject and capitalist consumer converged markedly after the Second World War, administrative commitments to both

¹⁵ Charlotte Biltekoff. *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 7.

¹⁶ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4.

¹⁷ High Commissioner to Distad Ponape, “Addition of Enriched Rice and Flour to Micronesian Diet,” May 14, 1958, Robert Gibson Papers, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i, Box 7, Folder 93, 1-2

¹⁸ Ann Nakano. “Food Stands in Way of Self-Gov’t.” *The National Union*. January 30, 1981, 7.

corresponded to such a degree as to make the island's 20th century governance something of a shared inter-imperial project, albeit one thrown out of time. Yet these parallels are often obscured by the strict periodization of modern Pohnpeian history into colonial periods, and by the logistical challenges inherent to accessing archival documents in all the relevant languages. I therefore offer histories of core commodities that resurface throughout Pohnpei's modern history, but which also highlight the particularities of each colonial ruler. I also rely on Japanese, German, and English-language archives and oral histories to better apprehend the island's inter-imperial overlap, and its divergences.

Chapter one is an environmental history of Pohnpei's trade in copra, the dried flesh of the coconut. During the 1870s and 1880s, copra drew trading firms to the island, and became a primary focus of the colonial regime during the island's German occupation. Here I draw our attention to the entanglement of human and nonhuman agents that facilitated the growth of Pohnpei's copra trade, and argue that Pohnpeians and coconuts, commodified as copra, remade the land and one another as indigenous and foreign visions of the coconut collided. Chapter two is a history of race and rice under Japanese rule. In the Japanese home islands, rice acted as an enduring, bifurcated metaphor for the Japanese self, both enforcing the eater's racial identity and marking the paddy land that produced it as Japanese. On Pohnpei, rice became a site in which one's standing within the colonial order realized and contested, at least until the island's racial regimes collapsed under the weight of the Pacific War.

Chapter three offers a history of domesticity and imported foods during the early American occupation. It traces the routes products like corned beef, canned salmon, canned milk, flour, tinned vegetables, and alcohol took through the households and

bodies of early Cold War Pohnpei. It argues that the U.S. Navy's confident vision of postwar Kolonia as an import-dependent base town broke down in the wake of American unease with modernity's impacts on Pacific Islander bodies and landscapes, and in light of Kolonia's flowering into a multiethnic hub whose own use of imports granted it a measure of independence from outside leadership. Chapter four is a history of breadfruit, rice, and the sovereignty movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It focuses on a series of impacts to local economies, political systems, cultures, and health so far-reaching they might be called a rice revolution. But the risk to Pohnpei's food sovereignty was always the era's primary concern, as the rice revolution's deep entanglements with imported goods and U.S. aid threatened to lure voters toward Washington at the very moment the territory's independence movements reached their climax.

Pohnpei

Pohnpei is named for the stone altar on which it rests. The first voyaging party to reach it called forth a quantity of altar stones, placing them on a coralhead just visible above the ocean's surface. That altar became the foundation for all of Pohnpei, whose earth, stones, and flora were subsequently assembled atop it through a mixture of human and divine labor. The island is high, volcanic, and lush, lying in the Caroline archipelago seven degrees north of the equator. Roughly circular and around 130 miles square, it is surrounded by a barrier reef that extends about two miles from the shoreline, enclosing a lagoon and a scattering of small islets. Outside its reef lie a number of low coral atolls, eight of which are inhabited and presently incorporated within the political boundaries of the Federated States of Micronesia's Pohnpei State. Those atolls include And, eight miles

southwest of the main island; Pakin, 21 miles west; Ngatik, 88 miles southwest; Mokil, 109 miles east; Pingelap, 188 miles southeast; Oroluk, 202 miles west-northwest; Nukuoro, 245 miles south; and Kapingamarangi, 465 miles north-northeast. Prior to colonial rule, the people of these atolls maintained varying degrees of contact with Pohnpei. Today, all have a permanent presence there.

Most of Pohnpei's residents live near the shoreline, where there are no natural beaches and few coastal plains, but where an extensive system of mangrove swamps guards against excessive erosion. The interior is rugged and more sparsely populated, with deep valleys and high mountain ridges like *Nahnalaud* and *Ngihneni* reaching more than 2,500 feet above sea level. Pohnpei's interior is among the wettest places on earth, receiving between 295 and 400 inches of rainfall per year, and sending 65-70% of that rainfall downstream through a network of more than 40 streams and rivers. The coasts are drier, and the western leeward shore drier than the windward side, but the island as a whole still averages 190 inches of rainfall annually. The climate is tropical, somewhat drier and less humid in January and February, but averaging between 80 and 90 percent humidity and holding to a narrow temperature range around the average of 81 degrees throughout the year.¹⁹

Pohnpei's land and sea are rich with resources. The lands Pohnpeians classify as *nanwel*, those not under human management, are found mostly in the interior. Inhabited and ruled by *enihn*, the gods and spirits of traditional religion, *nanwel* regions traditionally represented the limits of human authority, though they still yielded valuable crops like bananas and wild yams. *Nansapw* land is "humanized," sustaining households,

¹⁹ Mark Merlin, et al., *Tuhke En Pohnpei: Plants of Pohnpei*. (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1992), 1-4, 13-14.

farms, and most social activity. Over the centuries, *nansapw* farms became strategically managed agroforests, which typically consist of an upper canopy of breadfruit and coconuts, a midlevel canopy of herbaceous and woody perennials, and a lower canopy of root crops like yams.²⁰ The mixture of human and divine knowledge that brought these agroforests into being, and their enduring power to sustain human life, has led Pohnpei Chief of Agriculture Adelino Lorens to describe them as a “heavenly gift to Pohnpei... a natural gift,” one contemporary Pohnpeians should build upon but never undermine.²¹

Fish and shellfish have also sustained Pohnpeians, although their island’s agricultural abundance requires less dependence on marine resources than on outer atolls. Precolonial techniques like line fishing, spearfishing, gathering shellfish, and cooperative multi-net fishing typically took place within the confines of the reef. Most fishing was done on an ad hoc basis, with the catch divided among the fishermen, their kin, and neighbors. Although I focus mainly on agriculture, the increasing entanglement of Pohnpei’s fisheries with its market economy during the 20th century mirrors a similar evolution in its farms. Technologies like monofilament gill nets, fiberglass boats equipped with outboard motors, and icemakers expanded access to marine resources outside the reef, drawing fish like tuna more deeply into Pohnpei’s maritime economy, and providing a cash incentive for fishing groups to limit their size and willingness to share their catch. Further, as land transportation displaced canoe travel and fishing

²⁰ The *nanwel/nansapw* binary is not entirely rigid. *Nansapw* can be created from *nanwel* through diligent labor, and *nanwel* can return through neglect. Michael J. Balick, et al. *Ethnobotany of Pohnpei: Plants, People, & Island Culture*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 10; Akitoshi Shimizu. “Chieftdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World: Everyday Life, Subsistence and the Political System on Ponape,” in *Islanders and Their Outside World*. (Tokyo: Committee for Micronesian Research, St. Paul’s University, 1982), 169.

²¹ Adelino Lorens. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 5 March 2015.

became a pathway into the cash economy, canoe and net feasts grew increasingly rare.²²

Pohnpei's traditional political systems have offered mechanisms to manage this abundance for centuries. The *nahnmwarki* system, in effect since the early 17th century, divides the island into paramount chiefdoms called *wehi*, each of which is ruled by an "A" title line headed by a *nahnmwarki* and a "B" title line headed by a *nahnken*. Each *wehi* is composed of many *kousapw* (sections), which are ruled through parallel systems. These chiefs govern as embodiments of traditional custom (*tiahk*) rather than by coercion, preside over hierarchically organized communities traditionally ordered by status rather than economic class, and stand at the center of vibrant redistribution economies. A chief's governing authority is rooted in the prestige (*wahu*) associated with his title, just as the *wahu* of plants, animals, fish, and certain places and times elevate their standing within the same system. Chiefs control titles ranked by their *wahu* value, and by granting these titles in recognition of work done in service of the community or leadership, they incorporate nearly every adult Pohnpeian within their domain.²³

Prior to the German land reforms of 1912, the *nahnmwarki* was the sole landowner in his *wehi*, granting his people indefinite use rights to their farmsteads and using his divine authority to bring fertility to the soil. The island's redistribution economy revolves around the cycles of generosity and obligation generated by these initial gifts. The people offer the first fruits of their harvests to their chiefs, focusing particularly on crops like *sakau* (kava) or yams with a high prestige value. The chiefs then redistribute

²² Larry Allan Goodwin. "Change Is Continuity: The Maritime and Subsistence Economics of Ponape, Micronesia." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1983), 21, 130-132.

²³ Titles in both the *nahnmwarki* and *nahnken* lines have corresponding women's titles. A now disused "C" line of priestly titles maintained a parallel set of women's titles as well. I discuss women's participation in the *nahnmwarki* system at greater length in chapter 3. Shimizu, "Chiefdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World," 155-157.

those offerings according to the status of the titleholders in their domain. These redistributions obligate the people to make additional tributes in the future. In the meantime, a range of other feasts can be held, to demonstrate respect, show thanksgiving, or make amends, and to commemorate an array of important life events.²⁴

This feasting complex is often characterized as a prestige economy. Frequently targeted by missionaries and colonial officials for fostering gluttony, waste, and inequality, prestige feasting in fact induces greater agricultural productivity, and even aids in disaster recovery. The prestige economy operates in tandem with Pohnpei's subsistence and commercial economies. The former enables Pohnpeians to produce food for day-to-day use, which typically consists of crops, seafood, or meat that hold a low prestige value. The latter is rooted in the island's foreign trade, and is animated by cash and the imports it brings into reach. The reshaping of Pohnpei's subsistence and prestige economies is due largely to growing influence of its commercial economy, which since the early 19th century has been spurred along by the popularization of certain trade items, economic development, and the formulation of a new form of class-based prestige centered on access to cash rather than traditional status.²⁵

The scale of these changes to Pohnpei's indigenous food system is hardly unique in Oceania. In the Marshalls, nearly every resident of Kwajalein Atoll's thickly populated Ebeye islet lacks direct access to farmland and relies heavily on imported foods. On Oahu, development and commercial agriculture have displaced fishponds, breadfruit trees, and taro patches, and more than 90% of food is imported. New Zealand sends large

²⁴ Shimizu, "Chieftdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World," 155-157; David Hanlon. *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 40.

²⁵ William R. Bascom. "Ponapean Prestige Economy." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 4, no. 2 (1948), 211.

quantities of fatty mutton flaps to Papua New Guinea, where they are seen as central to a “modernist good life,” illustrations of wealthy nations “dumping” undesirable food into the developing world, and emblematic of the stubbornly unequal relationships fostered by globalization.²⁶ Even on nearby Nukuoro Atoll, whose population numbers in the hundreds, wartime bomb craters and sea level rise have resulted in saltwater intrusion through much of the central taro patch, severely damaging a critical staple that once stood at the core of the atoll’s food system.²⁷

Arguably, some of these communities now maintain food systems far more troubled than Pohnpei, which lacks the population density of Ebeye, the settler colonial legacy of Oahu, the poverty of Papua New Guinea, or the agricultural limitations of Nukuoro. But it is precisely Pohnpei’s agricultural abundance, political autonomy, fidelity to its *nahnmwarki* system, and small settler population that so clearly lays bare the full range of empire’s influence on indigenous food systems. Pohnpei can still sustain the majority of its people with local foods, and is hypothetically capable of substituting most of its imported staples with traditional foods like breadfruit or taro. Yet the island’s intermittent rice shortages can nonetheless inspire real panic, and even the occasional physical confrontation when grocery supplies run low. These panics alone suggest a more complex story, one tied to economics, tradition, prestige, desire, and a multilayered legacy of colonial encounter, and one that Pohnpei is uniquely positioned to reveal.²⁸

²⁶ Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington. *Cheap Meat: Flap Food Nations in the Pacific Islands*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 7.

²⁷ Ray Ezekias. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 15 January 2015. See: Phil Giles. “Nukuoro Atoll Taro Patch Report.” United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pohnpei Field Office, 2001. Micronesian Seminar archives, Chuuk.

²⁸ Jim Hiyane, owner of Kolonia’s Palm Terrace grocery, has called these periodic rice shortages “crises,” and speculated dramatically that “chaos and mob rule” would result from a more serious, longer-term scarcity of rice. Several years ago, a short tongue-in-cheek video circulated among Pohnpeian Facebook users that gave some playful substance to Hiyane’s hypothesis. Entitled “*Sohte Rais*” (no rice) and shot in

Breadfruit and tobacco: prehistories of empire

While I limit my focus to four commodities I find especially illustrative of Pohnpei's evolving food system under colonial rule, many other foods reveal a great deal about its history as well. Turtles, *sakau*, and yams harbor deep histories of Pohnpei's feasting complex, its political economy, and its ongoing ties to its high and low island neighbors. Breadfruit offers a story of sweeping change to subsistence and prestige economies, nearly a thousand years before colonization. The swift transition pigs made from trade item to fixture of prestige feasting reveals the island's remarkable capacity to adapt to new products and technologies. Tobacco's role as Pohnpei's first *de facto* currency and its deleterious effects on public health foreshadow some of the commercial economy's more recent impacts. This section includes brief versions of a few of those stories, and a much-abbreviated overview of the four periods Pohnpeians use to chronicle their history.

The first of these periods is *Mwein Kawa*, the period of building, which began with Pohnpei's first settlement around 2,000 to 2,500 years ago.²⁹ Oral histories describe an initial voyage guided by an octopus, which located a vast submerged reef marked by a small coralhead. Successive voyagers used magic and their canoes to deliver earth, stones, mangroves, and crops to that coralhead, building it into an island. According to Luelen Bernart, a mission-educated Pohnpeian who recorded his variant of the island's oral history in the 1930s and 1940s, in those years the people and the land underwent a sustained, mutual improvement. As Pohnpei rose from the sea, the people found food to

the style of a trailer for a post-apocalyptic disaster film, the clip featured foreboding music and dramatic monochrome shots of empty rice bags and bowls scattered through an apparently abandoned Pohnpeian household. James Hiyane. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 March 2015.

²⁹ Paul Rainbird. *The Archaeology of Micronesia*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 181.

eat and bark cloth to wear, battled and exterminated a cruel race of mutant cannibals who were born among them, and learned to cook with fire. Matrilineal clans became the “basic distinguishing unit of social organization,” each bearing histories that marked the deep ties between the people and the land. More than an evolution in Pohnpei’s food system, the *Mwein Kawa* saw Pohnpeians enlightened as moral beings, accumulating the deep knowledge needed to thrive in the environment they made.³⁰

Even so, Pohnpei’s decentralization continued to produce disorder. But during *Mwein Saudeleur*, the island was politically unified for the first time. Pohnpei’s second period began sometime between the 10th and 12th centuries, when two brothers named Olosihpa and Olosohpa set sail with a voyaging party from the west. Establishing a settlement on Pohnpei’s eastern shore after a prolonged search, they began to build a capital at Nan Madol. Over the centuries, that capital became a vast complex: 92 artificial islets spread across 200 acres, assembled from immense basalt crystals by a mixture of human and divine effort. Ohlosohpa became Pohnpei’s first island-wide leader, its Saudeleur, and launched a dynasty that coerced tribute and labor from all of Pohnpei for the next five centuries.

Ohlosohpa’s successors became ensconced at Nan Madol, along with lines of

³⁰ Each of the island’s six earliest voyages brought usable resources and technologies that radically reshaped the island’s environment and created its early food system. The first wave planted fruit seeds and taro, the second brought soil, the third carried the knowledge to build suitable shelters, the fourth brought ivory nut, the fifth fire, and the sixth yam seedlings and banana plants. Paul Rainbird has written that early settlers throughout the region aimed “to alter the very nature of the landscape, by manipulating the vegetation so as to cause erosion and thereby lay the foundations for the subsistence systems, in a landscape transported as much by mind as by seacraft.” Luelen Bernart. *The Book of Luelen*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), 7-11; Rainbird. *Archaeology of Micronesia*, 95; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 7. On Luelen, see: David Hanlon, “The Path Back to Pohnsakar: Luelen Bernart, His Book, and the Practice of History on Pohnpei.” *ISLA: Journal of Micronesian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 13-36; Dirk Ballendorf, “Luelen Bernart: His Times, His Book, and His Inspiration.” *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2005): 17-24; Jacqueline Hazen. “Voyages of Ethnographic Knowledge: Circulation, Intertextuality, and Genre in *The Book of Luelen*.” (M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 2012).

titleholders and priests. The former were assigned discrete forms of service to the Saudeleur, while the latter presided over religious ceremonies that ritually affirmed his dominion. Those ceremonies integrated an existing worship of the land centered in Salapwuk and Wene with a new ocean-centered worship of Nahn Samwohl, the alien, predatory moray eel. The combined practice was called Nahnisohnsapw, “the honored one of the land.” It helped cement the Saudeleur’s control over Pohnpei’s agricultural and marine resources, and over the island’s political, economic, and cultural life. The turtle was the culminating tribute of Nahnisohnsapw’s central ceremony, its ability to thrive on land and sea signifying the union of both. But the turtle also evoked the land’s maternal nurturing. Its ritual sacrifice therefore symbolized the submission of Pohnpei’s three *wehi* (turtle states) to the death-dealing power of the Saudeleur, whose rule forcibly interrupted the bond between the land and its people.³¹

Already exacting, Saudeleur demands for tribute and labor escalated over time. The Saudeleurs were said to be omniscient, and omnipotent. They claimed ownership over the products of all human labor for themselves and their court, at times feasting so richly that the people were left with little for themselves. Stories of the Saudeleur’s repressive rule pervade Pohnpei’s oral history. Luelen writes of a subordinate chief named Lepen Moar and of Pohnpei’s first farmer, a man named Lamuak. Lamuak

³¹ These three *wehi* were Sounahleng (presently Madolenihmw, U, and eastern Nett), Onohnleng (presently Kitti), and Pikeniap (Sokehs Island). Rufino Mauricio describes the last turtle ceremony performed at Nan Madol, sometime in the 1830s. Priests first transported a turtle caught and stored in a special pool to the shore of Temwen Island. There, “the turtle was bathed, anointed, and decorated with cords made from coconut fiber.” Following the purification, two priests positioned the turtle upright on a canoe between them and held it steady. The priest Dauk Madolenihmw “stood in front of the turtle and stared at its eyes. Every time the turtle blinked, Dauk would do the same.” The turtle was then taken to another place in Temwen, dropped four times on a large stone, transported to Idehd Islet in Nan Madol, killed, butchered, and redistributed. Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 9-15; Rufino Mauricio. “Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei, Micronesia: Perspectives from Archaeology and Oral History.” (University of Oregon, 1993), 151-158.

uprooted a certain banana sucker and brought it to the Lepen Moar's domain, asking permission to build a farmstead there. The banana tree bore first, and Lamuak baked one of its stalks in a stone oven as a chiefly offering. But before the Lepen Moar could bring the bananas to Nan Madol, Lamuak tossed them into a flooded river that carried them straight to the Saudeleur's residence. Furious, the Saudeleur ordered Lepen Moar on a quest abroad to fetch the feather of a rare bird, a mission likely to end in death. Lepen Moar reaffirmed his loyalty, but only after leading a group of people and animals on an epic voyage, finally securing the feather by virtue of their unusual skill and trickery.³²

Stories like these now stand as vivid warnings against centralized governance, repression, and chiefly greed. But anthropologist Glenn Petersen has speculated that the radical changes to the island under the Saudeleurs were not entirely of their making. Instead, he points to the diffusion between C.E. 1000 and 1500 of new hybrid varieties of breadfruit, a nutritious and abundant staple that demands relatively little labor to produce. Breadfruit, he suggests, may have "revolutionized" the region's subsistence economies by sharply reducing labor demands, diverting workers into production of tribute offerings or construction projects, and fostering sweeping changes in other areas of society as well.³³ Perhaps the abundant wealth that fueled the Saudeleur dynasty and the building of Nan Madol were also a consequence of breadfruit's extraordinary, even sacred, ability to provide for human needs. At the very least, *Mwein Saudeleur* coincided with a critical reordering of Pohnpei's food system, which saw breadfruit installed at the core of a food security framework that served the island well into the 20th century.

³² Luelen, *Book of Luelen*, 41-43.

³³ I discuss Petersen's "breadfruit revolution" theory more extensively in chapter four. Glenn Petersen. *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration, and Political Organization*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 57.

Mwein Nahnmwarki, Pohnpei's third period, followed an invasion from the east that toppled Saudeleur rule and avenged the long-suffering victims of the dynasty's abuse. Around 1628, a demigod named Isohkelekel gathered 333 companions from his home island, probably Kosrae, and led them to And Atoll. From And, they sailed to Pohnpei. But before staging an invasion, they made peace with the land and its people, marrying Pohnpeian women, fathering children, and absorbing the island's customs. Finally, Isohkelekel's forces staged a military campaign that left the Saudeleur cornered, forcing him to transform into a small fish and beat a permanent retreat. Isohkelekel then took up residence at Nan Madol. There, he received divine instruction to form a new political order.³⁴

Revolving around feasts that incorporated both the people and their tributes, the new *nahnmwarki* system fostered a closeness between leaders and their subjects that had been absent under Saudeleur rule. But with the demigod Isohkelekel installed as Madolenihmw's first *nahnmwarki*, that closeness was limited. Isohkelekel had already repurposed Saudeleur-era titles to manage the demands of the feast complex, and he now installed a *nahnken* to serve as intermediary between himself and his people, along with a line of associated titles. In time, Pohnpei's other *wehi* replicated this governing framework, splintering power across multiple paramount chiefdoms and giving rise to the maxim *Pohnpei sohte ehu*, "Pohnpei is not one." The first *mehn waii* (foreigners) to reach the island surfaced along its western coast in 1595, in the twilight of Saudeleur rule. But nearly all the island's other foreign visitors have found autonomous *wehi*, separated by political boundaries and cultural practices but united by their ties to the land.³⁵

³⁴ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 18-21.

³⁵ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 21-25.

It was not until the first decades of the 19th century that *mehn waii* began to build a sustained presence on Pohnpei, starting with the beachcombers who collected tortoiseshell for sale to visiting schooners in exchange for metal tools, firearms, and tobacco. Those beachcombers served at the pleasure of the *nahnmwarki*, each of whom took charge of the foreign trade in his *wehi*. But demand for imports quickly outpaced their ability to regulate commerce, and Pohnpeians began pursuing alternative pathways into the new commercial economy like prostitution and theft. Ship traffic peaked in the 1850s, when whalers regularly put in at the ports of Rohnkitti and Madolenihmw. By then, tobacco had become Pohnpei's currency of choice, and the pigs initially meant to provision passing vessels were featuring as prestige offerings in feasts across the island.³⁶

Tobacco proved a pragmatic way to accumulate foreign goods discreetly, without risking confiscation by traditional leaders. But its pervasive reach probably fueled widespread addiction as well, which then generated further demand for trade. Tobacco also drew the condemnation of Pohnpei's first Congregationalist missionaries, who crossed its reef in 1852 under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Alarmed by children's requests for chaw and their inability to avoid tobacco-based bartering, the missionaries set upon tobacco, alcohol, and prostitution as evidence of the deleterious effects of foreign contact, or at least foreign contact of the wrong sort. A devastating smallpox epidemic that struck two years later underlined those warnings, steeped in evangelical Manichaeism though they may have been. In fact, along with several additional outbreaks of influenza and measles, by the 1870s disease had reduced the island's population by more than half.³⁷

³⁶ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 60, 71, 74, 79.

³⁷ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 79, 84, 89, 98, 204.

By the time the warship *Manila* arrived in 1886 to declare Spanish possession of Pohnpei, beginning the fourth period of the island's history, a great many *mehn waii* had already staged encounters with Pohnpei and its people. Whalers and beachcombers had fueled an active foreign trade, some inadvertently spreading disease and others fathering children with Pohnpeian women. Protestant missionaries had planted churches and cultivated a small class of mission-educated Islanders, but failed to advance any truly radical reforms. The beginnings of a copra trade were taking root at Lenger Island in the northern lagoon, expanding the commercial economy's reach. Spain introduced a Catholic counterbalance to Protestant power, and engaged in frequent unsuccessful military campaigns against Pohnpeian forces.

Enduring transformations in Pohnpei's food system under Spanish rule were, however, relatively minimal outside of the copra trade. With thirteen governors in thirteen years, Pohnpei's Spanish rulers neither adopted a development strategy, actively promoted trade, integrated scientific research into their policymaking, or encouraged foreign settlement, all key factors in the food system's reordering after 1899. The military doctor Cabeza Pereiro, for instance, was left so discouraged by his years on Pohnpei that he composed a lengthy attack on his nation's chaotic, seemingly aimless quest for military domination there. Questioning the basis for Spain's presence in the islands, Pereiro dismissed their potential for commercial development, agricultural cultivation, settlement, or serving as coaling stations or ports-of-call. "The single benefit we have received from the islands to date," an exasperated Pereiro wrote, "is the sacrifice of men and money!"³⁸ Those sacrifices were only cut short by Spain's sale of the Carolines and

³⁸ Russell Jay Surber. "Pereiro's Recollections of the Ponape Uprising Against the Spanish, 1890-1891." (Master's Thesis, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1983), 20.

Northern Marianas to Germany. I therefore begin the story of Pohnpei's modern food system with copra, the quintessential commercial crop of German rule and foundation of the island's cash economy for nearly a century.

CHAPTER 1: IDEAL COCONUT COUNTRY: COMMODIFIED COCONUTS AND THE SCIENTIFIC PLANTATION

The first voyagers who settled Pohnpei brought with them nearly all the crops their descendants needed to survive, but the coconut came of its own accord. The island's oral histories speak of the world's first coconut tree, which sprouted from the grave of a man in Eir, to the south. The palm multiplied there and floated to Pohnpei, passing through the reef on the island's east side and coming to rest at Mesihsou in Madolenihmw.¹ Pohnpeians came to value the coconut's versatility, finding it useful for everything from providing sustenance and fiber to soothing conflicts between chiefs and their people.² Yet they also recognized its agency, as they did the agency of rivers, mountains, and reefs. As David Hanlon suggests, Pohnpeians regard human beings, natural forces, and supernatural forces as equally important agents in the making of their island's past.³ Pohnpei's rapid transition from an island where families maintained only a small number of coconut plantings to one whose 20th century skyline was dominated by coconut palms should therefore draw our attention to the entanglement of human and nonhuman agents that facilitated the growth of the copra trade on Pohnpei at the end of the 19th century.⁴

This chapter focuses on the modern proliferation of coconut trees on Pohnpei, its link to a powerful scientific agricultural discourse, and the coconut's attendant effects on Pohnpeian relationships and ecology. Environmental change has not always been at the forefront in written accounts of Pohnpeian history, just as Pohnpei's story has been

¹ Luelen Bernart. *The Book of Luelen* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), 127-128.

² Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 153.

³ David Hanlon. *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), xxi.

⁴ Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

largely absent in historical work on the Pacific copra trade. Still, it would be a mistake to dismiss the lessons Pohnpei's coconuts have to offer, both for assessing copra's impact on islands deemed marginal for production and in considering copra's transformative power even in places where large plantations were mostly absent. On islands like Pohnpei, copra signified the possibility of reimagining the coconut as money, and for decades represented the easiest and most regular access most families had to a burgeoning cash economy. I therefore follow the coconut's pathways across the Pacific and into Europe's booming coconut oil refineries, tracing the roots of the ideologies that drew Pohnpei into the global capitalist networks the copra trade helped to draw. I argue that Pohnpeians and coconuts, commodified as copra, remade the land and one another as indigenous and *mehn waii* visions of the coconut collided.

Historians who have examined Pohnpei's 1899-1914 German occupation, under which copra's influence on the island mushroomed, have most often taken the Sokehs Rebellion of 1910-1911 as their focal point.⁵ That rebellion was indeed pivotal for German rule on Pohnpei and for the evolution of Pohnpeian anti-colonial resistance, and its legacy on the island still endures. Yet, as Peter Sack suggests, the Sokehs Rebellion was neither representative of anti-colonial resistance in the German Pacific more broadly nor did it capture the full range of Pacific Islander responses to German colonial rule.⁶ Pohnpeians themselves sometimes note that the most enduring effects of colonialism on

⁵ See, for instance: Thomas Morlang. *Rebellion in der Südsee: Der Aufstand auf Ponape gegen die deutschen Kolonialherren 1910/11*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag), 2010; Francis Hezel. *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995); Peter Sack. *Phantom History, the Rule of Law and the Colonial State: The Case of German New Guinea*. (Canberra: Australian National University, 2001); and Helmut Christmann, Peter Hempenstall, and Dirk Anthony Ballendorf. *Die Karolinen-Inseln in deutscher Zeit: eine kolonialgeschichtliche Fallstudie*. (Münster: Lit, 1991); Paul Ehrlich. "'The Clothes of Men': Ponape Island and German Colonial Rule, 1899-1914'. (Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY Stony Brook, 1978);

⁶ Sack, *Phantom History*, 87-88.

their island have come not from the “hard bullets” of violent warfare but from the “soft bullets” of the cash economy and the imported goods it delivered.⁷

Germany presided over Pohnpei from its colonial capital at Herbertshöhe on New Britain, but it governed the “Island Territory” of the Carolines and Northern Marianas separately from its Melanesian holdings, aiming to transform Micronesians into capitalist consumers rather than pressure them into plantation labor.⁸ Even so, the plantation remained a persistent fixture in German colonial visions of the island, despite the fact that all of region’s copra interests were privately held and Pohnpei’s wet, rocky soil made it a poor fit for large-scale monocropping. Plantations appealed to colonial officials throughout the German Empire as a totalizing way of life and a tool of colonial power, just as they appealed to the copra industry as a way to boost production and regulate quality. On Pohnpei, the colonial logic of the plantation intruded even where plantations themselves were few.

Plantation copra was in such demand partly because of Europe’s emerging coconut margarine industry, which after the 1880s began to purchase kiln-dried, plantation-grown coconut flesh in large quantities. Industry boosters imagined a bright future for the product: as an inexpensive alternative to butter, a butter or lard substitute for Hindus and Muslims, a hygienic and shelf-stable product suitable for hospitals and army camps, a solution to the spiking costs of animal fats, or – more speciously – a miracle food whose cleanliness guaranteed freedom from typhoid and tuberculosis.⁹

⁷ Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

⁸ Sack, *Phantom History*, 21.

⁹ P.W. Bedford. “Commercial Notes on Foreign Countries.” *Pharmaceutical Record and Weekly Market Review* 10 (4 August 1890): 312; “Cocoa Butter.” *New York Tribune*, 22 September 1901; “Coco-Nut Fat.” *Pharmaceutical Journal: A Weekly Record of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences*, 8 August 1903, 237; J. Ferguson and A.M. Ferguson. “Germans Produce an Edible Fat from Copra.” *The Supplement to the*

Margarines like Palmin, Cocosa, Nucoline, and Vegetaline stressed the coconut's purity in their advertising, often by contrasting vivid white coconut flesh against the black skin of an ape or a "Native," or by framing industrial coconut production as a colonial civilizing process.¹⁰ Ultimately, however, Pohnpei produced little of this high-grade copra, falling instead into a supporting role: exporting trade copra and absorbing migrants from nearby coral atolls, thus enabling plantation copra to be produced elsewhere.

Yet the long-term impacts of copra on Pohnpei were dramatic nonetheless. In 1939, as a man of 73, Pohnpeian oral historian Luelen Bernart reflected back on the changes the copra trade had brought to his island. After the 1912 German land reform, he said, Pohnpeians "became ambitious to earn money through the production of copra," urgently desired to possess their land, and no longer shared food as often as they once had. Young couples shifted toward patrilocal residence, and married couples began to live independently. And, he might have added, the island boasted thousands of new residents from atolls like Pingelap, Mokil, and the Mortlocks, transforming Pohnpeian society and its relationship with neighboring islands.¹¹ These "soft bullets" became the most enduring legacy of Germany's brief time on Pohnpei.

Land and labor

Pohnpei's gently sloping mountains, turquoise lagoon, and lush vegetation must have made it appear a potential Eden to foreign visitors in the 19th century, a garden ready

Tropical Agriculturist and Magazine of the Ceylon Agricultural Society 6, no. 4 (April 1909): 395; *The Cult of the Coconut*. (London: Curtis Gardner & Co., Ltd., 1912), Introduction, 3.

¹⁰ David Ciarlo. *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 127.

¹¹ Statement by Lueleng [sic] in *Translation of Japanese Land Documents*, ed. Francis M. Miyake and Asia Mapping Inc., University of Hawai'i Library, reel 22 (hereafter JLD), 51-56.

to be reclaimed from the wilderness. *Mehn waii* in this period rarely missed a chance to remark on the island's beauty. Yet many saw in this beauty a fundamental disorder that demanded their intervention. When Frederick Moss visited from New Zealand in 1886, he declared that in spite of the fertility of its soil Pohnpei would require terrace farming to become truly productive. "Then it will be a lovely garden," he wrote, "but not, I fear, till then."¹² Moss read the Pohnpeian landscape as a signifier of the advancement and industriousness of its inhabitants, and found both lacking. This easy conflation of the shape of the land and the advancement of its people proved remarkably resilient in imperial visions of the island. As Carolyn Merchant suggests, the intertwined binaries of humans as civilized/savage and the land as garden/wilderness reach back to the earliest period of European exploration in the New World.¹³ Those binaries were at the heart of Pohnpeian and *mehn waii* contestations over coconuts and how to cultivate them.

Throughout Pohnpei's colonial history, *mehn waii* agricultural development schemes have been built on critiques of the island's farms as little better than untended wilderness. German district officer Albert Hahl, for instance, saw in Pohnpeian cultivation "a random style of gardening," and invested considerable personal effort in introducing commercially viable foreign crops to the island.¹⁴ Yet much of what foreigners like Hahl saw as chaos or natural landscape was strategically built. Pohnpeians distinguished between their island's humanized *nansapw* land and its spirit-filed *nanwel*, but they also recognized numerous *nansapw* subcategories, from *mwetwel* (forest

¹² Frederick J. Moss. *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea*. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1889), 204-205.

¹³ Carolyn Merchant. *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 66.

¹⁴ Albert Hahl. *Governor in New Guinea*, trans. Peter G. Sack and Dymphna Clark (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), 67.

clearing) and *lepwul* (swamps) to *diphw* (overgrown areas not yet reverted to “wild” forest), *wasahn kousoan* (house clearings), and *mal* (forest or grass savannah). But it was the indigenous agroforest, *panwel*, that most encompassed the accumulation of Pohnpei’s agricultural knowledge, and lay at the heart of its humanized landscape.¹⁵

Unrecognizable in terms of early 20th century European agriculture, Pohnpei’s agroforests provided a sustainable, intercropped land-use system capable of supplying much of a skilled farmer’s subsistence and prestige needs throughout the year.¹⁶ That agroforestry system was hard-won. Pohnpei’s earliest settlers probably practiced shifting cultivation, clearing fields, burning the cuttings, planting crops for two or three years, and then allowing the land to grow wild. An agroforestry framework likely emerged by the middle of the Saudeleur period, combining tree crops with a multi-layer canopy of other vegetation.¹⁷ Yet Pohnpei’s apparent fertility is deceptive, and its agroforestry land limited. While the island’s upland slopes offer fertile soil and good drainage, many are too steep, stony, or rainy for farming. Bottomlands are suitable for crops like swamp taro, but are wet and poorly drained. Most agroforestry therefore occurs in the lowlands, where soil is typically older and weathered, and where acidity limits possibilities for planting. There, coconuts and breadfruit dominate the agroforest’s upper canopy, while intercropping limits soil depletion, even from a large number of coconut trees.¹⁸

At the outset of the 20th century, Pohnpeians and *mehn waii* understood agroforests and plantations to be places laden with meaning, where labor was intimately

¹⁵ Mark Merlin, et al., *Tuhke En Pohnpei: Plants of Pohnpei*. (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1992), 30-32.

¹⁶ For a more detailed definition of agroforestry, see: Bill Raynor. *Agroforestry Systems in Pohnpei: Practices and Strategies for Development*. (Kolonia, Pohnpei: College of Micronesia, 1991), 1.

¹⁷ Merlin, et al., *Tuhke En Pohnpei*, 33.

¹⁸ Merlin, et al., *Tuhke En Pohnpei*, 5; Raynor, *Agroforestry Systems in Pohnpei*, 16; Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

linked to the status of those who worked them. For Pohnpeians, the agroforest was a critical site for *doadoahk*, work, having taken on an expanded importance after the decline of traditional warfare in the last years of the 19th century. David Hanlon writes that *doadoahk* then constituted one of Pohnpei's most fundamental activities. The proximate purpose of *doadoahk en nansapw* (subsistence work) and *doadoahk en nanihmw* (domestic work) was to sustain human life, but all *doadoahk* ultimately served the *nahnmwarki*. Direct service to the *nahnmwarki* was called *doadoahk en wahu*, works of honor. It materially linked commoners to their island's traditional political system through the feasting complex, using chiefs as a medium.¹⁹

While traditional leaders could order their people to perform certain forms of labor, voluntary contributions were most highly valued. *Tautik*, little work, was a short burst of voluntary service, typically participation in warfare. *Taulap*, great work, included "direct labor and all expressions of obedience, etiquette, and deference." Most visible as *nohpwei*, the first fruits contributions that drove Pohnpei's prestige economy, *taulap* reflected a patient, rigorous, lifelong dedication to the *nahnmwarki*. Traditional leaders answered *nohpwei* tributes with reciprocal redistributions, but also rewarded exceptional gifts with a traditional title, or with a title promotion. Skilled farmers therefore competed to make exceptional offerings of prestige crops like yams or *sakau*. A rare cultivar or a gift of unusual size or quality stood to boost the giver's social standing, on an island where prestige was highly coveted.²⁰

¹⁹ Shimizu, "Chiefdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World," 158-160; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 70.

²⁰ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 70; Michael Lieber. "Strange Feast: Negotiating Identities On Ponape." *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 93, no. 2 (1984), 169.

American missionaries and German colonial officials, by contrast, seemed to carry with them Lockean notions of private property, presuming, as Patrick Wolfe puts it, that “property in land resulted from the mixing of one’s labor with it to render it a more efficient provider of wealth than it would have been if left in its natural state.”²¹ Apart from the risk of joining property rights to a subjective standard for what qualified as labor, this framing became especially troublesome when confronted with orientalist visions of the boundless abundance of Pacific land. German district officer Viktor Berg, for instance, asserted that Pohnpei’s soil and climate were “so favorable for native produce, the natives have never learned to work hard for their living or even for a certain amount of luxury,” while Albert Hahl worried over the vast plantings left behind by those who had perished in the epidemics of the 19th century. “In a certain sense,” he wrote, the resulting abundance of food was detrimental to Pohnpeian industriousness, as “the mass of fruit makes structured work almost dispensable.”²² Yet, Hahl noted, the fantasy of a labor-free Pohnpei had reached at least as far as Nürnberg, where a family set out for the island in hopes of establishing a plantation, after reading that “the people here lived under breadfruit trees and had only to stretch out their hands to obtain the necessaries of life.”²³

These *mehn waii* assumptions made Pohnpei’s agroforests a potential target for foreign civilizing missions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and ultimately contributed to dispossession of vast tracts of *nahnmwarki*-owned land after the reforms of 1912. Yet the agroforest remained the steadfast core of Pohnpei’s food system, mitigating

²¹ Patrick Wolfe. “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race.” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 869.

²² For historical population estimates, see: Saul Riesenber. *The Native Polity of Ponape*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968, 6. Hahl, Albert. “Mitteilungen über Sitten Und Rechtliche Verhältnisse Auf Ponape.” *Ethnologisches Notizblatt* 2, no. 2 (1901): 1–13, 21; Viktor Berg. “Über die Insel Ponape.” *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 13 (1902): 179.

²³ Hahl, *Governor in New Guinea*, 74-75.

the need to rely on imported goods for essential resources except in times of extreme natural disaster. Still, as the copra trade reached Pohnpei in the 1870s, followed two decades later by a supportive German regime, *mehn waii* increasingly agitated for land, labor, and tax reforms that aimed to alter this balance in their favor.

The copra plantation's global origins

When the first regular copra exports began leaving Pohnpei in the 1870s via the trading station at Lenger Island, families produced the vast majority of the island's copra at their convenience. According to Luelen, Pohnpeians propagated these coconuts by selecting a fresh nut, hanging it from a tree or placing it on a drying platform until it sprouted, and then planting it, probably within an existing agroforest. Coconut meat could then be smoked or sun-dried before being bagged and shipped. Pohnpei's copra firms all encouraged production of this trade copra. But all aspired to plantation copra as well, from the three German firms who merged in 1887 to form the Jaluit Gesellschaft to Japan's *Nan'yō Bōeki kaisha* (NBK), which by the end of the German occupation in 1914 controlled most of the region's foreign trade.²⁴

On the one hand, the plantations Pohnpei's copra firms envisioned were the economic consequence of a simple technological innovation. In 1868, Theodor Weber of J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn developed a new process to dry coconut kernels on site, bag them, and then transport them to factories in Europe. There, coconut oil was extracted using industrial machinery and the coconut cake by-product sold for animal feed. Trading

²⁴ Paul Hambruch. *Ponape, Vol. 1: Geschichte, Geographie, Sprache, Eingeborene*. (Hamburg: Friederichsen, de Gruyter & Co., 1932), 344; Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 157; Mark Peattie. *Nan'yo: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 25. On Hambruch's scholarship, see: Glenn Petersen, "Hambruch's Colonial Narrative," *The Journal of Pacific History* 42, no. 3 (2007): 317-330.

firms then established plantations on islands and atolls across the Pacific to control quality and maximize production, remaking places like the Marshall Islands and Samoa into regional copra centers. On the other hand, the plantations of the German Pacific served a political function. They embodied a new model of humanitarian sovereignty that relied on the plantation as an instrument of its influence and a sign of its penetration.

On the eve of the 20th century, many in Europe viewed Germany's embrace of scientific research and its application of scientific methods in East Africa as a model for the modern colonial state, which they argued was more humanitarian than its antecedents. As Andrew Zimmerman notes, science was more than a means to enact this new form of humanitarian sovereignty. The two were inseparable. "Scientific law," Zimmerman writes, "is universal, indifferent to political boundaries, and allowing of no dissent, not because it is tyrannical, but because it is true." Thus scientific agriculture, with its systematic approach to land and labor management, became the preeminent tool by which German officials sought to regulate the political and economic lives of Africans. They did so not only by insisting that farmers replace efficient and productive intercropping with more labor-intensive plough-driven monocropping, but by developing agriculture programs that made intimate interventions in African households, transforming the gendered division of labor and relations with European capital along with the landscape itself.²⁵ The cultural authority with which Western science was laden

²⁵ Andrew Zimmerman. "Ruling Africa: Science as Sovereignty in the German Colonial Empire and Its Aftermath" in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 94-95, 97.

thus made it an appealing tool for colonial governance, and a powerful rationale for rejecting Indigenous scientific knowledge.²⁶

The coconut was just one of many cash crops that drew the attention of Western agriculturalists around the turn of the 19th century. Soon, the research this new class of coconut experts conducted in agricultural institutes and on plantations from Ceylon to the Philippines began to appear in a spate of new planters' manuals.²⁷ Despite their global origins, the manuals' prescriptions and tendency to interpret the coconut in economic terms were generally quite consistent. In his 1914 book *The Coconut*, for instance, Edwin Bingham Copeland promised readers that he had "constantly kept emphatically in view the fact that the [coconut] is of interest only because of its business importance." Promising that the physiology and proper management of the coconut palm were "the same the world over," manuals like Copeland's enlisted planters in a global project of curating and homogenizing coconut stocks in order to facilitate plantation agriculture and boost industrial production.²⁸

Many of the world's copra planters thus found themselves in search of what Copeland called "ideal coconut country." The phrase appears in *The Coconut*, captioning an image of a tranquil coconut grove.²⁹ An imposing volcano stands in the background,

²⁶ The resonances between German rule in Pohnpei and Africa were more than incidental. Three of the island's five German district officers had previous experience in Germany's African colonies: Victor Berg in Cameroon and German East Africa, Gustav Boeder in Dar es Salaam, and Hermann Kersting in Togo.

²⁷ See: Émile Prudhomme, *Le Cocotier: Culture, Industrie et Commerce dans les principaux pays de production. Coprah, Huile, Fibre de Coco et dérivés divers*. Paris: A. Challamel, 1906; John Ferguson, *Coconut Planter's Manual, or All About 'The Coconut Palm'*. (Colombo, Ceylon: A.M.&J. Ferguson, 1907); Max Birk, *Kopra-Produktion und Kopra-Handel*. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913); Paul Preuss, *Ways to Grow the Coconut* [椰子栽培法], trans. Shizuo Matsuoka [松岡静雄]. (Tokyo: Nōshōmushō Nōmukyoku, 1915).

²⁸ Warren Herbert Wagner. "Edwin Bingham Copeland (1873-1964) and His Contributions to Pteridology." *American Fern Journal* 54, no. 4 (October-December 1964): 177-179; Edwin Bingham Copeland. *The Coconut*. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), x.

²⁹ Copeland, *The Coconut*, 28.

with a thin line of palms and a placid lake below. The image represents orderly planting, a farm regularly maintained to prevent undergrowth and pruned to maximize crop yield, with pests held at bay using scientifically supported techniques. The geographic location is unmarked, and evidence of a human presence erased. The image reflects the logic of the planters' manual, which demanded that the coconut, the land, and its inhabitants all be curated and homogenized in order to achieve ideal production conditions. A 1912 British manual, for instance, offered a list of "Native errors" focused mainly on laborers' failure to plant trees in well-spaced grid formations, which directly echoed *mehn waii* critiques of Pohnpeian coconut planting, as well as the planting requirements of Pohnpei's German land code.³⁰

Pohnpei's agroforests easily accommodate additional coconut plantings without damage to other crops, but reproducing "ideal coconut country" on the island demanded more than minor adaptations.³¹ Fortunately for the island's copra firms, the reforms they envisioned frequently overlapped with the German administration's own agenda. Where planters preferred land they could acquire easily, German officials pursued land reform in hopes of encouraging individual ownership and disempowering paramount chiefs, whose substantial land holdings were still underutilized after the massive epidemics of the mid-19th century. Where planters preferred to work in peacetime, German officials hoped to forestall violent revolt by pursuing voluntary disarmament. And where planters demanded a pliant labor force, German officials conjured ways to educate Pohnpeians for labor in a capitalist system without deploying more than a handful of officials or foreign laborers to the island.

³⁰ *Cult of the Coconut*, 54; Ehrlich, "Clothes of Men," 204-205.

³¹ Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

When the first German warship arrived to take possession of Pohnpei in 1899, it set in motion a brief period of relative calm after years of chaotic Spanish rule. The island's first German district officer, Albert Hahl, threw open the doors of the old Spanish fort, worked in consultation with the island's traditional leadership, and pursued a cautious approach to political and economic reform. Tending toward an outward respect for Pohnpeian culture, Hahl learned Pohnpeian, appeared at feasts in traditional dress, drank *sakau*, and took a Pohnpeian mistress.³² But he also modeled the long-term transformations he hoped to see, personally tending a small experimental garden on the north bank of the Dauen Neu River.³³ Hahl never persuaded Pohnpeians to adopt the 30 or so cash crops he introduced to the island, but in the meantime he could often be seen in Kolonia among his test plantings of coffee, cotton, cocoa, rubber, hemp, and vanilla, and a few head of cattle.³⁴ In time, Hahl imagined, Pohnpei's tribute feasts would be eliminated and "landed property" brought to its commoners, whose rights he once compared to the slaves of ancient Sparta. Then, perhaps, the island might be made safe for commercial agriculture, and life redefined as the agroforest faded to the background.³⁵ Yet even as Hahl toiled silently away, parts of the island were already being remade by Pohnpei's most successful copra planter: a wealthy Pohnpeian man named Henry Nanpei who was already becoming a key ally to the German regime, and an antagonist.

³² Ehrlich, "The Clothes of Men," 101; Bernart, *Book of Luellen*, 124.

³³ Governor, Herbertshoehe to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 15 January 1900, RGIG, vol. 10, Item 121, Document 5, 9.

³⁴ The German regime introduced a total of 69 types of plants to Pohnpei as part of a larger colonial agriculture program that was coordinated from Berlin. Although the Spanish regime lacked a formal plant introduction program, a number of cash crops were successfully introduced to Pohnpei during the 1880s and 1890s as well. Albert Hahl. "Allgemeiner bericht über Ponape." *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 11 (1900): 546; Diane Ragone, et al. "History of Plant Introductions to Pohnpei, Micronesia and the Role of the Pohnpei Agriculture Station." *Economic Botany* 55, no. 2 (2001), 292-293.

³⁵ Hahl, "Mitteilungen über sitten und rechtliche verhältnisse auf Ponape." *Ethnologisches Notizblatt* 2, no. 2 (1901), 11; Ehrlich, "The Clothes of Men," 105.

Henry Nanpei, copra planter

Travellers who navigate through one of the channels in Pohnpei's reef and across a short distance of open sea will find themselves at And, a picturesque coral atoll nine miles off Pohnpei's southwestern coast. While And's lagoon covers more than 28 square miles, the atoll itself consists of less than a square mile of land thickly blanketed by self-propagated coconut palms. And is uninhabited today, but from the late 19th century until the 1950s the atoll housed a vibrant community of laborers engaged in copra production for Pohnpei's Nanpei family.³⁶ And's coconut trees are the descendants of one of Pohnpei's only true copra plantations, comprised of palms once neatly planted in rows 25 feet apart at the strict instruction of the family's patriarch, Henry Nanpei.³⁷

Like Nanpei himself, the plantation at And walked a line between Pohnpeian and *mehn waii* ways of being: reflective of a deep tradition of strategic adaptation to outside influence, yet unthinkable without its foundation in local culture and relationships. And's grid-like plantings no doubt stemmed most directly from Nanpei's embrace of the principles of scientific agriculture, perhaps mediated through advice from resident *mehn waii* or his own reading, but they were just as much the product of Nanpei's personal relationships with the atoll's community of laborers. The rows of palms also suggest Nanpei's awareness of colonial discourses that tied land use practices to cultural sophistication, and were meant to signify his own advancement, no less than the European-style homes he built or the business suits he often wore. Pohnpei's published histories have routinely featured Nanpei as a major political player on Pohnpei and in the Island Territory, but his approach to agriculture is perhaps just as revealing. As historian

³⁶ Thomas Panholzer and Rufino Mauricio. *Place Names of Pohnpei Island, Including And (Ant) and Pakin Atolls*. (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2003), 159.

³⁷ Tesiwo Liwy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29 April 2015.

Tesiwo Liwy suggests, Nanpei's Mortlockese employees not only produced copra but "worked hard to show the Germans how Henry [Nanpei] developed the land" at And as well.³⁸

Copra made Nanpei Pohnpei's richest man, and held out the promise of wealth to the handful of European traders who attempted plantation ventures on the island, among them Joaquin Kilmete in Nett, Oscar and Emil Loessner in Madolenihmw, and Dominique Etscheit at Mpwoampw, Dekehtik, and Sapwtik.³⁹ These settlers' plantings resembled Nanpei's in most ways. Yet Nanpei's path to prosperity was unique, from his reliance on mutual obligation for his labor supply to his broad family and clan connections and his zeal for leveraging his copra earnings into social prestige. He therefore played a critical role in introducing copra and cash to his island and in making economic commodities of Pohnpei's coconuts, as he built a vast new network of wealth around his centers of power: And Atoll and the port of Rohnkitti.

The foundations of Henry Nanpei's copra empire lay in his family and the Protestant Church. Nanpei was born in 1860 to paramount chief Nahnken Nahnku of Kitti and Meri-An, the daughter of a Pohnpeian mother and the English beachcomber James Headley. In an "unprecedented, revolutionary departure" from matrilineal succession and the guardianship of the island's paramount chiefs over its land, Nahnku willed all of the Kitti Nahnken's land holdings directly to Henry. Those holdings included the fishing and farming preserve of And Atoll, whose transfer generated feuds with Enipein's Sou Kitti

³⁸ Tesiwo Liwy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29 April 2015.

³⁹ Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 15 May 1903, in Susanne Moyal. *Records of the German Imperial Government of the South Seas Pertaining to Micronesia as Contained in the Archives Office, Australian National Government, Canberra*. (Saipan, Mariana Islands: Division of Lands and Surveys, 1975) (hereafter RGIG), vol. 5, Item 8-2, Document 18, 1-2.

Sigismundo and his supporters for decades.⁴⁰ As a young man, Nanpei was sent to Madolenihmw to attend the Protestant mission school at Ohwa. There he became the mission's most prized convert, and the most prominent among a small circle of ambitious mission graduates. While still a student, Nanpei opened Rohnkitti's only store. There, he sold to visiting ships and supplied "all the [imported] goods which Ponapeans coveted," investing the profits in coconut plantings on his land nearby.⁴¹

By 1890, Nanpei was the island's wealthiest man. He operated stores at Rohnkitti and in the Spanish town of Santiago de la Ascension (later Kolonia), maintained plantations at Kitti and And, and operated a compound at the mouth of Rohnkitti's Lehn Diepei River that included a wharf, boathouse, and storehouse. His ship, the *Insular*, made runs to And to transport copra back to Pohnpei.⁴² He expanded his landholdings by accepting land as payment when traditional leaders incurred debts. He embraced the trappings of Western culture, but his ability to offer yams, *sakau*, pigs, cattle, or dogs at traditional feasts also made him an exemplar of Pohnpeian masculinity, which was defined in part by the ability to give generously at feasts on short notice.⁴³ Nanpei blanketed Rohnkitti with coconut palms, attracting a large community of Pohnpeians, Chuukese, Mortlockese, Pingelapese, Mokilese, and Nukuorans who travelled to or settled around his compound for work. Other Pohnpeians were active in the island's foreign trade as well. The Soumadau of Sokehs, for instance, worked for Dominique Etscheit and owned a store at Mwalok before he became a leader in the Sokehs

⁴⁰ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 74, 175-176; Paul Ehrlich. "Henry Nanpei: Pre-Eminently a Ponapean" in *More Pacific Islands Portraits*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978), 135, 145-146.

⁴¹ Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 125

⁴² Yvette Etscheit Adams. *Island Traders: Memories of the Carlos Etscheit Family*. (Pohnpei, 2009), 14.

⁴³ Ehrlich, "Henry Nanpei," 142. See: Suzanne Falgout, "The Quiet of the Fierce Barracuda: Masculinity and Aggression in Pohnpei, Micronesia." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 14 (2009): 445-453.

Rebellion.⁴⁴ But by the turn of the century, Nanpei had become Pohnpei's principal copra planter and a force to be reckoned with.⁴⁵

In 1896, the English traveller F.W. Christian visited Pohnpei and praised the “magnificent groves” that stretched across And's islets.⁴⁶ Most European planters of the time assumed that plantation workers were most effectively motivated when their survival depended on their labor, as when they earned cash to purchase imported foods. But Luelen Bernart, Nanpei's political ally and brother-in-law, believed that And's productivity was the result of Nanpei's generosity, a management method that approximated traditional Pohnpeian governance. Bernart wrote that:

Henry Nanpei had a little copra from the low island of Ant, which could produce about twenty tons or so. But the copra workers did not pick up all the coconuts from under the trees, and the workers enjoyed drinking the green nuts. And when he sent workers to [And] to make copra he would sell the copra and then he would have to pay them but if they wanted some little things or the like he would give them what they wanted. This was when he began to make more money.⁴⁷

Nanpei's workers traded their labor for the benefits of life on the atoll: use rights to the land, access to gifts of food, cash, and other goods, and life in a close-knit community that eventually numbered around 200 people and included numerous homes and a small community church. According to Luelen, Nanpei was also unique among the island's buyers in offering good prices even when copra's value fell on the world market. As a result, Nanpei earned a fierce loyalty among his workers.⁴⁸

Increasingly, Nanpei leveraged his economic power and influence in the church to advance his political interests, pulling strings out of public view in the style of traditional

⁴⁴ Hambruch, *Ponape*, 345; Ehrlich, “Clothes of Men,” 103.

⁴⁵ Ehrlich, “Clothes of Men,” 83, 160-161.

⁴⁶ F.W. Christian. *The Caroline Islands: Travel in the Sea of Little Islands*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1889), 64-65, 71; Ehrlich, “Henry Nanpei,” 78.

⁴⁷ Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 119.

⁴⁸ Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 125; Tesiwo Liwy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29 April 2015.

Pohnpeian politicking. His interests were numerous. He defended American Protestant missionaries against the machinations of Spanish priests, accompanied a group of missionaries to Washington to seek Benjamin Harrison's intercession in Pohnpei's wars with Spain, lobbied to end the island's alcohol trade, and worked to install a quasi-parliamentary "council of the wise" with himself as chair.⁴⁹ Nanpei's political dealings earned him praise and scorn from the island's foreign regimes. Spain awarded him a medal for protecting Spanish lives during a battle at Ohwa, but suspected him of gunrunning and jailed him as an American spy.⁵⁰ Some German officials relied on his diplomatic skill, and Nanpei became the only Pohnpeian to adopt Albert Hahl's cattle ranching scheme, but others suspected him of supplying anti-German forces in the Sokehs Rebellion.⁵¹ In later years Japan fêted him at public events, but suspected him of being an anti-Japanese activist, erecting a small police station just outside his home at Rohnkitti that Nanpei believed was built specifically to monitor his activities.⁵²

Henry Nanpei passed away in 1928, leaving control of the family business to his son Oliver. By 1935, the Nanpei Company controlled And Atoll and half of Pohnpei's indigenous-held land, or about 9,800 acres.⁵³ Oliver remained a force on the island well into the 1950s, his influence rooted in copra just as his father's had been. At times, colonial officials seemed to find the Nanpei family's success difficult to interpret. The German regime's reports and official correspondence often slighted Nanpei's prowess in

⁴⁹ "To Appeal to President Harrison: Alleged Mission of the Chief of Ponape, Caroline Islands." *Evening Star*. 8 July 1891; Henry Nanpei to O.P. Emerson, Pohnpei, 39 July 1893, letter of Henry Nanpei. Mission Houses Museum Archive, Honolulu; Hambruch, *Ponape*, 206.

⁵⁰ Ehrlich, "Clothes of Men," 74, 81.

⁵¹ Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 177; Hambruch, *Ponape*, 309; Hahl, *Governor in New Guinea*, 65-66.

⁵² Toshio Iwase [岩瀬 俊夫], "The Life and Times of Henry Nanpei" [アンリ・ナニベ翁の生きていた頃], *Nan'yō Guntō* 4:2 (1938), 58.

⁵³ John L. Fischer, "Contemporary Ponape Island Land Tenure" in *Land Tenure Patterns in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, vol. 1 (Guam: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1958), 117.

the copra trade, either erasing his presence altogether by classifying him as an unnamed “native planter,” indirectly critiquing his planting methods, or taking credit for his work. Yet the Nanpeis also charted a unique vision for Pohnpei’s future, one alternately community-minded and self-interested, which integrated monocropping techniques into the Pohnpeian landscape without dislodging agroforests or the families who depended on them. Amid typhoons, a rebellion, and war, that framework’s endurance on the island bore testament to its potency, and to the Nanpeis’ power.

Educational typhoons, neighborly relocations, and a coconut land reform

When a devastating typhoon struck Pohnpei in April 1905, German colonial policy on the island suddenly began to move in fast forward. The storm must have seemed apocalyptic, and stories of its impacts resound through oral histories and the colonial archives. Luelen describes the typhoon as a “fire of spray,” a storm with a twisting wind that overturned every one of the island’s large trees and flattened all of its dwellings.⁵⁴ Twelve Pohnpeians were killed, and more than 200 wounded. Settlements at Kolonia, Lenger, and Ohwa were flattened. Younger, more flexible coconut trees fared better, although many were broken or shorn of leaves. But breadfruit trees were devastated, yams damaged, animals drowned, and food stores waterlogged.⁵⁵ Fallen trees blocked footpaths for years, and both the Jaluit Gesellschaft and the German government saw boats they relied on for transportation sink or founder on the reef.⁵⁶ The storm also wreaked havoc in the Marshalls, Kosrae, and on outer islands nearby. On Pingelap,

⁵⁴ Bernart, *Book of Luelen*, 126.

⁵⁵ Anonymous. “Bericht des geschäftsführenden Vizegouvernours in Ponape über den Orkan vom 20. April 1905.” *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* XVI (1905): 407–408.

⁵⁶ Willie Gartzke. *The Rebellion on Ponape and Its Suppression by HMS “Emden,” “Nurnberg,” “Cormoran,” and “Planet.”* Ivan Tilgenkamp, trans. n.p., 1970, 42; Hambruch, *Ponape*, 347.

around 200 perished as a result of the storm, and those who remained on the atoll endured a painful famine.⁵⁷ On Mokil, not a single house or coconut tree was left standing in the storm's aftermath. Desperate for food, Mokilese dug up buried coconuts, sent children out onto the reef to collect coconuts the storm had washed into the lagoon, and dug into the taro patch to eat bits of taro rotten from seawater intrusion.⁵⁸

The storm produced a clear-cut humanitarian crisis, but German officials used another word to describe it: *erzieherisch*, or educational.⁵⁹ Micronesia's German government had left administering any program of formal schooling to missionaries, as the Spanish had before them. Yet German officials throughout the territory frequently suggested that "the natives must be trained to work," that "drought, locust, famine or other causes... might have an educational effect," or that "a structured occupation, strongly disciplined, will be an education for the indolent island people."⁶⁰ This sort of coerced agricultural "education" had been impossible when Pohnpeians were able to fulfill their necessities through the island's agroforestry system. But the storm's crop damage set off a chain reaction that at first seemed to provide the regime an opportunity to steer Islanders into capitalist labor and consumption on a long-term basis. With sudden

⁵⁷ "Documents and Reports, 1900-1909, Ponape," ABCFM, 19.4, vol. 14, no. 87, 2; "Verwaltungsbericht des Vizegouverneurs in Ponape." *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* XVII (1906): 284; Anneliese Eilers. *Inseln um Ponape*. (Hamburg: Friedrichsen, De Gryuter & Co., 1934), 425.

⁵⁸ Takuya Nagaoka and Barbara Hicks. "An Account of Jahle, Lange and the Typhoon of 1905" in *Oh Mehjwa: Chants, Songs, Accounts, and Tales of Mwoakilloa Atoll, Micronesia*. (Pohnpei: Historic Preservation Office, 2004).

⁵⁹ The term *erzieherisch* was deeply tied to German colonial discourse. Its verb form *erziehen* means 'to form someone's (especially of a child) spirit and character and to promote their development'. These paternalistic connotations made *erzieherisch* a useful shorthand for German officials seeking to frame their nation's colonial interventions in benevolent terms, particularly in Africa. See, for instance: Imperial District Administration, Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 10 January 1906, RGIG, vol. 9, Item 9-3, Document 1, 7. *Duden*, s.v. "erziehen," accessed 31 March 2017, <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/erziehen>.

⁶⁰ These remarks refer to the Chamorros of the Northern Marianas, Pohnpeians, and Marshalllese respectively. Reichstag, Denkschrift 1899/1900, 15-16; Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 24 October 1901, RGIG, vol. 10, Item 121, Document 20, 5; Imperial Governor, Rabaul to Secretary of State, Colonial Office, Berlin, 21 June 1912, RGIG, vol. 24, Item Y44, Document 9, 5.

leverage over hungry Islanders, typhoon-damaged land in need of replanting, and Outer Islanders from atolls more conducive to plantation copra seeking relocation, Pohnpei's German officials and copra traders began pursuing a radical remaking of the region's land, vegetation, and people.

In the short term, the storm enabled Pohnpei's German regime to demonstrate its benevolence, and perhaps its indispensability, through an energetic program of typhoon relief. On the one hand, German aid efforts approximated the functioning of traditional inter-island networks, which had long enabled residents of storm-damaged atolls to seek refuge with fellow clan members on undamaged islands. In December of 1905, district officer Viktor Berg wrote that Pohnpeians were "literally in competition to receive the Pingelap people with mainly unselfish hospitality" as his own administration attempted to do the very same thing.⁶¹ On the other hand, Berg was quick to take advantage of Pohnpei's food shortage to fulfill a long-sought aim of disarmament, and he offered Pohnpeians 35 Marks or a supply of imported rice, canned salmon, or canned beef for each weapon they surrendered.⁶² As district officer Georg Fritz later remarked, disarmament not only contributed to the island's security but was a "prerequisite" for everything from a "more dignified" relationship with Pohnpeians to land reform and economic development.⁶³

Despite the scale of the damage, some of Pohnpei's agroforest crops proved surprisingly resilient. Pohnpeians told ethnographer Paul Hambruch that many of the

⁶¹ Petersen, Glenn. *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration, and Political Organization*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 10; Imperial District Administration, Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 10 January 1906, RGIG, vol. 9, Item 9-3, Document 1, 3-4.

⁶² Hambruch, *Ponape*, 283.

⁶³ Georg Fritz. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam! Die Vorgeschichte des Aufstandes von 1910/11 in Ponape*. (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912), 40.

island's denuded breadfruit trees sprouted leaves and walnut-sized fruits only two months after the 1905 storm, and that bare coconut palms sprouted new fronds.⁶⁴ Prospects for leveraging the food shortage into a long-term wage labor force therefore proved illusory, with employment peaking at 53 in April of 1906 and then declining rapidly as conditions improved.⁶⁵ Government efforts to reconfigure Pohnpei's plant and human populations proved more enduring. Farmers welcomed the opportunity to receive seeds for maize, peanuts, sweet potatoes, yams and other plants from the German administration at no cost. Even Henry Nanpei dispatched a request for yam sprouts to Herbertshöhe after returning from a trip to Germany and finding his property in ruins.⁶⁶ Those distributions enabled Berg to deliver 30,000 seed coconuts to Pohnpei, Mokil, and Pingelap along with instructions for their proper planting, making sure to include industry-preferred varieties from Chuuk and Nukuoro.⁶⁷ The storm also offered the opportunity to initiate voluntary relocations of Outer Islanders to high islands. On Pingelap, the relocations to Saipan and Pohnpei that occurred in 1905 and 1906 appear to have been the first large-scale emigrations in the atoll's modern history.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Hambruch, *Ponape*, 348.

⁶⁵ Reichstag, Denkschrift 1906/1907, 2.

⁶⁶ Around half of these 30,000 were planted on Pohnpei and the other half on outer islands. On Henry Nanpei's journey to Germany and missionary allegations of his nervous breakdown and interfamily conflicts around this time, see: David Hanlon, "Another Side of Henry Nanpei," *The Journal of Pacific History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 36-51. Anonymous. "Verwaltungsbericht des Vizegouverneurs in Ponape." *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* XVII (1906): 285-286; "Bericht über eine Reise des Vizegouverneurs in Ponape nach dem Ostkarolinen." *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* XVII (1906): 553; Reichstag, Denkschrift 1905/1906, 2, 7; Henry Nanpei, Chief, Ponape to Governor Hahl, 20 February 1907, RGIG, vol. 6, Item 8-3, Document 44; Nagaoka and Hicks, *Oh Mehjwa*, 7.20.

⁶⁷ Viktor Berg. "Über die Insel Ponape." *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 13 (1902): 179. Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 12 August 1903, RGIG, vol. 5, Item 8-2, Document 17, 5; Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 24 March 1902, RGIG, vol. 10, Item 121, Document 23; Jaluit Co., Ponape to Governor Dr. Hahl, Ponape, 30 April 1911, RGIG, vol. 19, Item W21-1, Document 9.

⁶⁸ Imperial District Administration, Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 10 January 1906, RGIG, vol. 9, Item 9-3, Document 1, 5; David Damas. *Bountiful Island: A Study of Land Tenure on a Micronesian Atoll*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1994), 157.

In Berlin, meanwhile, colonial policy was undergoing a sharp transformation. Driven by condemnation of genocides in South-West Africa and a series of other scandals and abuses, Bernhard Dernburg was made secretary of a recognized Colonial Office in 1907. There, he advocated for “scientific colonialism,” stressing economic development and social change in hopes of transforming colonies into producers of raw materials and consumers of industrial goods. In the Island Territory, power then shifted away from district officers and toward the governor of New Guinea, and renewed emphasis was laid on administrative efficiency, economic development, and boosting tax revenues.⁶⁹

The tensions generated as district officer Georg Fritz and his successor Gustav Boeder attempted to press these reforms on Pohnpei ultimately led to the Sokehs Rebellion, about which a great deal of historical scholarship has already been produced.⁷⁰ In short, Fritz, followed by the more imperious Boeder, carried out a series of negotiations and coercions between 1907 and 1910 meant to enact major changes in the island’s land tenure, labor system, tribute feasting complex, and road network. These reform efforts then collided with Henry Nanpei’s behind-the-scenes machinations, attempts by traditional leaders to protect their power, and a series of perceived insults leveled by Boeder against the paramount chiefdom of Sokehs. Finally, in October of 1910, the Soumadau of Sokehs took charge of a roving five-month war that began with the assassination of Boeder, three other Germans, and four Mortlockese boatmen and ended in the rebels’ defeat the following March.

⁶⁹ Gerd Hardach. “Defining Separate Spheres: German Rule and Colonial Law in Micronesia” in *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the Indigenous Response*, Hermann J. Hiery and John M. MacKenzie, eds. (London: Tauris, 1997), 234-235.

⁷⁰ For two recent studies that focus extensively on the rebellion, see: Thomas Morlang’s 2010 *Rebellion in der Südsee* and Peter Sack’s 2001 *Phantom History, the Rule of Law, and the Colonial State*.

Germany's mass execution of at least fifteen Sokehs rebels and the indefinite exile of the chiefdom's remaining 460 residents was an unprecedented show of colonial violence for Pohnpei, and it remained firmly lodged in the island's collective memory for decades.⁷¹ But the rebellion also became a critical boost to the administration's resettlement program and its land reform efforts. German officials moved swiftly to fill an emptied Sokehs with relocated Outer Islanders, including Mortlockese who had already been finding shelter on Pohnpei since a typhoon struck their islands in 1907. Chiefs from Pingelap, Mokil, and Ngatik inspected vacant plots around Sokehs, and the German regime extended the Nett nahnmwarki's political authority to encompass Sokehs as well.⁷²

In 1912, the administration's annual report framed these relocations as an effort to "unify the various tribes scattered over the numerous Micronesian atolls," and to alleviate the "misery and complete helplessness of these natives after the constantly recurring typhoons." Resettlement, the report argued, would restore self-confidence and "confidence in life" to Outer Islanders who "have lived in seclusion and loneliness for so long."⁷³ The extent of the crisis in the storm-damaged Mortlocks was undeniable. In fact, gratitude for the "love and compassion" demonstrated by Pohnpei's traditional leaders and for the German evacuations has proved so enduring that it can still be seen on a small plaque outside the Mortlockese church at Sokehs Pah, installed at the typhoon's 2007

⁷¹ The official German report gives the number executed at 17, as do ethnographer Paul Hambruch and naval officer Edgar von Spiegel. However, Luellen Bernart gives names for only 15 executed rebels, and three additional rebels he says avoided execution. Reichs-Kolonialamt, *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete 1910/11*, 171; Hambruch, *Ponape*, 308-309; Edgar Spiegel von und zu Peckelsheim. *Kriegsbilder aus Ponape*. (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1912), 228; Bernart, *Book of Luellen*, 144-145.

⁷² According to Yanaihara, the Japanese Navy split the two chiefdoms again a few years later. Ebert to His Majesty the Emperor, Berlin, 23 July 1911, RGIG, vol. 19, Item W21-1, Document 11; Tadao Yanaihara. *Study of the South Sea Islands* [南洋群島の研究]. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1935), 301-302.

⁷³ Reichs-Kolonialamt. *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und der Südsee 1911/12*. (Berlin: Mittler, 1913), 150.

centennial. Nonetheless, the relocations left behind large tracts of unused land in the Mortlocks, whose atolls approximated the ideal coconut country of the planters' manual far more closely than did rainy, densely forested Pohnpei.⁷⁴ Officials therefore moved to lease that land to businessmen, who they promised could then "exploit the lands for plantations to the fullest possible extent."⁷⁵

The rebellion aided in securing land reform on Pohnpei as well. That reform was wide-ranging, and included an island-wide land survey, deeds granting individual families legal ownership of their land, a shift from matrilineal to patrilineal inheritance, a prohibition on female land ownership, a reduction of honor feasts, and the prohibition of land seizures by traditional leaders, among other measures.⁷⁶ While the violence of the German response to Sokehs strengthened the administration's hand in advancing these reforms, the growing penetration of trade copra on the island played a role as well. Wealthy Pohnpeians like Henry Nanpei endorsed the administration's land proposals as a way to boost their economic influence. But they also modeled a new form of cash-based prestige toward which trade copra was the only obvious route for commoners. Years later, Mamken Peleleng, recalled widespread elation at the passage of the reform, remembering that "when we were given land, we were so delighted."⁷⁷ Thus, whereas the island's traditional leaders had strenuously opposed land reform efforts only a few years earlier, by 1911 those who came to Kolonia to negotiate terms with district officer Hermann Kersting voiced their unanimous support.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Reichstag, Denkschrift 1903/1904, 8.

⁷⁵ Reichs-Kolonialamt, *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete 1911/12*, 150; Ebert to His Majesty the Emperor, Berlin, 23 July 1911, RGIG, vol. 19, Item W21-1, Document 11, 3.

⁷⁶ Ehrlich, "Clothes of Men," 201-207.

⁷⁷ Statement by Mamken Peleleng, JLD, 128-129.

⁷⁸ Statement by Edwardo, JLD, 80-81.

On the back of each land deed, the German administration placed a series of coconut planting requirements. Those requirements were detailed and meticulous, and Pohnpeians who failed to follow them were punished with hard labor. Farmers were required to use government-selected seednuts, plant them eight meters apart, keep new plantings four meters from boundary lines, and plant other government-regulated foods once their coconut quotas had been fulfilled.⁷⁹ The planting regulations were unpopular but effective, despite accounts of Pohnpeians who deceived inspectors by shifting seedlings from one homestead to the next. Luelen later recalled that, “during first three years [after the reform], there was no work other than planting of coconuts.”⁸⁰ With the help of energetic private planters, like the Pohnpeians who planted even the ruins at Nan Madol with coconuts, post-typhoon Pohnpei was then revegetated around the coconut tree and its people drawn into the cash economy copra had built.⁸¹

Conclusion

Pohnpei’s German regime was unceremoniously ejected from power in the fall of 1914, by a small fleet of Japanese warships.⁸² At the time, Germany’s land reforms may have appeared fragile. Yet while unpopular provisions such as the stricture against female land ownership were later removed, the reform’s broad outlines and the reshuffling of Pohnpei’s human and plant populations proved remarkably enduring. When a group of traditional leaders sat down at the Japanese land office in Kolonia in 1938 and 1939 to reflect on the legacy of the 1912 land reform and the copra trade, they spoke dramatically

⁷⁹ Ehrlich, “Clothes of Men,” 204-205.

⁸⁰ Statement by Lueleng, JLD, 51-52.

⁸¹ Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

⁸² Shizuo Matsuoka [松岡 静雄]. *Ethnography of Micronesia* [ミクロネシア民族誌]. (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishing Company, 1927), 3-8.

of persistent, wide-ranging transformations. Madolenihmw's Kurou en Roi spoke of men who leveraged deeds to seize land from their female kin, a previously unthinkable practice he believed demonstrated that "the people have become selfish and egotistical." Henry Nanpei's old rival Sigismundo complained that land deeds, not familial relationships, now seemed to define land ownership.⁸³ Mamken Peleleng agreed, telling the land officers, "I do not understand the thinking of the younger generation."⁸⁴ Still, individual land ownership had become widely accepted, and no movement to seek its repeal ever arose.

Many of the coconut trees Pohnpei planted under German rule remained productive until the 1950s, when American agriculturalists began a large-scale replanting campaign across the island.⁸⁵ In the meantime, the island's Japanese and American administrations each expressed admiration for German agricultural policy, and each sought to emulate it. Japan built an agriculture station on the site of Germany's old experimental gardens, which the United States inherited after the Second World War. Together, they introduced hundreds of additional crops to the island.⁸⁶ Japan halted Germany's resettlement programs, but in 1917 repatriated most of the Sokehs rebels, leaving the resettled residents of Sokehs unmolested and directing them to build a Pohnpeian-style title system of their own.⁸⁷ In later years, additional migrations strengthened those Outer Islander communities further, and added new ones.

⁸³ Statement by Kurou En Roi, JLD, 43-45; Statement by Sekisimondo, JLD, 92-94.

⁸⁴ Statement by Mamken Peleleng, JLD, 130-131.

⁸⁵ Tosio Thomson et. al., "New Trees for Old: Ponape and Kusaie" in *Coconut Culture in Micronesia: Excerpts from papers presented at the Pacific Coconut Production and Processing Interchange at Metalanim, Ponape, July, 1964*. (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1964), 31-32.

⁸⁶ See: Ragone et. al., "History of Plant Introductions."

⁸⁷ According to Morlang, the last of the Sokehs rebels returned to Pohnpei from Palau in 1927. Thomas Morlang, *Rebellion in der Südsee*, 196; Tesiwo Liwy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29 April 2015.

Other than the increase in coconut plantings, many of them lightly used after the copra industry's decline in the 1960s, the Pohnpeian landscape bears few visible markers of German rule today. A handful of ruined roads and structures remain, and deer released into the island's interior still roam. There is also the *mwet en kehp*, a style of yam cultivation known as the "yam plantation" that arose under German occupation and may have originated as an interpretation of European monocropping.⁸⁸ Yet the "soft bullets" of the copra trade endured as Pohnpei's primary cash crop for nearly a century, forming the foundation of Pohnpeian access to the island's commercial economy when nearly every introduced cash crop seemed destined for failure. As Manuel Amor recalled, even under the intense Japanese agricultural experimentation of 1930s Pohnpei, only coconuts remained reliable because "only copra could become money."⁸⁹ Trade copra held an allure on Pohnpei that other cash crops did not, demanding neither commercial fertilizer nor pesticides, neither land clearing nor the disruption of agroforests. Still, copra reshaped Pohnpei profoundly, and helped set the stage for the much deeper penetration of the cash economy in recent decades, with all its cascading effects on the island's ecology, sovereignty, culture, and health.

⁸⁸ Raynor, *Agroforestry Systems in Pohnpei*, 38.

⁸⁹ Manuel Amor. Interview by author. Awak, Pohnpei. 12 December, 2014.

CHAPTER 2: THE RICE GRAIN AS RACIAL BORDERLAND: RACE, STATUS, AND BELONGING ON JAPANESE POHNPEI

As 1936 drew to a close in the Japanese agricultural colony at Palikir in the southwestern edge of Sokehs, the rice was not growing well. With a thriving settlement of more than 2,000 already established at Kolonia, the Japanese regime had moved into Palikir nine years earlier in hopes of nurturing a model agricultural community there. Officials named it Haruki-mura: “coming of spring” village.¹ At first, according to a visitor named Takuro Hasumi, the *Nan’yō’chō* (South Seas Government) “broke its back” to encourage Haruki-mura’s mostly Hokkaido-born farmers to grow enough rice to make the colony self-sufficient. But hard labor, excessive rainfall, easily exhausted soil, pests, and a disease that festered in the paddies and left farmers jaundiced stirred a quiet rebellion against the *Nan’yō’chō*’s agriculture station back in Kolonia. The result was a cluster of paddies half-heartedly planted, and a community of farmers leading hardscrabble lives amid Haruki-mura’s roughly cleared fields and barracks-like housing, looking as impoverished as the rice they grew. “There are rice plants in the paddies,” Hasumi observed, “but some seem to contain rice grains while others don’t.” For the farmers, he could offer only pity.²

¹ In 1935, Kolonia had a population of 2,287, with 1,385 Japanese (including Koreans, Taiwanese, and settlers from Sakhalin), 891 Islanders, and 11 others. The island’s total population was 8,169, with 95% of settlers residing in Kolonia. Keiko Ono and Tetsuya Ando. “A Study of Urban Morphology of Japanese Colonial Towns in *Nan’yo Guntō*: Part 5, Ponape, Yap and Jaluit branch districts (*shicho*).” *Journal of Architecture and Planning* 77, no. 676 (June 2012), 1522; Wakako Higuchi, “Chronology of Micronesia under Japanese Administration,” 1985, University of Hawai’i Pacific Collection, 4.

² The cause of the jaundice was Weil’s disease, a form of leptospirosis transmitted by rats. The agriculture station later pushed back against these criticisms, arguing that short-term visitors gained only a partial view of their operations, and minimizing the threat of Weil’s disease and the levels of discontent at Haruki-mura. Noboru Yoshina [吉奈昇], “Activities of the Pohnpei Agriculture Station” [ポナペ試験場は何をしたか], *Nan’yō Guntō* 3:3 (1937), 25; Takuro Hasumi [蓮見卓郎], “Traveling Through the Eastern Pacific Islands, Part 4 [東群島の旅 (その四)]”, *Nan’yō Guntō* 2:11 (1936), 34; Takuro Hasumi [蓮見卓郎], “Struggling in Palikir” [喘ぐパルキール], *Nan’yō Guntō* 2:12 (1936), 28.

While other crops grew well enough for Palikir's Japanese farmers to trundle periodically over the rough road to Kolonia's markets, only the wealthy Omura family seems to have made a success of rice culture at Haruki-mura prior to the Pacific War. For this, agriculturalists credited Mr. Omura's character and work ethic, boasting that his hard work had made him wealthy and allowed him to cultivate rice paddies that even Hasumi agreed were an "outstanding success."³ Through much of Pohnpei's Japanese occupation, *Nan'yō'chō* officials blamed settlers' moral character for poor rice yields while dismissing Islander capacity for rice cultivation out of hand. Meanwhile, farmers groused that agriculturalists were obsessed with crossbreeding a perfect Pohnpei-grown rice at the expense of practical support or community education.⁴ As agriculturalists dragged their feet, settlers in town grew so dependent on food imported from Japan that visitors worried for their health.⁵ Still, the regime continued to break its back for rice, because rice was unlike any other crop that accompanied *mehn waii* to Pohnpei.⁶

Rice and rice cultivation were burdened with implications for race and status in Japan well before the first Japanese settler reached the *Nan'yō Guntō* (South Sea Islands). Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney argues that rice has acted as an enduring, bifurcated metaphor for the Japanese self: "on the one hand, 'rice as our food' and, on the other hand, 'rice paddies as our land,' each reinforcing the other."⁷ But this mutually reinforcing

³ Hasumi, "Struggling in Palikir," 28; Yasutaro Ogusu [小楠安太郎], "Following the Tracks of Development in the South Seas, Part 3" [群島開発の跡を尋ねて(三)], *Nan'yō Guntō* 5:10 (1939), 95.

⁴ Mitsuyuki Kaneya and Rokuro Kitahara [金谷光行, 北原六朗], "*Nan'yō Travel Journal (Hizakurige)*, Part 7" [南洋膝栗毛], *Nan'yō Guntō* 2:10 (1936), 47-48.

⁵ Umesao Tadao [梅棹忠夫], "Travelogue" [紀行] in *Pohnpei Island* [ポナペ島], ed. Kinji Imanishi [今西錦司]. (Tokyo: Shoko Shōin, 1944), 451. Willard Price, *Pacific Adventure*. (New York: John Day, 1936), 169.

⁶ Hasumi, "Traveling Through the Eastern Pacific," 34.

⁷ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4.

relationship between rice, landscape, and Japanese racial identity acquired powerful new layers of meaning when it traveled to imperial spaces, particularly those judged suitable for rice cultivation like Korea, Taiwan, or Pohnpei. There, rice became a racial borderland, where *naichi* (home island) Japanese could be marked from Islanders and one's standing within the colonial order realized and contested.

Rice reveals a colonial hierarchy far less fixed than is implied by the *Nan'yō Guntō*'s informal pecking order: Japanese on top, followed by Okinawans, Koreans, Chamorros, and Carolinians.⁸ In fact, the territory's racial boundaries were subject to constant manipulation. Colonial authorities and Islander elites worked its racial boundaries to their own political or economic advantage. Islanders started families with settlers, embraced or dismissed Japan's nationalistic bluster or, on Pohnpei, declined to incorporate rice as a prestige food within the traditional political system despite its symbolic power within colonial society. Islanders took note of the slippage between racial categories among settlers as well, styling Okinawans as "Japanese *kanaka*" (the Islanders of Japan) or observing that, "the Japanese did not care about the Koreans but to fight with a Japanese or Okinawan was a serious offense."⁹

Implicit in these negotiations was a contestation over the boundaries of ethnic Japanese identity and the *naichi* (内地). *Naichi* is a deceptively simple term for "domestic" or "inland" that is applied both to rice (*naichi hakumai*) and people (*naichi* Japanese). Like the English term "mainland," *naichi* distinguished the Japanese metropole from its hinterland and established the former as the "central reference of

⁸ Wakako Higuchi. *The Japanese Administration of Guam, 1941-1944: A Study of Occupation and Integration Policies, with Japanese Oral Histories*. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013), 144.

⁹ Max Iriarte. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, May 14, 1951, in Eastern Carolines Field Notes, John L. Fischer, Tozzer Library, Harvard University (hereafter HFP), reel 2, Disc 8, Side 1 [frame 784]

value” within national space. It also naturalized colonial relations with exterior colonies like Taiwan and interior territories like Hokkaido, and helped draw them in or push them away.¹⁰ Japan’s colonization of Micronesia, for instance, generated the novel category of “inner *Nan’yō*” in order to distinguish it from Southeast Asia and the rest of the Pacific, and in so doing to extend the outer fringe of knowable Japanese space.¹¹

The *Nan’yō Guntō*’s entangled race relations were partly rooted in *naichi* Japan’s unique relationship with those interior/exterior colonies. Robert Tierney argues that modern Japan developed a “hybrid imperialism” that was distinct from, but also mimetic of, Western imperial regimes. With the West a steadfast but silent presence, Japan promoted a “fictive unity and imaginary kinship” with the people it colonized, enabling it to condemn Western powers while also mimicking the tactics those same powers had once used to erode Japan’s sovereignty.¹² In the *Nan’yō Guntō*, this tendency surfaced everywhere from ethnographies that baselessly pegged early Micronesian navigators as Japanese emigrants to settlers who asserted an intimate cultural familiarity with the Islanders around them.¹³ At the same time, Tierney suggests, a persistent trope of savagery enabled Japanese to assert their distance from and superiority over the indigenous population of the *Nan’yō Guntō*. Japanese novelists, ethnographers, policymakers, folklorists, and racial scientists therefore imagined the *Nan’yō Guntō*’s

¹⁰ Susan Najita. *Decolonizing Cultures in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 5.

¹¹ Mark Ombrello, “Japanese Conceptualizations of the South Seas (Nan’yo) as a Supernatural Space from Ancient Times in the Contemporary Period.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 2014), 68.

¹² Robert Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery: the Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 3-4, 15, 21, 33.

¹³ See, for instance: Shizuo Matsuoka [松岡静雄]. *Ethnography of Micronesia* [ミクロネシア民族誌]. (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1943), 87; Seitaro Yasutake, Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Tokyo, Japan, 10 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration: Interviews with Former South Sea Bureau and Military Officials*. (Agana, Guam: Micronesian Area Research Center, 1987), 61.

“innocent, happy primitive[s]” as foils to their own cultivation and modernity, or as objects of nostalgia that demonstrated the need to recover the “purity and original nature of the Japanese people.”¹⁴

The *Nan'yō'chō's* obsessive dedication to developing a Pohnpei-grown rice despite the range of economic, labor, and environmental challenges it presented was, in part, an attempt to enact this distinct settler colonial vision onto the land. Since Japan's 1868 Meiji Restoration, a growing network of government agriculture stations and the aggressive promotion of fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides had helped to nationalize the *naichi* landscape and standardize Japanese agricultural knowledge.¹⁵ As Japan's empire expanded, that model of industrial agriculture was used to assimilate colonial environments as well. In the *Nan'yō Guntō*, perhaps no island landscape was more transformed than that of Tinian, in the Mariana Islands. There, Japan put the entire island to service as a vast sugar plantation, sidelining the handful of remaining indigenous residents and creating a powerful cautionary tale for Pohnpeians who later worried of being entirely relocated themselves, to Kosrae.¹⁶

Yet Pohnpei-grown rice was as much as means of assimilating a landscape as it was a strategy to support the Japanese Navy's long-range program of southward advance, or *nanshin*. Until the exigencies of the Pacific War suddenly made local rice production

¹⁴ While both framings occurred in Japanese colonial writings concurrently throughout the interwar period, Tierney suggests that a major shift occurred from the former to the latter during the 1930s. Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery*, 10, 55.

¹⁵ Brett Walker. *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 57.

¹⁶ Tinian's small interwar population was the result of depopulation from introduced disease, followed by Spanish relocations to Guam in the early 18th century. John Fischer, “During the preparation of paper on Ponapean Land Tenure in 1954,” in HFP, reel 2, Disc 35, Side 1, 1 [frame 603]. See: Keiko Ono, John P. Lea, and Tetsuya Ando, “A Study of Urbana Morphology of Japanese Colonial Towns in Nan'yo Gunto, Part 1: Garapan, Tinian and Chalan Kanoa in Northern Marianas.” *Journal of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Engineering* 556 (June 2002): 337.

indispensable, the *Nan'yō Guntō*'s rice projects aimed neither for profitmaking, export, nor self-sufficiency. Nor did the *Nan'yō'chō* primarily intend its intensive program of economic development and government-subsidized colonization to turn a substantial profit or create the "idealistic flower garden" of nationalist propaganda. Instead, islands like Pohnpei served a largely strategic function. They were "just a base to expand further south... too small to support productive agriculture," tropical proving grounds whose true value to Japan lay in the lessons they held for future expansion to resource-rich Southeast Asia.¹⁷ Ultimately, however, each of these projects broke down upon sustained contact with the *Nan'yō Guntō*'s land and people and with the Pacific War, whose overwhelming force and seemingly impersonal violence reminded many Islanders of a typhoon.¹⁸

Pohnpei's Japanese occupation proceeded in three phases. First there was an initial period of Naval rule (1914-1922), relatively uneventful in terms of settlement or economic development but far more chaotic and violent than its official reports implied. Then, a civilian government operating under the League of Nations Mandate system (1922-1936), which drew on powerful behind-the-scenes support from the Japanese Navy to facilitate development projects and promote settlement.¹⁹ During this period, Japan imported an underclass of Okinawan and Korean workers, breaking from the habit of Oceania's European powers of working to lure or impress Islanders into plantation labor. By the end of the 1930s, nearly 60% of *Nan'yō Guntō* settlers were Okinawan, another

¹⁷ Kakuichiro Murayama. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Tokyo, Japan, 16 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 73; Kiyomatsu Aoki. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Iwate, Japan, 15 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 22. See also: Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 43.

¹⁸ Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout, and Laurence Marshall Carucci. *The Typhoon of War: Micronesian Experiences of the Pacific War*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 330-332.

¹⁹ As Wakako Higuchi suggests, the Japanese Navy continued to oversee *Nan'yō'chō* policymaking throughout the 1920s and 1930s, securing prodigious levels of government funding, shuffling accounts to create the illusion of an independent territorial economy, and ensuring that civilian economic development projects also met military requirements. Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 25, 28, 87.

6% were Korean, and settlers constituted nearly two thirds of the territory's population.²⁰ Finally, there was a period of joint military-civilian governance (1936-1945) marked by rising nationalism, war, and collapse.

This chapter follows grains of Japanese rice and constructions of Japanese race as they circulated and evolved from the *naichi*, to Korea and Taiwan, and to Pohnpei. It traces rice varieties rich with symbolic value for Japanese consumers but dispensable for Pohnpeians, and examines how the powerful Nanpei family and *Nan'yō'chō* branch manager Shigeru Tanaka navigated the racial boundaries that so structured Japanese Kolonia. It closes with the Pacific War, whose deprivations raised questions that powerfully reframed the issues of belonging and identity that had hung in the air since Shizuo Matsuoka and his men first crossed Pohnpei's reef in the fall of 1914.

Nanjing rice, *naichi hakumai*, and yams: food, race, and status

For decades, Japan used the penetration of rice consumption to shorthand the progress of its civilizing mission and economic development in the *Nan'yō Guntō*.²¹ But long before the first ship carried domestically grown white rice (*naichi hakumai*) across Pohnpei's reef, many Pohnpeians had already embraced imported rice, as a low-status food. The island's earliest encounters with rice recede into its deep past, though they may have mirrored the disgust a group of wayward navigators from Fais experienced in 1696

²⁰ Settlers and Islander populations on Pohnpei were near parity on the eve of the Pacific War. On urbanizing Saipan, settlers outnumbered Islanders by a factor of ten to one. Keiko Ono, "Building Paradise: The Establishment of Japanese Colonial Towns in the Western Pacific." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sydney, 2002), 2, 81, 199; Okinawa Prefecture, "History of Okinawan Prefecture [沖縄県史]" in Mark Peattie Papers, Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam [hereafter MPP], Box 1, Folder 13, 399.

²¹ See, for instance: Kiyoshi Yoshida [吉田清]. *Album of the South Sea Islands Under Japanese Mandate* [日本統治地域 南洋群島解説写真帖]. (Garapan, Saipan: Kenbunsha, 1931), 22.

when, stranded in the Philippines, they recoiled from boiled rice grains they believed to be worms.²² By the 19th century, however, rice was a staple of Pohnpei's trading posts, sourced mainly from China after Germany reoriented shipping routes to locate the island between Hong Kong and Sydney.²³ Pohnpeians saw in this rice a fast-cooking substitute for starchy staples like breadfruit or yams, not glutinous enough to stick to their fingers as they ate.²⁴ But Japanese settlers saw something else: *nankinmai*, the notorious “Nanjing rice” associated with Japan's very lowest classes, possessed with the power to dislocate the eater from ethnic Japaneseness and, it was rumored, to pose a physical danger to Japanese bodies.²⁵

Nanjing rice cut to the heart of the class and ethnic tensions of turn-of-the-century Japan, but the rice itself made for a slippery category. Often used to refer to any foreign rice, Nanjing rice was typically imported not from the Chinese city of Nanjing but from the prolific rice-producing regions of Southeast Asia.²⁶ Nanjing rice was first introduced

²² Francis X. Hezel. *First Taint of Civilization: a History of the Caroline and Marshall Islanders in the Pre-Colonial Days, 1521-1885*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983), 36-37.

²³ David Hanlon. *From Mesenieng to Kolonia: An Archaeological Survey of Historic Kolonia*. (Saipan: Historic Preservation Office, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1981), 63. See also: Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 11 August 1905 in Susanne Moyal. *Records of the German Imperial Government of the South Seas Pertaining to Micronesia as Contained in the Archives Office, Australian National Government, Canberra*. (Saipan, Mariana Islands: Division of Lands and Surveys, Dept. of Resources and Development, Trust Territory Govt., 1975) (hereafter RGIG), vol. 6, Item 8-3, Document 9, 27-32.

²⁴ Kanichi Uchida [内田寛一]. “Management of the New Territories in the South Seas” [南洋新領地の経営に就いて]. *South Seas Association Report 4* (May 25, 1915) [南洋協会会報]. Japan Institute for Pacific Studies archive, Tokyo, Japan [Hereafter JPS], 76; B.F. Johnston, Mosaburo Hosoda, and Yoshio Kusumi. *Japanese Food Management in World War II*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), 51.

²⁵ Despite the Japanese government's assurances that Nanjing rice was nutritionally sound, particularly during the nation's 1918 rice riots, Nanjing rice was widely rumored to bring “disorderly bowels” or diarrhea to the Japanese who consumed it. Miono Yamamoto [山本美越乃]. “Report on the Pacific Islands in the South Seas Territory,” [南洋新占領地事情(上)] *The Sun* [太陽] XII, no. 11 (September 1915) in MPP, Box 1, Folder 8, 110; Uchida, “Management of the New Territories,” 76; Johnston et al., *Japanese Food Management*, 51.

²⁶ By the early 1920s Nanjing rice constituted more than 5 percent of Japan's total rice consumption. Most of its foreign rice was imported from “Rangoon, Saigon, or Siam” and aimed at its poorest consumers. Seiichi Tōbata, “The Japanese Rice Control,” in *Commodity Control in the Pacific Area*. W.L. Holland, ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin), 157.

to Japanese consumers during the 1890s. It swiftly became infamous for its yellowed, slippery grains that smelled of petroleum, a remnant of the oil-treated hemp sacks used to transport it.²⁷ Its appearance rankled, clashing with the “luster, purity, and whiteness” that characterized an ideal bowl of *naichi hakumai* and evoking the dark skin of the non-Japanese who cultivated it.²⁸ Encounters with Nanjing rice provoked shame, disgust, or rage. In the streets, poor shoppers hid the Nanjing rice they purchased from prying eyes. In Natsume Sōseki’s 1908 novel *The Miner*, the title character found himself “absolutely mystified” by the “dingy-looking rice” that slipped sickeningly from his chopsticks and tasted of wall mud. At the Ashio copper mine in 1907, laborers angrily interpreted their foreign rice rations as a “particularly egregious abuse of managerial power,” and rioted.²⁹

These aversions were partly rooted in class anxiety, exacerbated by the third-rate restaurants where Nanjing rice was served and stereotypes of the “low-class, marginal, and vaguely menacing” miners with whom it was often associated.³⁰ But, for many Japanese, consuming foreign rice also provoked a deeper hurt. It cut painfully against nativist discourses that had linked Japanese rice and traditional agrarian practices to a distinctive ethnonational identity since the Tokugawa period, first as a means to distance Japan from China and then to distance it from the West.³¹ That linkage intensified as the

²⁷ The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture insisted in 1918 that these petroleum-treated sacks were no longer in use, and that the “strong odor” of Nanjing rice had completely vanished. Still, consumers remained skeptical. Michael Lewis. *Rioters and Citizens: Mass Protest in Imperial Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 31-32, 258 n.24.

²⁸ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 76; Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, 81.

²⁹ Johnston et al., *Japanese Food Management*, 51; Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, 82; Natsume Sōseki. *The Miner*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 88.

³⁰ Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens*, 199; W. Donald Burton. *Coal Mining Women in Japan: Heavy Burdens*. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 147.

³¹ Among the nativist scholars who particularly emphasized rice as a marker of Japan’s distinction from and superiority to China was Atsutane Hirata (1776-1843). Hirata valorized the “pure ‘Japaneseness’ of agricultural practice and Shinto belief, asserted that Japanese rice possessed a divinity that ensured the “uniqueness and superiority” of those who ate it, and argued that Chinese rice produced “weak and enervated” bodies. Harry Harootunian. *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa*

Meiji government adopted agrarian imagery to spur industrial and agricultural productivity. It intensified further when the Shōwa military began promoting *naichi hakumai* as a symbol of the “purity of the Japanese self” and a food uniquely equipped to supply soldiers with the energy needed for victory.³² By the late 1930s, rice consumption had peaked as a percentage of Japan’s total calorie intake.³³ A food considered a luxury only a century earlier had become indispensable for many Japanese, even as the whiteness consumers now demanded from the polished rice grain stripped it of critical vitamins like B₁, resulting in epidemics of nutritional deficiencies like beriberi.³⁴

Still, for many *naichi hakumai* remained out of reach. Colonies like the *Nan’yō Guntō*, however, held out the promise of regular rice consumption as well as the status that came with marking oneself off from Nanjing rice-consuming Islanders. That bargain held particular appeal to *naichi* tenant farmers and many Okinawans, for whom the poverty and overpopulation of their home islands meant they “couldn’t eat” or were forced to substitute potatoes for rice in their daily meals.³⁵ The promise of a rice-laden good life even featured in pro-settlement boosterism. In the 1935 book *Japanese Islands in the Tropical Pacific*, Hidekichi Shimura vividly contrasted the lives of farmers in the *naichi* and the *Nan’yō Guntō*. Whereas *naichi* peasants faced crop failures that forced them to eat starvation foods and left them unable to scrounge even one bottle of *sake* for

Nativism. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 212; Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 88, 93; Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, 81.

³² Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 93.

³³ Yujiro Hayami. “Rice Policy in Japan’s Economic Development.” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 54, no. 1 (1972), 20.

³⁴ Instances of beriberi within the Japanese military declined sharply after 1925, when rice rations were replaced with a 7:3 rice to barley ratio. Cwiertka, Katarzyna J. *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity*. (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 68-69.

³⁵ Takuzo Takano. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Yamagata, Japan, 16 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 79-80; Masanori Nakahodo [仲程昌徳]. *Okinawans Voyaging in the South Seas*. [南洋紀行の中の沖縄人たち] (Naha, Okinawa: Boda Inku, 2013), 80, 90.

festivals, he argued, the *Nan'yō Guntō* was a “paradise.” There, Islanders never went homeless. Settlers traded their morning tea for the Okinawan rice liquor *awamori*, humming and singing as they worked. Their lives, he concluded, were “as alike as clouds and mud.”³⁶

Pohnpeians, by contrast, fixed rice near the bottom of the hierarchies they used to mark food, status, and ethnicity. Rice was quite unlike prestige crops like yams or *sakau*, whose associations with ambition and masculinity granted them substantial leverage to determine status or mark ethnic boundaries. Because attaining it reflected neither assiduous labor nor a mastery of Pohnpeian agricultural practices, rice could not be offered as *doadoahk en wahu*, the “works of honor” that demonstrated the bearer’s esteem for their traditional leaders. Yams, on the other hand, required so much agricultural prowess that they became the island’s “most pertinent symbol for expressing man’s diligence.”³⁷ Exceptional yams offered up at feasts led to title promotions and enhanced status and, as Kurekohr of Soune explained to an American anthropologist in 1950, were “the same as money.”³⁸ Alternatively, bananas were so easily planted that they signified a man’s laziness or, metaphorically, a woman’s promiscuity.³⁹ Rice did

³⁶ Hidekichi Shimura [志村秀吉]. *Japanese Islands in the Tropical Pacific: Notes on the Eastern Caroline Islands*. [熱帯の日本南洋群島 附東カロリン群島紳士録] (Tokyo: Nanyōsha, 1935) in Box 1, Folder 8, MPP, 153.

³⁷ Akitoshi Shimizu. “Chieftdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World: Everyday Life, Subsistence and the Political System on Ponape,” in *Islanders and Their Outside World*. (Tokyo: Committee for Micronesian Research, St. Paul’s University, 1982), 183.

³⁸ Kurekohr of Soune was one of Jack Fischer’s primary informants. His full name is listed in John L. Fischer, Saul H. Risenberg, and Marjorie G. Whiting, *Annotations to the Book of Luelen*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), 10; Kurekohr. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, August 8, 1950, in HFP, reel 2, Disc 26, Side 1 [frame 430].

³⁹ First fruits offerings of bananas are known as *mwohn uht*. Shimizu, “Chieftdom and the Spatial Classification,” 174-175; Saul Risenberg. *The Native Polity of Ponape*. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968), 79.

signal access to Pohnpei's cash economy, but its primary value still lay in freeing up time to cultivate crops of greater value, or to supplement the diets of landless outer Islanders.

Imported foods like rice therefore played a far smaller role in defining relationships between Pohnpeians and outsiders than did the title system and feasting complex. Japanese sailors and a handful of settlers were the island's most visible new residents, but most of the Sokehs rebels returned to Pohnpei in 1917, lodging with family rather than displacing the Pingelapese, Mokilese, and Mortlockese Germany had resettled on their land.⁴⁰ Outer islands produced new migration as well. In 1919, a settlement sprouted at Kolonia's Porakied after a lengthy drought on Kapingamarangi. Economic migrants trickled in throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁴¹ Some of these outer Islanders were formally drawn into Pohnpei's traditional governance when Germany and Japan attempted to standardize the chiefly system for administrative convenience. In Sokehs, for instance, Japanese officials installed a full complement of titled chiefs, most of whom were not Pohnpeian.⁴² But many outer Islanders and *mehn waii* operated outside the traditional leadership system altogether, whether from disinterest, exclusion, or lack of access to farmland. The discrimination that resulted could be powerful, as

⁴⁰ According to Morlang, the last of the Sokehs rebels returned to Pohnpei from Palau in 1927. Thomas Morlang, *Rebellion in der Südsee: der Aufstand auf Ponape gegen die deutschen Kolonialherren 1910/11*. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010), 196; Tesiwo Liwy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 29 April 2015.

⁴¹ Kapingamarangi's 1916-1918 drought resulted in more than 90 deaths. In 1919, a Japanese teacher named Huria resident on the atoll arranged for the migration of 90 Kapingese to Pohnpei for work with a trading company. When half of the emigrants died from a dysentery epidemic the same year, the Japanese regime arranged for the survivors to choose land in Kolonia for a permanent settlement. Nukuorans were presented with a nearly identical offer, but due to conflicts within the community their land remained largely vacant. Michael Lieber. "The Processes of Change in Two Kapingamarangi Communities," in *Exiles and Migrants in Oceania*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1977), 35; Vern Carroll, "Communities and Noncommunities: The Nukuoro on Ponape," in *Exiles and Migrants in Oceania*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1977), 69.

⁴² Previously, German officials had promoted the *lepen Nett* to *nahnmwarki* and offered him authority over both Nett and Sokehs. The Japanese Navy subsequently divided the two *wehi* again. Tadao Yanaihara [矢内原忠雄]. *Study of the South Sea Islands* [南洋群島の研究]. (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1935), 301-302.

nonparticipation rendered outsiders functionally invisible. Or, as one Pohnpeian man put it in 1965, “a man without a title is not a person.”⁴³

For both Pohnpeians and Japanese, the closely entwined relationship between ethnicity, status, and food implied an intimate, mutually sustaining connection between human beings and their immediate natural environments. But because cultivated rice was unfamiliar and disconnected from Pohnpei’s deep past, it fell outside the island’s prestige system despite being labor intensive and locally grown.⁴⁴ Likewise, the painstaking approach Japanese agriculturalists took in crossbreeding *naichi hakumai* signaled an imperative to translate the deep ties between Japanese people and their rice to a new place, to acclimate the crop to Pohnpei’s tropical climate without erasing its essential character. But while imports like pigs could become Pohnpeian prestige foods given sufficient time and care, the sudden impact of an unfamiliar environment on Japanese foods and bodies evoked a host of settler anxieties over climate, lifestyle, and proximity to Islanders. The imperial rice paddy, constructed at the intersection of Japanese agrarian tradition, scientific agriculture, and empire, was among the *Nan’yō’chō’s* most visible attempts to address those anxieties.

Japan’s imperial rice paddies

The prospect of a Micronesian high island achieving self-sufficiency in rice production has possessed each of the region’s colonial powers, but has seemed time and

⁴³ By the 1960s and 1970s, outer Islanders and *mehn waii* routinely gained legibility within Pohnpeian society by receiving traditional titles, but this practice was less common in the prewar era. See: Michael Lieber, “Strange Feast: Negotiating Identities On Ponape.” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 93, no. 2 (1984): 141-190.

⁴⁴ Rainer Jimmy. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, January 13, 2015.

again to be just out of reach.⁴⁵ Pohnpei's wet, fertile terrain led to vague Spanish promises for future rice projects, German test plantings at Kolonia's agriculture station, and major multi-decade rice initiatives under Japanese and American rule.⁴⁶ Each of these initiatives ultimately flopped, but Japan's rice projects stood out. Not only were its attempts to crossbreed *naichi hakumai* especially dogged, the Japanese regime's attempts to marshal the rice paddy as a settler colonial scheme were unique. The paddies agriculturalists helped create on Pohnpei and Palau were rooted in the upheavals of an expanding, industrializing Japanese Empire. In time, they may have facilitated a radical reorientation of Pohnpei's ecology and economy around Japanese desires, had the Pacific War not intervened. But while *Nan'yō'chō* attempts at paddy cultivation were sincere, it was knowledge about rice cultivation rather than rice itself that was the most valuable product of its rice research: knowledge that might someday have facilitated mass expansion into the resource-rich islands of New Guinea, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Rice is an honest, delicate crop. It requires no processing other than threshing and milling before it can be cooked, and its grains can be consumed without any other ingredients. Yet producers have long believed rice to be predisposed to "high levels of power and control, manipulation, and machination" in cultivation, from the water management practices needed to sustain irrigated paddies to the negotiations required to

⁴⁵ A number of these rice projects were undertaken in the Marianas, which is also the only part of Micronesia with a tradition of indigenous rice cultivation. This tradition remained active in parts of the Marianas until well into the twentieth century. See: Nancy J. Pollock "The Early Use of Rice in Guam: The Evidence from the Historic Records." *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 92, no. 4 (1983): 509–520; R.R. Solenberger. "The Changing Role of Rice in the Mariana Islands." *Micronesica* 3, no. 2 (December 1967): 97–103

⁴⁶ Henry Nanpei to C.P. Emerson, 25 July 1895. "Nanpei, Henry, Ponape (Island) Letters Probably Written by Henry Beaumont Who Worked for Nanpei for 7 Years." Micronesia Mission: Hawai'i Evangelical Archive Papers, Mission Houses Museum, Honolulu Hawai'i, 3–4; Diane Ragone, David H. Lorence, and Timothy Flynn. "History of Plant Introductions to Pohnpei, Micronesia and the Role of the Pohnpei Agriculture Station." *Economic Botany* 55, no. 2 (2001), 319.

balance market demand, labor practices, and political imperatives.⁴⁷ Collisions between these imperatives and local environments have produced thousands of distinct rice varieties globally. As Francesca Bray suggests, each of those varieties encapsulates histories of “various kinds of knowledge, skill, and desire” that converge to create both a distinct grain of rice and a “material, social, and political landscape.”⁴⁸ The rice paddy, in other words, is an intensely political space. When agriculturists across Japan’s rice-producing colonies crossbred new rice grains, as they did on Pohnpei over nearly two decades, they were therefore working to encapsulate the imagined future pasts of Japanese settler colonialism there. When planted and harvested, they expected those rice grains to bring forth territories integrated into the Japanese homeland, whether as a periphery to be exploited, an assimilated *naichi* space, or a combination of the two.

In a sense, Japan’s imperial rice paddies were an outgrowth of a process of domestic ecological and economic integration that began in the 18th century. As Edo’s urban population expanded, the nation began “economically colonizing itself,” drawing the Japanese periphery into monocropping regimes in service of ballooning metropolitan demand for products like soybeans and rice and, at times, producing crushing famines in agrarian areas.⁴⁹ As the industrialization of the Meiji era drew laborers from farm to factory, scientific agriculture and the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides extracted greater output from fewer farmers.⁵⁰ Those strategies helped boost domestic rice consumption and made Japan a net exporter of rice until the First Sino-Japanese

⁴⁷ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 13; Peter A. Coclanis, “Power and Control,” in *Rice: Global Networks and New Histories*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 275.

⁴⁸ Francesca Bray, “Purity and Promiscuity,” in *Rice: Global Networks and New Histories*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 39.

⁴⁹ Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, 38.

⁵⁰ Walker, *Toxic Archipelago*, 54-55, 57; Toshihiro Higuchi. “Japan as an Organic Empire: Commercial Fertilizers, Nitrogen Supply, and Japan’s Core-Periphery Relationship,” in *Environment and Society in the Japanese Islands: From Prehistory to Present*. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 148.

War.⁵¹ But with traders diverting supplies to a hungry Chinese market, rising production costs, rapid inflation, and spiking rice prices, Japan increasingly relied on imports of the hated Nanjing rice as *naichi hakumai* fell farther out of the reach of many Japanese families. The otherwise strong economy during the First World War helped spark a crisis: eight weeks of nationwide rioting in 1918, with consumers railing against an established order unable to supply them with Japanese rice at a fair price.⁵²

In the wake of the riots, the Japanese government worked to restore self-sufficiency in rice by further integrating Japan with the economies and environments of its rice-producing colonies. As the nation stabilized its rice markets, built local warehouses, and reclaimed land, colonial governments attempted to transform Korea and Taiwan into “reserve rice baskets” for the home islands.⁵³ In the short term, colonial administrators created artificial rice surpluses for export, surpluses Japanese officials sometimes called “starvation exports.”⁵⁴ Sorghum was shipped from Manchuria to Korea, compelling Korean consumers to substitute sorghum for rice in their daily meals. Taiwanese consumers were likewise compelled to replace some of the rice they ate with sweet potatoes.⁵⁵ In the long term, Japan simply transplanted much of its domestic agricultural policy to the colonies in service of its *naichi* consumers. As agriculturalists crossbred new strains of high-yielding Japanese rice adapted to the climates of Korea and Taiwan, colonial regimes funded irrigation and water control projects, subsidized the

⁵¹ Hayami, “Rice Policy,” 23.

⁵² Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens*, 12, 31.

⁵³ Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens*, 245.

⁵⁴ Lizzie Collingham. *The Taste of War: World War Two and the Battle for Food*. (New York: Allen Lane, 2011), 51.

⁵⁵ Yujiro Hayami and V. W. Ruttan. “Korean Rice, Taiwan Rice, and Japanese Agricultural Stagnation: An Economic Consequence of Colonialism.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84, no. 4 (November 1970), 570.

purchase of chemical fertilizers, and supported the transfer of new agricultural technologies.⁵⁶

As a result, production and exports from the colonies surged as Japanese markets became swamped with colonial rice that approximated *naichi hakumai* in an increasingly convincing way. Between 1915 and 1935 net imports of rice from Korea and Taiwan increased more than sixfold. During the same period, Japan's total rice imports increased from 5 to 20 percent of domestic production, even as shipments of Southeast Asian Nanjing rice waned.⁵⁷ As Michael Schneider suggests, we may be left to speculate as to whether Japanese were elevated by their control over colonial food systems, degraded by consuming colonial rice, "proletarianized" through their participation in mass urban food consumption, or simply placated by rice that had become "not much inferior in taste and quality" to its *naichi* cousin.⁵⁸ We do know, however, that these Japanese-style paddies had the deliberate side effect of disciplining colonial land and labor, planting critical signifiers of *naichi* Japan in colonial landscapes, and acting as proving grounds for the character of the laborers who worked them.

Of course, Pohnpei's relationship to Japan's interwar rice markets was quite unlike colonial rice regimes in Korea and Taiwan. On the one hand, land suitable for rice cultivation on the island was limited, and some of it already planted in coconuts for the copra trade. Even had *Nan'yō'chō* agriculturalists managed to fully plant Pohnpei in rice, the export value would have been negligible. On the other hand, because most of the

⁵⁶ Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens*, 245; Chih-ming Ka, *Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan: Land Tenure, Development, and Dependency, 1895-1945*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), 134; Hayami, "Rice Policy," 24; Johnston et al., *Japanese Food Management*, 56.

⁵⁷ During this period net imports of rice from Korea increased from about 187,000 to 1.3 million tons, while net imports from Taiwan increased from about 124,000 to 777,000 tons. Hayami, "Rice Policy," 24.

⁵⁸ Michael A. Schneider "The Limits of Cultural Rule: Internationalism and Identity in Japanese Responses to Korean Rice" in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 109; Tōbata, "Japanese Rice Control," 2.

Nan'yō Guntō's major economic initiatives relied on settler labor rather than on Islanders, the territory's rice paddies were not invested with the urgent "educational" designs Germany had held for its copra plantations. Officials instead embedded their interventions in Pohnpeian agricultural practices elsewhere.⁵⁹ In 1915, for instance, the Japanese Navy established public schools called *kōgakkō* to teach Islanders Japanese and train them for colonial labor.⁶⁰ By the 1930s students at Kolonia's *kōgakkō* were tending sweet potatoes, daikon, pumpkins, squash, pineapples, bananas, soursop, and cotton in the school garden.⁶¹ The regime also instituted a suite of agricultural regulations and delegated their enforcement to its omnipresent police officers, who along with teachers were the only government officials many rural Islanders ever encountered.⁶²

Further, it is unlikely that Pohnpei's Japanese military government would have been disciplined enough to transform the island into a "rice basket" for the *Nan'yō Guntō*. While the Navy's own reports paint a picture of cautious, scrupulous leadership, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officer Morie Ōno offered a portrait of a young regime that had already become profoundly disordered.⁶³ During his 1914-1915 journey through the territory, Ōno spoke with Congregationalist missionary Kinzō Tanaka, who accused a

⁵⁹ South Seas Government. *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Sea Islands Under Japanese Mandate*. (Tōkyō: Japanese Government, 1926), 61.

⁶⁰ These schools were called *shōgakkō* (elementary schools) between 1915 and 1918, *tōmin gakkō* (Islander's schools) between 1918 and 1922, and *kōgakkō* (public schools) thereafter. Higuchi, "Chronology of Micronesia," 2.

⁶¹ In 1936, the Kolonia *kōgakkō* owned seven pigs and a cow, and had plans to acquire chickens and goats. Junichi Tanaka [田中準一]. "Study on Dormitory and School Management in Pohnpei [寄宿舎の研究と我が校における経営]. *Nan'yō Kyōiku* 2:3 (April 1, 1936), in JPS, 53.

⁶² Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 74; Willard Price, *Pacific Adventure*. (New York: John Day, 1936), 251-2. See also: South Seas Government, "Police of the South Seas" [南洋群島警察概要], 1935, in JPS, 35, 177.

⁶³ See: Entries for November 9 (recounting orderly daily schedules), November 30 (a dutiful visit to the Nanpei residence), January 6 (repatriating Dr. Girschner and his wife to avoid "interference"), October 29 (detailed manifests of personnel and supplies), and November 21 (a manifest of ten other Germans to be repatriated). Japanese Navy Third Special Marine Unit, "Battle Diary of Third Special Marine Unit on Pohnpei Island, November 29, 1914 – January, 1915" in Selected Archives of the Japanese Army-Navy, 1868-1945 Hamilton Library Microfilm Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (hereafter SAJN), reel 91.

Japanese officer of taking three mistresses and then issuing threats to Islanders unless they brought him Henry Nanpei's daughter as well. He found Nanpei waxing nostalgic over German rule, lamenting the decline of Pohnpei's morals now that alcohol was so readily acquired from Japanese sailors. The Chief of Civil Affairs told of a group of Islanders who asked to dance at a party aboard the *Kasuga-kan*, but who first demanded assurances that they would not be beaten. Those assurances were ignored, and sailors set upon them with wooden sticks, producing skull fractures, broken bones, and bloodied bodies.⁶⁴ Islanders unwilling to endure public beatings for offenses as minor as tipping their hats or nodding rather than saluting became apprehensive of military personnel. Some came to view the dormitory at the Kolonia *kōgakkō* as "a place surrounded by tigers and wolves." Ōno concluded that the regime was functioning on a "politics of intimidation" that was doing serious damage to Japanese rule.⁶⁵

Pohnpei's Naval regime did fulfill some of its policy objectives, but this early turmoil had serious repercussions for its agricultural ambitions. With fewer than 150 Japanese settlers on the island by the end of the 1910s, the Navy presided over construction of four NBK stores and four police stations by 1919, new *kōgakkō* at Kolonia and Kitti, and the controversial seizure of the land remaining in each *wehi* after Germany's 1912 allotments, known as the *luhwen wehi*.⁶⁶ There were visits from

⁶⁴ Between November of 1914 and January of 1915, Ōno traveled to Saipan, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, Palau, Angaur, Jaluit, and Nauru. The officer who demanded Nanpei's daughter was Captain Iida of the First Garrison. Ōno, "Overseas Trip Report," 145-149; Morie Ōno [大野守衛], *Conditions of the South Pacific Islands Under German Occupation* [独領南洋諸島事情]. (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1915), 1.

⁶⁵ Ōno, "Overseas Trip Report," 147-148.

⁶⁶ By 1919, Japan had erected police stations in Kolonia, U, Madolenihmw, and Kitti. The seizure of the *luhwen wehi* (remainder of the *wehi*) represented a major loss for traditional leaders, who have continued to fight for the return of their land through American rule and into the post-independence era. South Seas Government. *Police Reports* [臨時南洋群島防備隊管下狀況概要], December 1919, 1, 8, 10, in JPS; Asia Mapping, Inc. *Translation of Japanese Land Documents*. (Saipan, Mariana Islands: Trust Territory

researchers, expulsions of German residents, and the entry of the Congregationalist *Nan'yō Dendō Dan* mission as well.⁶⁷ But the German agriculture station at the Dauen Neu River fell into disuse, although researchers did recommend test plantings of wetland and dryland rice.⁶⁸ Japanese entrepreneurs poured into islands to launch agricultural ventures, but without adequate vetting many turned out to be ill prepared or reckless.⁶⁹ Only copra seemed to be on a firm footing. NBK, for instance, relied on the Japanese Navy's protection and a new, exclusive contract for freight, passenger, and mail service to expand the near-monopoly it held over the copra trade in the Marianas and Western Carolines. The company inherited the Jaluit Gesellschaft's *Nan'yō Guntō* holdings as well, including its plantation in Madolenihmw.⁷⁰

Still, none of these initiatives bore as much potential consequence as the founding of the South Seas Industrial Experiment Station in 1922, the same year the Navy yielded formal authority to the civilian *Nan'yō'chō* government. The Industrial Experiment Station was situated a short distance from *Nan'yō'chō* headquarters in Palau, modeled

Division of Lands and Surveys). Hamilton Library Microfilm Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (hereafter TJLD). reel 22, (73) 1711:18-20; Noble's House, Ponape Congress to Hon. Elbert Thomas, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, May 13, 1952, "Request for the return of the 'remainder of the wehy' and the mangrove forests," in HFP, reel 2, 2. [frame 818]

⁶⁷ The Navy's 1915 initial "fact-finding mission" was composed of journalists, writers, scholars, and government officials and was meant to spur public interest in southern expansion. J. Charles Schencking, "The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Constructed Consciousness of a South Seas Destiny, 1872-1921." *Modern Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (1999), 791. See also: Department of Education Bureau of Special School Affairs [文部省専門学務局]. *Report on Observations in the Newly Occupied Territories of the South Seas*. [南洋新占領地視察報告] (Tokyo: Monbushō Senmon Gakumukyoku), 1916; Carl Heine to Nathaniel G. Grasty. 5 May 1919. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Papers, 19.4, vol. 5, no. 197, 4.

⁶⁸ Junius Boyd Wood. "Japan's Mandate in the Pacific." *Asia* 21, no. 9 (September 1921), 752; Ryozo Kanehira. *Flora Micronesica*, vol 1. Hisayoshi Takeda, trans. (Tokyo: Office of the Engineer, United States Army Pacific, 1958), 66-67; Department of Education, *Report on Observations in the Newly Occupied Territories vol. 2*, 91.

⁶⁹ The Orient Sugar Company, for instance, arrived on Pohnpei in 1916 and established a sugar plantation that limped along for four years before succumbing to rainfall and insects, ultimately costing its backers between ¥300,000 and ¥400,000. Mark Peattie. *Nan'yo: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 118; David C. Purcell, Jr. "Japanese Expansion in the South Pacific, 1890-1935." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1967), 29.

⁷⁰ Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 120-121.

after the experiment stations that promoted industrial agriculture across the Japanese Empire. A Pohnpei branch was established in 1926, and swiftly became a linchpin of Japan's research into tropical agriculture. Visitors lavished praise on the "small agricultural kingdom" Pohnpei branch director Moritarō Hoshino built at Kolonia's southern end over two decades of importing and crossbreeding economic, subsistence, and medicinal plants. But they took particular note of Hoshino's "pet project" to hybridize a Japanese-Pohnpeian rice. American journalist Willard Price, for instance, hailed a strain he believed blended the "good breeding" of Japanese rice with the "rain-defying hardihood" of an Indian import.⁷¹ Yet the meticulous rice experiments that consumed Hoshino's team after 1927 were neither an innocuous pet project nor even a scheme to reconstruct Pohnpei as a *naichi* Japanese space. Instead, the station's research was a single key step in a longer-range project to extend Japanese settlement, trade, and power to the south. It was a tool of *nanshin*: southward advance.

The scale and potential impact of that project was reflected in the deliberate pace of Hoshino's work. Through the balance of the 1920s, the *Nan'yō'chō* embarked on an accelerated program of infrastructure development, building wide roads, hospitals, schools, radio stations, telephone systems, and electric lights on each of the territory's major islands. Pohnpei saw a new *kōgakkō* at U, a *shōgakkō* for Japanese students in Kolonia, and the launch of a major land survey, among other developments.⁷² In the

⁷¹ Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 135, 332n28; Ragone, et al., "History of Plant Introductions," 294; Price, *Pacific Adventure*, 249-250; R.V.C. Bodley. *The Drama of the Pacific: Being a Treatise on the Immediate Problems Which Face Japan in The Pacific*. (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1934), 146-167.

⁷² Peattie suggests that only 70 new Japanese settlers arrived on Pohnpei between 1923 and 1930. Catholic priests on the island, however, noted the arrival of 200 Okinawan families destined for plantation labor in 1928. Both the U *kōgakkō* and Kolonia *shōgakkō* were established in 1926. South Seas Government, *League of Nations Report for 1926*, 70; Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 176; Higuchi, "Chronology of Micronesia," 4; Ryojiro Asami [浅見良次郎]. *Overview of the Education of Japanese Children in the South Seas*. [南洋群

meantime, Hoshino's team worked methodically through 112 rice varieties it imported from Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, South Asia, and Indonesia.⁷³ By 1935, with economic development continuing apace, Pohnpei's settler population had mushroomed: Kolonia now housed nearly 1,400 settlers and 900 Islanders. There was a booming company town on Madolenihmw's Ledau River, supporting the new starch factory planted by *Nan'yō Kōhatsu Kabushiki kaisha* (South Seas Development Company, or NKK). In Palikir, settlers farmers slogged away at the agricultural settlement, Haruki-mura. But despite some visible progress, Hoshino's rice research appeared no closer to a usable product, and in 1936 the *Nan'yō Guntō* magazine teased his team for "analyzing rice grains at their desk all day long" while settler farmers became impoverished waiting for their results.⁷⁴

Hoshino repeatedly insisted that Pohnpei's agriculture station was a "pure scientific project," but he cannot have been unaware of its expansionist implications.⁷⁵

島内地人子弟教育状況概要] (Tokyo: Nan'yō Keizai Kenkyujo Shuppanbu, 1943), 9; "News of the Islands." *El Siglo* 15 (1928), 357. Francis Hezel Personal File, Micronesian Seminar Archive, Chuuk, 6.

⁷³ The 112 figure was the initial, and largest, introduction of rice varieties the station introduced to Pohnpei. More varieties were introduced in subsequent years, some imported from abroad and some introduced from the Industrial Experiment Station's test plantations in Palau. South Seas Government, Industrial Experiment Station. "Reports on the Achievements on the Industrial Experiment Station of the South Sea Island Government." 1928. Nihon Microfilm Collection, Micronesian/Pacific Collection, College of Micronesia-FSM [Hereafter NMC], reel 11, 176, 212-217.

⁷⁴ Among these signs of progress were a small test plantation opened at Kahmar in Nett and erratic sales of rice and straw to local farmers and consumers. In 1932, Kahmar managed to produce roughly 400 gallons of unpolished rice for the year's first harvest and nearly 850 gallons for the second harvest, earning the station ¥384 after expenses of ¥1,664. That year's report blames the site's poor drainage and rice disease for the poor harvest. The 1933 report is similarly dire, recording a loss of ¥1,220 at Kahmar. The station's reports during this period frequently complain of crop damage from insects, rats, birds, bats, disease, and weather, which result in total losses for many of the station's test plantings. Industrial Experiment Station, "1931 Report on the Achievements," in NMC reel 11, 134, 159; Industrial Experiment Station, "1932 Report on the Achievements" in NMC reel 11, 162-163; Industrial Experiment Station, "1933 Report on the Achievements" in JPS, 114; Industrial Experiment Station, "Report on the Achievements," in NMC reel 11, 198; Hasumi, "Traveling Through the Eastern Pacific," 34.

⁷⁵ Wakako Higuchi. "A Japanese Building on Ponape: The South Seas Bureau Tropical Industries Research Institute and the Meteorological Observatory" in *Technical Assistance & Training in the Investigation, Analysis & Treatment Proposal for the Japanese Agriculture Station, Pohnpei FSM: Cultural Landscape and Concrete Conservation*, 2006, University of Hawai'i Pacific Collection, 20-21.

Those implications were spelled out with increasing clarity once Japan made its 1935 exit from the League of Nations. The *Nan'yō'chō* then defined the *Nan'yō Guntō* as “bases for southward advance and national defense” for the first time. The South Seas Industrial Experiment Station was charged with an expanded research portfolio and reorganized as the Tropical Industries Research Institute, modeled after a similar organization in Taiwan.⁷⁶ Six years later, in 1941, Hoshino's team finally delivered a hybridized Japanese-Pohnpeian rice to Haruki-mura, which it designated 158x123. But while 158x123 was successfully cultivated on wartime Pohnpei, it was never a major player in the island's peacetime food supply.⁷⁷ Instead, the *Nan'yō'chō* built settler societies across Micronesia that were utterly dependent on imported foods, whose complex racial boundaries barely resembled the imperial paddy's promise of totalizing settler colonial transformation.

The Nanpeis and Shigeru Tanaka: working Kolonia's racial borders

Anyone familiar with the sleepy settlement that surrounded Kolonia's fort under Spanish and German rule would have struggled to recognize the briskly expanding town in the mid-1930s. But while the old Spanish walls no longer separated rulers from ruled, Kolonia had become divided in less apparent ways. A visitor disembarking onto the government pier would have emerged from a drab industrial waterfront onto *Kaigan Dōri*, a lively commercial strip crowded with settlers and Islanders. Roads opposite the pier led toward a handsome hilltop complex of schools, administrative buildings, and a

⁷⁶ The *Nan'yō'chō* first formally identified the islands of the *Nan'yō Guntō* as “bases” in the 10-year development plan of 1935. The Tropical Industries Research Institute pursued research into agriculture, forestry, and mining. Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 33.

⁷⁷ Higuchi notes that 158x123 was a descendent of a breed the station called No. 158, a cross between ADT 3 from British India and Nakamura rice from Japan. Higuchi, “Japanese Building on Ponape,” 20.

courthouse, hospital, and post office. There, a second commercial strip had developed along *Namiki Dōri*, which boasted shops, a photography studio, and the Ponape Theater. But farther south was a pleasure district, where Okinawan and Korean homes were crowded among cafes, sushi bars, and segregated restaurant-cum-brothels staffed by *geishas*.⁷⁸ Closer examination would have revealed *naichi* Japanese mostly clustered in Kolonia's center, Islanders residing at the town's outskirts and in rural areas, and Okinawan and Korean laborers congregating wherever there was work to be had.

Once noticed, segregation in the *Nan'yō Guntō* was hard to miss. It ran from the territory's colonial education system to its race-based wage scales, from the prohibition on Islanders consuming alcohol to the restriction on Islander men marrying settler women. Even the rice on store shelves seemed to echo the territory's racial boundaries: from the multiple grades of *naichi hakumai* preferred by Japanese to the Okinawan, Korean, and Nanjing rice favored by other groups.⁷⁹ But, perhaps because the boundaries of the *naichi* were themselves in flux, these divisions were more elastic than they first appeared. Japan's Pacific colonial towns were actually less segregated than their European counterparts.⁸⁰ Even if Islanders were merely shifting from "remote Other" to "close Other" in Japan's colonial discourse, or being reframed as "potential Japanese"

⁷⁸ Kolonia's pleasure district sat just across the Dauen Neu river from Mpomp, where the Japanese military built a base on land seized from the Etscheit family in 1940. In wartime, sexual access to geishas was classed and racialized: Japanese geishas for officers, Okinawan geishas for noncommissioned officers, and Korean geishas for soldiers, with Islanders barred altogether. In peacetime Garapan, prostitutes were explicitly ordered not to sleep with Islander men. Takehiko Akita [秋田武彦]. *War Diaries from Pohnpei: Unsinkable Ship on the Pacific* [ボナペ島 戦記: 南海の不沈艦]. (Tōkyō: Kobunsha, 1981), 51; Ono, "Study of Urban Morphology Part 5," 1524; Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 208-209; *Miscellaneous Nan'yō'chō Land Documents* [土地関係書類その他]. (Saipan: Division of Lands and Surveys, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands). Hamilton Library Microfilm Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (hereafter NLD), 13V 29-32; Nakahodo, *Okinawans Voyaging*, 86.

⁷⁹ South Seas Government. *Statistical Yearbook vol. 1* [南洋庁統計年報] (Tokyo: South Seas Government, 1933), 326-328.

⁸⁰ Ono, *Building Paradise*, 21.

incapable of shedding that potentiality, identification with Japan could still be manipulated, stretched, and undermined.⁸¹ Henry Nanpei's tumultuous mentorship of his son Oliver and their skillful navigation of the island's racial boundaries suggest just how pliable and penetrable those boundaries could be, particularly for Islanders with money or power. Likewise, *Nan'yō'chō* branch manager Shigeru Tanaka's fading connection to the *naichi* raised the troubling possibility for some settlers that their own identification with Japan may be less permanent and more susceptible to Pohnpei's unfamiliar environment and people than they had assumed.

Oliver Nanpei was born in Rohnkitti in 1882, the eldest son of Henry and Caroline Nanpei. Seeking the advantages of an American education for his son, Henry enrolled Oliver at the Kamehameha School's Preparatory Department in 1890 during a stopover in Honolulu.⁸² Oliver remained at Kamehameha until 1901 to study engineering, ultimately returning home when Henry became dissatisfied with reports of his performance.⁸³ Back on Pohnpei, missionary Leta Gray saw in Oliver a sturdy man of nineteen, a natural leader whose smoking habit and "slangy" English accompanied him from the city. But Gray also detailed dramatic scenes of conflict between father and son. After one quarrel, Oliver was disowned, chastened, enrolled at Ohwa's mission school, and then withdrawn after a tearful late night apology to his father. Accumulating scandals

⁸¹ Naoto Sudo. *Nanyo Orientalism: Japanese Representations of the Pacific*. (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2010), 6-7.

⁸² Henry left Pohnpei after Madolenihmw's violent rebellion against Spanish authorities that year resulted in the exile of the island's Protestant missionaries. Later, when he arrived in San Francisco, Nanpei joined a network of ministers and representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on a speaking tour. The group deployed lobbyists to Washington as well, and the missionaries were ultimately restored. Luelen Bernart. *The Book of Luelen* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), 122; Paul Ehrlich. "Henry Nanpei: Pre-Eminently a Ponapean" in *More Pacific Islands Portraits*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978), 137; "President Harrison and the Ponape Troubles," *Hawaiian Gazette* (Honolulu, HI), November 24, 1891, p. 3; "To Appeal to President Harrison: Alleged Mission of the Chief of Ponape, Caroline Islands," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), July 8, 1891, p. 3.

⁸³ "Gospel Boat Sails Away," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu), July 2, 1901, p. 5.

at Rohnkitti eventually led Henry to sentence his son to six months of hard labor under guard, though Oliver's charismatic influence and band of unruly followers made it impossible to keep him under lock and key.⁸⁴

In her account of Pohnpei's Protestant mission during those years, Leta Gray depicts Henry Nanpei as a man overcome by family turmoil and his own poor health, and increasingly at odds with missionaries like herself and her husband. One evening, she writes, Henry swallowed enough laudanum to "kill three men," narrowly escaping death and retreating to Ohwa to convalesce. Then, when Oliver stood accused of running off with another man's wife, Henry asked the colonial government to hold his son in "protective custody" until he returned from a lengthy trip to Germany with the Jaluit Gesellschaft's Emil Loessner.⁸⁵ Government boats landed at Ohwa and Oliver surrendered peacefully, but Henry set upon the woman, knocking her to the ground as his son struggled to pull him away.⁸⁶ Oliver remained in jail while his father traveled, at times working a chain gang. But when Henry returned home to find his possessions devastated by the 1905 typhoon, he threw himself into rebuilding. He engineered Oliver's release, revived his copra empire, and was eventually able to secure major new concessions during the German land reform.⁸⁷ By the time Henry returned to Germany in 1912 to enroll his sons Robert and Enter in the mission school at Bad Liebenzell, Oliver

⁸⁴ Leta Gray, *Uriel of Ponape*, 1970. Mission Houses Museum Archives, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 22-24, 29-31. See: David Hanlon, "Another Side of Henry Nanpei," *Journal of Pacific History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 36-51.

⁸⁵ Passenger lists for this journey include Emil Loessner, his wife, Henry Nanpei, and a passenger given as "E. Nanpei," possibly Henry Nanpei's son Ernes Nanpei. An article referencing the trip in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* lists "E. Nanpei and H. Nanpei" as two Nanpei "princes" en route to enroll in a German college, but this appears to be an error. Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, 1 March 1905 in RGIG, vol. 5 Item 8-2, Document 33, 1-4; "Passengers Arrived," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu), May 9, 1905, p. 10; "Passengers Departed," *Evening Bulletin* (Honolulu), May 30, 1905, p. 8; "Princes of Carolines: Young Chiefs Enroute to German College," *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu), May 9, 1905, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Gray, *Uriel of Ponape*, 34, 37-38, 40.

⁸⁷ Gray, *Uriel of Ponape*, 52, 62-63; Ehrlich, "Henry Nanpei," 150.

had been entrusted with operations on And and was helping oversee the family's stores and plantations on Pohnpei.⁸⁸

Henry Nanpei's grandest political ambitions may have been a casualty of the Sokehs rebellion, but he and Oliver continued the family's artful political maneuvering under Japanese rule.⁸⁹ Henry appeared as a guest of honor at one of Kolonia's extravagant festivals for the Emperor's birthday in the late 1910s, cutting a figure so statesmanlike that family friend Toshio Iwase saw in him the dignified, sorrowful cast of Jean Valjean and pronounced him a "phoenix among sparrows." At his home in Rohnkitti, Iwase found Nanpei relaxing in a *yukata* with a bottle of Mitsuya Cider. There, he protested his surveillance by military police as an anti-Japanese activist, decried their harassment of his daughter, and declared himself "just a Christian," "pure of heart," and "very pro-Japanese."⁹⁰ Henry could be pointed in his praise for Germany or his criticism of Japan. But he also profited from sales of livestock to settlers and in 1923 toured the Japanese mainland, probably as a guest of the *Nan'yō'chō*.⁹¹ When Henry passed away in 1928, Oliver took the helm of the Nanpei Company. Among his first major statements was a memorial to his father at Rohnkitti, an imposing statue he erected with NBK's help at cost of ¥20,000.⁹²

⁸⁸ *Ponape, Das Südseeparadies*. (Bad Liebenzell: W. Heinsen, 1952), 36; Ehrlich, "Henry Nanpei," 151.

⁸⁹ Francis X. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 142.

⁹⁰ Toshio Iwase [岩瀬 俊夫], "The Life and Times of Henry Nanpei" [アンリ・ナニベ翁の生きていた頃], *Nan'yō Guntō* 4:2 (1938), 55-58; NLD 9Y 19-20.

⁹¹ NLD 9Y 19-20; Hermann Joseph Hiery, *The Neglected War: The German South Pacific and the Influence of World War I*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 192; Ehrlich, "Henry Nanpei," 152.

⁹² Oliver worked with NBK to erect the statue at Rohnkitti. Henry Nanpei wrote two wills: a document from 1920 leaving all his possessions to Oliver and a 1923 testament leaving individual properties to his wife, the people of Kitti, and the *Nan'yō'chō* and placing the Nanpei Company in the joint possession of his children. Only the 1923 testament was probated by the Japanese government or recognized by Trust Territory courts. Ehrlich, "Henry Nanpei," 152; Sei Uemoto. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei. 23

Even without ingratiating themselves to the *Nan'yō'chō*, the volume of Nanpei land holdings at the time of Henry's death made the family an inescapable presence on the island. By 1935, the Nanpei Company controlled And Atoll and half of Pohnpei's indigenous-held land, about 9,800 acres.⁹³ Those holdings continued to grow under Oliver's management, in part because he shared his father's willingness to hold land titles as collateral for Pohnpeians seeking loans. In 1938, for instance, a man named Bernardo backed out of an agreement to sell his land at Pehलग to the Wakamoto Company. Instead, he planned to use the land to satisfy a debt of ¥1,910, accrued when Oliver loaned him funds for a group tour of Japan and a surgical procedure. Wakamoto, which hoped to build a cassava plantation on the site, filed a formal complaint with the land office. There, they accused Oliver of "scheming" to obstruct their acquisitions, presiding over a vast area of unused land on Pohnpei, and willfully interfering with the island's development.⁹⁴

Nonetheless, Oliver continually worked to enhance his family's influence by deepening its ties to Japan. He encouraged his daughters to find Japanese husbands, sent

April, 2015. See: Henry Nanpei (Rosa) v. Kiyoko M. Sproat, Civil Action No. 27-81, Decision (Trial Division of the High Court, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands at Kolonia Pohnpei, July 16, 1985), 5-7; John F. Embree, *Field Report on Trip to Micronesia, December 14, 1945 – January 5, 1946*, 1946, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 81. See: Hanlon, "Another Side," 49.

⁹³ John L. Fischer, "Contemporary Ponape Island Land Tenure" in *Land Tenure Patterns in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, vol. 1 (Guam: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1958), 117.

⁹⁴ The same year, Konerat Anseimo traded his land on Parempei for what he later claimed was a case of corned beef, two sacks of rice, a tin of sugar, a canoe, a sum of ¥300, and a promise to "take care of me so long as I lived." When their dispute went to court in 1956, however, Oliver countered that Anseimo had blown through a payment of ¥1,000 and failed to perform as a laborer at the Nanpei plantations in Rohnkitti. He described the other items as gifts given out of Oliver's "kindness" and "great pity." During Oliver's testimony at the 1956 trial, he also accused Anseimo of behaving "like a female," presumably a reference to Anseimo's alleged inability to provide for himself. At one point in the trial Nanpei turned to Anseimo and said, "you have been acting like a female and that's the trouble with you. You are as a man and as a woman, and you are an idiot!" Konerat Anseimo v. Oliver Nanpei, Civil Action No. 96, Transcript of Evidence (Trial Division of the High Court, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands at Ponape District, June 25-26, 1956), 3-4, 19-20, Trust Territory Archives, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, reel 815; TJLD, reel 18, (38) 9P-418; TJLD, reel 18, (38) 9P 428-429.

a son to be educated in the *naichi*, and toured the country himself. In time, his daughters Daisy and Luise married the brothers Shigedō and Kandō Muriyama and Keity married a man named Takeno, men who served the family directly at the Nanpei Company and indirectly through Pohnpei's land office.⁹⁵ But Oliver was also eager to see his grandchildren raised “strictly in the Japanese ways” and, according to the island's first American military governor, even declined to speak Pohnpeian with them at home.⁹⁶ So eager was Oliver to demonstrate his loyalty to Japan that in 1939 he donated ¥10,000 for “national protection,” a gift the *Nan'yō Guntō* magazine boasted was beyond the means even of elite Japanese settlers.⁹⁷ These overtures paid off. When the *Nan'yō'chō* seized possession of Pohnpei's mangrove swamps in the 1920s, the Nanpei family was exempted.⁹⁸ When Pohnpeians were a minority in Kolonia, the Nanpeis maintained a stately home in the town's most established area, at *Kaigan Dōri's* northern end. And when the territory's colonial education system was its most powerful sign of racial segregation, Oliver sent his children to the *shōgakkō* with the progeny of the town's settler elites.⁹⁹

The Nanpei family's wealth set them apart, but their engagement with settler society was not entirely unique. Islanders attended Kolonia's churches and schools, strolled its streets, and patronized its shops, and in 1935 made up about 40% of the

⁹⁵ Embree, *Field Report*, 70, 81, 83; Rufino Mauricio, “Family Roots: Genealogy and History of Some Families of Kitti, Pohnpei,” 32; Anseimo v. Nanpei, 20, 25.

⁹⁶ Albert Momm, *Ponape: Japan's Island in the Eastern Carolines*. College of Micronesia-FSM, Micronesia/Pacific Collection, 28.

⁹⁷ “A Wealthy Islander in Pohnpei Donates ¥10,000 for National Protection” [ポナペの島民資産家壹萬圓を国防献金], *Nan'yō Guntō* 5:9 (1939), 85.

⁹⁸ John Fischer, “During the preparation of paper on Ponapean Land Tenure in 1954,” in HFP, reel 2, Disc 35, Side 1, 11 [frame 602].

⁹⁹ Yvette Etscheit Adams. *Island Traders: Memories of the Carlos Etscheit Family* (Pohnpei: Etscheit family, 2009), 68; Ono, “Study of Urban Morphology Part 5,” 1523; Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 217.

town's 2,287 residents.¹⁰⁰ They developed affinities for some imported foods and disgust for others, such as the edible snails that escaped Kolonia's shops and overran the island in the 1930s.¹⁰¹ Some expressed pity for Japanese who neglected foods they knew to be delicious, such as the Pohnpeian students who visited Tokyo in 1937 and speculated that the apparent absence of fruits other than watermelon there meant Japanese "don't know other fruits."¹⁰² Barred from more prestigious jobs, Islanders took posts at the lower rungs of the settler economy, as assistant police officers, assistant teachers, laborers, and household servants to gain access to the commercial economy, and continued producing copra as well. Traditional leaders were also drawn in. In 1922, the *Nan'yō'chō* designated a headman and assistant headman in each *wehi*, salaried positions usually filled by the *nahnmwarki* and *nahnken*.¹⁰³ When these leaders passed away or failed to demonstrate adequate fealty to Japan, the *Nan'yō'chō* engineered a replacement, often a young man

¹⁰⁰ According to Yvette Adams, Pohnpeians preferred the Etscheit store to Kolonia's Japanese shops because the family spoke Pohnpeian and was already established on the island. The Nanpei store shared the same qualities. Manuel Amor describes the Kolonia Nanpei store during this time as a small shop that stocked "imported Japanese things because local people could make other things for themselves." Sei Uemoto. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei. 23 April, 2015; Adams, *Island Traders*, 51; Manuel Amor. Interview by author. Awak, Pohnpei. 12 December, 2014; Ono, "Study of Urban Morphology Part 5," 1522, 1524.

¹⁰¹ Giant African snails were introduced to Pohnpei in 1935 via Taiwan. They met with limited commercial success, but did wreak havoc on settler gardens and wild yam plantings after escaping. One group of Japanese soldiers stationed on Pohnpei cleaned, boiled, and salted snails they found near the airport at Nanpohnmal. Afterwards, according to one account, "everyone went to the bathroom frequently." Nozaki Seiichi, [野崎政一] "Gardens Being Destroyed: Damage from Edible Snails and How to Prevent It," [菜園を荒らすもの 食用蝸牛の害とその対策] *Nan'yō Guntō* 6:2 (1940), 28-33; John Fischer, "Notes at a meeting of the council of officials at U district," October 10, 1950 in HFP, reel 2, Disc 25, Side 2, 10 [frame 421]; Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 138, 220; Tamura Notosuke [田村元輔], "Fighting Every Day" [戦いの日々] in *Coconuts: Independent Hybrid 52nd Artillery Brigade, 2nd Company, vol. 1*. [独立混成第五十二旅団砲兵隊第二中隊. 独立混成第五十二旅団砲兵隊第二中隊誌 (第一号) 椰子の実] (Pohnpei: Ponape Senyūkai, 1985), 39. See also: Colin Tyner. "Struggling with Complex Natures in the Ogasawara Islands" in *Environment and Society in the Japanese Islands: From Prehistory to Present*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 168.

¹⁰² F.S. Sei [生], "A Guest From the South Seas." [南洋のお客様] *Nan'yō Guntō* 3:9 (1937), 74. See also: Mechas Keiko Miyashita Cho. Interview by Maki Mita, in *Palauan Children Under Japanese Rule: Their Oral Histories*. (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2009), 104.

¹⁰³ Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 75-76

with ties to the regime. These men then assumed both the traditional titles and bureaucratic responsibilities of their predecessors.¹⁰⁴

As the *Nan'yō'chō* blurred Pohnpei's colonial and traditional governance, some traditional leaders pursued opportunities to profit from their titles. A few sold the yams they received at feasts.¹⁰⁵ Others leveraged their land holdings and ties to settler society into business operations. Nett *Nahlaimw* Joseph Iriarte, for instance, had served as translator to the German regime and personal secretary to Max Girschner, and then as an NBK copra buyer. By 1923, he was operating a 36-acre copra plantation and building a reputation at the *Nan'yō'chō* as a thoughtful, sensitive man of intelligence.¹⁰⁶ When he became assistant headman of Nett in 1939, Iriarte had already been circulating among Kolonia's elites for years, and could be found anywhere from a *kamadipw* to the *Nan'yō'chō* offices to the Carlos Etscheit home, hashing out matters of the day over glasses of wine in fluent German.¹⁰⁷

As Pohnpeians and outer Islanders drew closer to Japan, *naichi* bureaucrats, traders, and settlers like Shigeru Tanaka seemed to be drawing closer to the islands. Tanaka, Pohnpei's *Nan'yō'chō* branch manager between 1936 and 1939, first came to the *Nan'yō Guntō* in 1919 from Miyazaki prefecture on Kyūshū's southeastern coast. He served with the territory's military administration, became Saipan's branch manager in 1933, and took the same role on Pohnpei three years later. Branch managers generally implemented orders from above rather than shaping policy themselves, but Tanaka's

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, Madolenimw's 1932 replacement of the recently deceased *Nahnmwarki* Alexander with Moses, whose appointment was uncontested by the Japanese regime. See also the narrow 1934 election of Kalio to the position of Sokehs *Nahnmwarki* after his predecessor passed away. NLD 16D 19, 84-87.

¹⁰⁵ Kurekohr. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, December 19, 1950, in HFP, reel 2, [frame 29].

¹⁰⁶ The *nahlaimw* holds the second rank in the *nahnken* line. NLD 16D 173-175.

¹⁰⁷ Adams, *Island Trader*, 63.

proponents championed him as an indispensable “living dictionary of Pacific Islands administration” nonetheless.¹⁰⁸ As one visitor remarked, “Tanaka is a little guy, but he talks big.”¹⁰⁹ And perhaps Pohnpei did appear to be Japanizing under Tanaka’s tenure. His arrival coincided with the *Nan’yō’chō’s* Ten Year Development Plan, which freshly prioritized Pohnpei for settlement and development. The pages of local newspapers were filled with items from the *naichi* rather than the *Nan’yō Guntō*, and some Japanese families seemed to be maintaining exclusive diets of imported foods at the expense of their own health. Some visitors even asserted that Pohnpei’s Japanese community was living “completely isolated from the island and its people.”¹¹⁰

But the disregard some settlers may have felt for their surroundings belied the complexity of the island’s social landscape and its mounting racial anxieties. A 1936 edition of the *Nan’yō Guntō* magazine, for instance, includes a satirical tour of Pohnpei in which the experienced hand Mitsuyuki Kanetani introduces newcomer Rokurō Kitahara to life on the island. As they stroll by Tanaka’s hilltop office overlooking Kolonia, they catch a glimpse of him from the sidewalk.¹¹¹ “Oh,” Kitahara exclaims, “he’s really dark. *Nan’yō* colored.” “Tanaka has been working in the *Nan’yō Guntō* for 14 years,” Kanetani replies. “He knows everything, and he’s an expert on *Nan’yō Guntō* administration. Even his bones are black. The color of his face is a trademark of life in the *Nan’yō*.” But, Kitahara wondered, does living in the *Nan’yō Guntō* “make you black?” Certainly, Kanetani declares, referencing a handful of prominent Japanese officials and settlers.

¹⁰⁸ Shimura, *Tropics of the Japanese South Seas*, 2; Wakako Higuchi. Interview by author. Mangilao, Guam, January 6, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Hasumi, “Traveling Through the Eastern Pacific,” 34.

¹¹⁰ Several newspapers operated on the territory’s larger islands. Among them were Saipan’s *Nan’yō Asahi Shinbun*, Palau’s *Nan’yō Shinpo*, Pohnpei’s *Karorin Taimusu*, and Chuuk’s *Torakku Jihō*. Peattie, *Nan’yo*, 203, 205, 337n6; Price, *Pacific Adventure*, 169.

¹¹¹ For a description of Pohnpei’s *Nan’yō’chō* office during this time, see: Hasumi, “Traveling Through the Eastern Pacific,” 34.

“Everyone living in the *Nan’yō* for a long time becomes *Nan’yō*-colored. Look at the post office ship. It’s black too.”¹¹² While the inexperienced Kitahara seems to fret over the precariousness of his Japanese identity, the magazine also turned its mockery on settlers who became obsessed with such questions. A later issue includes a cartoon of a Japanese man in a business suit, drinking hot tea as perspiration rains down from his forehead. Alongside the image, Kanetani jokes, “In Japan, it’s customary to serve hot tea and wear an *obi* even if it gives you heat rash.”¹¹³

Nothing more crystallized the anxieties evoked by Tanaka’s “blackness” or underlined the plasticity of the territory’s racial boundaries than intermarriage, which the *Nan’yō’chō* permitted so long as *mehn waii* men were paired with Islander women. Presumably, the *naichi* settlers most possessive of their Japaneseness avoided these relationships, but many Okinawans and Koreans felt no such obligation. Even prominent Japanese men like NBK branch managers Kohachirō Uemoto and Raichi Akinaga and Kolonia mayor Michio Suzuki pursued marriages with Islander women, whether for love or access to local family and clan networks. Still, the products of these relationships struck a predictably distressing chord with *naichi* Japanese who feared they “would make our blood polluted or make our family record dirty.”¹¹⁴ In 1935, for instance, *naichi* visitor Sakan Ando narrated his journey to Kolonia as a kind of racial melodrama. Strolling down *Kaigan Dōri*, Ando recalled, he happened upon a Pohnpeian-Japanese child named Gina. Ando learned that her father was a copra trader, that her parents were away in the outer islands, and that she was staying with her Pohnpeian relatives.

¹¹² Mitsuyuki Kaneya and Rokuro Kitahara [金谷光行,北原六朗], “*Nan’yō* Travel Journal (*Hizakurige*), Part 8” [南洋膝栗毛], *Nan’yō Guntō* 2:10 (1936), 112.

¹¹³ Kaneya and Kitahara, “*Nan’yō* Travel Journal, Part 7,” 47.

¹¹⁴ Seitaro Yasutake. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Tokyo, Japan, 10 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 62.

Suddenly gathering up the confused girl in his arms, Ando found himself filled with shame at her father's "love affair," her Pohnpeian home, and her enrollment in a *kōgakkō*. He agonized over the imminent moment when she realized her "destiny" and found himself, "frozen with sadness." As they parted, Ando was overcome, longing to ask her why she was born.¹¹⁵

On the eve of the Pacific War, Oliver Nanpei, Joseph Iriarte, Shigeru Tanaka, and Gina represented just a handful of the *Nan'yō Guntō*'s prospective futures. On the one hand, men like Nanpei and Iriarte had opened cracks in the territory's racial hierarchies and slipped through, performing assimilation successfully enough to bolster the interests of their families without being swallowed into settler society. On the other hand, people like Tanaka and Gina were complicating the notion that islands like Pohnpei could simply be transformed into *naichi* space, whether through colonial education, settlement, or rice culture. For Kitahara and Kanetani, it was Tanaka's knowledge of the *Nan'yō Guntō* that "made him black," the same knowledge that should have enabled him to perform effectively in his job. But for Sakan Ando, mixed children like Gina signified an even more distressing future, not because of her mixed parentage but because her family seemed to favor their ties to Pohnpei over her Japanese identity. Had peacetime settlement endured in the *Nan'yō Guntō*, it seems likely that these questions would have grown even more complex. In the crucible of war, however, the island's ambivalent racial lines came to a sharp point, until they became scrambled once again.

¹¹⁵ Sakan Ando [安藤盛], "Mixed Child of Pohnpei" [ボナペの混血児] *Nan'yō Guntō* 1:4 (1935), 40-41.

Feeding and being fed: racialized rationing, forced labor, and wartime collapse

On the morning of December 8, 1941, air raid sirens blew over Kolonia. At the *shōgakkō*, the news from Pearl Harbor propelled students to a small Shinto shrine where they bowed toward Japan and prayed for victory. Later in the day, the children joined in an exuberant parade through town, clutching Japanese flags, shouting “*banzai*,” and singing military songs.¹¹⁶ Outwardly, these celebrations seemed to signal the Pacific War’s arrival on Pohnpei. But those familiar with the fragile supply chain that undergirded the island’s import economy had seen cracks forming since the 1937 invasion of China: rice shortages, imports disappearing from store shelves, and farmers replanting their land with rice substitutes.¹¹⁷ In the weeks after December 8th, those omens of future deprivation became concrete. Staple foods were rationed, the *Nan’yō’chō* seized Mpwoampw for use as a military base, and the military began taking an increasingly firm hand in the island’s administration.¹¹⁸

Islanders, settlers, soldiers, and sailors soon found themselves at the intersection of a deceptively inclusive wartime nationalism, racialized food and labor systems, and daily food deprivations. Those forces sharpened some of Pohnpei’s hierarchies, but they helped overturn others. Rice’s symbolic power put it at the very center of the island’s wartime power struggles, and negotiations over food and feeding powerfully reframed the contestations over belonging and identity that had hung over Japanese-occupied Pohnpei

¹¹⁶ Adams, *Island Traders*, 84-85, 87.

¹¹⁷ Pohnpei’s agriculturalists warned of an “urgent rice shortage” in 1938, promising to accelerate their rice research. In 1940, Okinawan merchant Taruji Majikina leased a two-acre farm in Ledau, proposing to plant it in sweet potatoes to help boost local food supplies. The following March, the Wakamoto Company planted its land at Pehleng in cassava in hopes of producing a workable rice substitute. South Seas Government, “Overview on the Activities of the Industrial Experiment Station of the South Sea Island Government” [南洋庁熱帯産業研究所事業概要昭和十三年九月], 1938, in JPS, 48; TJLD reel 21, (61) 13Q 359-360; TJLD reel 21, (61) 13R 232.

¹¹⁸ Adams, *Island Traders*, 82, 94

since 1914. Who could produce rice, who could eat it, who needed to be fed, and who could do the feeding became critical questions that reshaped policy, bodies, and relationships, and set the stage for Pohnpei's impending American occupation.

In a war that claimed as many lives from malnutrition and starvation as from military deaths, the overriding concern with food and feeding that absorbed wartime Pohnpei was not unique. As Lizzie Collingham suggests, securing food by exploiting occupied territories or denying it to enemy nations through blockades was a “central preoccupation” for both sides throughout the Second World War.¹¹⁹ In Japan, however, rice's unique association with identity actually provoked fractures in the food system prior to the outbreak of hostilities. When the Great Depression sent agricultural prices into a tailspin, *naichi* farmers had responded by railing against the now popular and inexpensive colonial rice that filled Japanese store shelves, and in 1934 plans to expand Korean rice production were shelved.¹²⁰ As military operations expanded, productive farmers became hungry soldiers, agricultural output declined, and the government gathered up *naichi hakumai* so soldiers could have the energy needed for victory (or so it claimed).¹²¹ Allied blockades then made it increasingly difficult to transport supplies, even within the *naichi*. By 1943, Japan was addressing the resulting food crisis with a policy of “self-sufficiency.” In many cases, this simply meant soldiers and civilians fending for themselves: foraging, capturing enemy supplies, or planting fast-growing crops like the ubiquitous sweet potato anywhere they could.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Collingham, *Taste of War*, 8.

¹²⁰ Susan C. Townsend. *Yanaihara Tadao and Japanese Colonial Policy: Redeeming Empire*. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 137. See also: Eiichi Nakajima, *The Korea Rice Problem* [朝鮮産米の諸問題], (Tokyo: Manchurian Railway Tokyo Branch Research Group, 1941), 8.

¹²¹ Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 93.

¹²² Collingham, *Taste of War*, 286.

On outer atolls like Ngatik, which were largely self-sufficient already, the breakdown of these supply chains had little effect.¹²³ In New Guinea, however, where fighting was desperate and life barely sustainable, food shortages resulted in widespread starvation. Food deprivation even contributed to a “systematic and organized military strategy” of cannibalism there, whereby Japanese soldiers targeted Allied servicemen, Asian POWs, indigenous people, and other Japanese. Some of the soldiers stationed in New Guinea pursued their victims indiscriminately. But others consciously animalized non-Japanese: consuming “black pigs” (indigenous civilians) but not “white pigs” (Allied soldiers), or consuming either so long as they avoided fellow Japanese.¹²⁴ A few cases of Japanese cannibalism even reached Chuuk Lagoon, where Islanders crowded among thousands of civilians and personnel associated with the Japanese Navy’s Combined Fleet.¹²⁵ Pohnpei avoided that outcome, and in fact weathered a near tripling of its wartime population better than any of the *Nan’yō Guntō*’s other high islands. Yet suffering there was acute nonetheless, and the island’s entanglement with the warring Japanese Empire no less fraught with potential dangers.¹²⁶

Wartime rationing in the *Nan’yō Guntō* segregated access to commercial goods for the first time, and access to rice swiftly became the territory’s primary marker of “true” Japaneseness. On Pohnpei, rice was among the first staples to be rationed, along

¹²³ Lin Poyer. “Echoes of Massacre: Recollections of World War II on Sapwuahfik (Ngatik Atoll)” in *The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989), 109.

¹²⁴ Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 115, 139; Kazuo Hara. *The Emperor’s Naked Army Marches On*. Imamura Productions, 1987. See also: Georgina Fitzpatrick, Tim McCormack and Narrelle Morris. *Australia’s War Crimes Trials: 1945-51*. (Boston: Brill, 2016), 298-314.

¹²⁵ Chuuk Lagoon ultimately supported 9,000 Islanders and 35,000 Japanese during the war. Keiko Ono and Tetsuya Ando, “A Study of Urban Morphology of Japanese Colonial Towns in Nan’yo Gunto, Part 4: Natsujima, Truk Islands,” *Journal of Architectural Planning* 77, no. 671 (January 2012), 209; See: Poyer et al., 175-179; Erman. Interview by John Fischer. Fefan, June 20, 1949, in HFP, reel 1, 125 [frame 753].

¹²⁶ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 181.

with flour, milk, and canned goods.¹²⁷ In Palau, Japanese and Palauan-Japanese families received monthly distributions of rice, soy sauce, miso, and clothing. Palauan families received the same distributions in smaller amounts at first, but these were eliminated later in the war.¹²⁸ On Guam, rice was reserved exclusively for Japanese, and the price of other staples increased at least eightfold for Chamorros.¹²⁹ Of course, most of the territory's settlers really were more dependent on imports than Islanders. But the *Nan'yō'chō's* eagerness to racialize rationing also reflected its long-held apprehension of Islanders as happy-go-lucky primitives inhabiting a tropical paradise.¹³⁰ The administration's 1932 decennial report, for instance, declared that Islanders had no need of imports at all, "as they make a living happily without them." According to the report, the only articles Islanders purchased were "luxuries" such as toiletries, canned goods, rice, cloth, and tobacco.¹³¹ The century-long history of these items in the region went without comment.

The *Nan'yō Guntō's* rationing strategies revealed a critical tension in the nationalism that swept the islands after 1937, whereby the *Nan'yō'chō* increasingly incorporated Islanders as equal beneficiaries of the Emperor's care in its public statements while alienating them from the privileges of full citizenship. Nationalist rhetoric could then be found everywhere from the territory's *kōgakkō*, where students pledged to become "splendid Japanese nationals" each morning, to the symbolic rewards

¹²⁷ Adams, *Island Traders*, 82, 94

¹²⁸ Itebang Luii (Shimeichi, Nicholas). Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Palau, 28 March, 1985, in *Personal Correspondences and Interviews with Former Japanese Officials in Palau*, University of Hawai'i Pacific Collection, 2; Yoshiko Ashio. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Palau, 4 April, 1985, in *Personal Correspondences and Interviews*, 3.

¹²⁹ Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 95, 183.

¹³⁰ Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery*, 10.

¹³¹ South Seas Government. *History of Ten Years of Administration in the South Seas* [南洋庁施政十年史]. (Tōkyō: South Seas Government, 1932), 362.

issued to adult Islanders who performed exceptional acts of national service.¹³² In 1942, for instance, 20 Pohnpeians bound for war in New Guinea were given license to violate restrictions against indigenous alcohol consumption at a farewell party in Kolonia. A Japanese sailor friendly with the group interpreted their celebratory drinking as a sign they now belonged to the army and, more dramatically, that they were “not Islanders anymore.”¹³³ For most Islanders, however, the territory’s hypernationalist turn resulted in an appreciable loss of status, just as its ostensibly need-based rationing system resulted in a loss of access to rice and other consumer goods.

On Pohnpei, this loss of status was most visible in the racialized labor regimes the military instituted for the island’s defense preparations. Because Pohnpei was the territory’s second largest landmass, its abundant farmland combined with the regime’s growing focus on self-sufficiency elevated its strategic value as an agricultural center. Thus, Islanders were probably more likely to be pressed into agricultural labor on Pohnpei than anywhere else in the *Nan’yō Guntō*. As Wakako Higuchi suggests, the impulse to assign the harshest labor and longest hours to Islanders, Okinawans, and Koreans was rooted in prewar assumptions about “organic differences” among racial groups and the *Nan’yō’chō’s* tendency to structure education and labor around “original racial ability and particularities.”¹³⁴ Islanders were therefore enlisted in projects such as

¹³² Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 141, 143. See also: Hezel, *Strangers*, 214.

¹³³ The practice of momentarily suspending alcohol regulations to signal inclusion went back to 1914, when the Navy allowed Pohnpeians one beer each to celebrate Christmas. Mitsuo Watakabe [渡壁三男]. *Pohnpei of the Eastern Caroline Islands with Deserted Ponapean Death Band* [東カロリン群島ポナペ島]. (Ube City, Yamaguchi: Watakabe, 1972), 127; Entry dated December 24, 1914, Japanese Navy Third Special Marine Unit, “Battle Diary of Third Special Marine Unit on Pohnpei Island, November 29, 1914 – January, 1915,” in SAJN, reel 91.

¹³⁴ Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 142

rice cultivation, road building, airport construction, and heaving antiaircraft guns up mountains, though initially as contract employees working within their own *wehi*.¹³⁵

Yet one's status within the colonial order still mattered. Many Pohnpeian and Pohnpeian-Japanese elites were able to maintain positions of relative privilege, continuing their work as police officers, hospital employees, or on their own farms.¹³⁶ Oliver Nanpei offered coconuts, pigs, and cows to Japanese soldiers throughout the war, and those soldiers not only left his family unmolested but thanked him profusely at the war's end, some of them in tears.¹³⁷ Even migrant laborers found loopholes. A Chuukese man named Nutkas, for instance, traveled from Fefan to work the NKK plantations at Ledau. On his first day of work, he wore a small rising sun emblem that indicated achievement at his *kōgakkō*. It caught the eye of a high-ranking company official, and Nutkas was installed as the Fefan group's new translator and leader. He spent the remainder of the war in search of opportunities to better his standing. He worked in the NKK offices while others labored in the fields and fled Ledau to protest his low pay, seeking refuge with the wealthy William Helgenberger. He was found and beaten along with other deserters, fled again, returned, and secured higher wages. He oversaw the Chuukese workers at a Wakamoto Company plantation, but finding that "all the Trukese men hated me," he came back to Ledau. There, he "bossed all the workers" and freed his family from their labor obligations. "Everyone (else) old and young worked very hard at that time," Nutkas later recalled. "We were very comfortable."¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 79.

¹³⁶ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 97.

¹³⁷ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 210.

¹³⁸ Nutkas. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, 1953, in HFP, reel 2, 1171-1173 [frame 158-160].

Initially, rice was the linchpin of the island's wartime food strategy. Pohnpei's agriculturalists developed a plan to harvest nearly 69,000 gallons of the 158x123 variety annually from 735 acres to supply 3,000 Japanese consumers.¹³⁹ Their attempt to enact this plan resulted in the first large-scale production of the station's bespoke Pohnpei rice, and the *Nan'yō'chō* established or enlarged dryland and wetland rice fields in Nett, Palikir, and Ledau. The war also brought 158x123 to Guam, which could have signaled an important victory for the station's research. But with Guam's shortages of labor and supplies, yields in the first year amounted to less than half of what Pohnpei produced, and insect damage the following year caused the project to be abandoned.¹⁴⁰ Pohnpei's own labor and fertilizer shortages never resulted in the end of rice cultivation there, but did lead the regime to refocus its self-sufficiency strategy around faster-growing cassava and sweet potatoes, in addition to crops like rice, potatoes, yams, pineapple, cucumbers, papaya, and cabbage.¹⁴¹

Pohnpei's wartime plantations initially depended on short-term contract laborers, some of whom took their assignment as a competition. Kitti people gained a reputation around the island for their "stupid work": a willingness to complete assigned projects ahead of schedule in order to return home early, sometimes to the anger of Japanese officials. As the pressures of war intensified, however, the contract labor system became compulsory. Plantations then received Islanders, Okinawans, and Koreans who worked for little or no compensation, including children. Able-bodied Pohnpeians were shifted around the island and to places like Kosrae for agricultural labor and defense

¹³⁹ This would have amounted to around 23 gallons of rice annually per person, somewhat less than half of average per capita rice consumption in prewar Japan. South Seas Government, "Overview on the Activities of the Industrial Experiment Station," 48; Higuchi, "Japanese Building on Ponape," 19-20.

¹⁴⁰ Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 99-100.

¹⁴¹ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 79.

preparations. Those assigned to rice production were lodged in rough dormitories nearby the paddies. There, they began work at five or six each morning, seven days a week.¹⁴²

In peacetime, the *Nan'yō'chō* had dismissed Islanders' capacity for rice cultivation out of hand, and generally limited their efforts to promote it to settlers alone. Japanese officials, scholars, and those eager to develop the territory's commercial agriculture had pinned this alleged inadequacy on Islanders' moral and cultural failings, just as the *kōgakkō* system promoted a scheme of "moral education" in order to transform Islanders into "earnest people able to work."¹⁴³ In 1927, for instance, Shizuo Matsuoka speculated that Chamorros on Rota were "gradually abandoning" traditional rice cultivation because rice "calls for hard work, irrigation, protection against mice, and demands great painstaking."¹⁴⁴ Moral critiques of rice farmers had even extended to settlers, as when an agriculturalist and *Nan'yō'chō* official blamed the wilting paddies at Haruki-mura on the indolence of its settler farmers and their tendency to cheat the land office by claiming improperly cleared farmsteads.¹⁴⁵ Other than the few *kōgakkō* graduates who attended the agriculture station's small boarding school, therefore, most of Pohnpei's Islanders had no experience growing rice prior to wartime.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Suzanne Falgout. "From Passive Pawns to Political Strategists: Wartime Lessons for the People of Pohnpei," in *The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 284, 286; Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 57-58, 78-79, 98, 148.

¹⁴³ Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 141.

¹⁴⁴ The first edition of Matsuoka's ethnography was published in 1927. Matsuoka, *Ethnography of Micronesia*, 563.

¹⁴⁵ Ogusu, "Following the Tracks of Development," 95.

¹⁴⁶ The agriculture station's boarding school aimed to train small cohorts of male, landowning Islanders to plant, manage, process, and market cash crops within the Japanese colonial economy. It planned to teach a small cohort of 15 students when it opened in 1934. Manuel Amor, a student who lived in the school's dormitory, was paid 70 sen per day for his work there. Despite the hands-on training in wetland and dryland rice planting it offered, however, even the school's own graduates were unlikely to grow rice after graduating. Amor, for instance, returned to his home in U after his two years and planted coconuts instead, reasoning that, "only copra can become money." NLD 15S 40; NLD 16C 31; Manuel Amor. Interview by author. Awak, Pohnpei. 12 December, 2014.

Nonetheless, the war now placed the territory's rice supply in the hands of Pohnpeian labor for the first time, producing a collision between longstanding *mehn waii* tropes of "lazy and shiftless" Islanders and the assimilationist rhetoric of wartime nationalism.¹⁴⁷ This collision appeared particularly dramatically in the letters of Nakahashi Kiyoshi, a schoolteacher on wartime Guam. Prior to the collapse of Japanese rice cultivation there, Kiyoshi lavished praise on the Chamorro laborers forced into paddies from "early in the morning until late at night," while also maintaining that Chamorros "don't like to work." When fully-grown grains of Guam rice reached his table, however, Kiyoshi interpreted them as a sign that "both this island and its natives are Oriental, and have an Oriental character." Even a single grain of this rice seemed to Kiyoshi to signal that Chamorros, like the Ainu, were "destined to be included in our race."¹⁴⁸ Pohnpei's Japanese farmers were less theatrical, but no less invested in coaching Islanders to become efficient agricultural laborers. An elaborate set of instructions for managing agricultural contract workers offered Japanese overseers advice for everything from handling Islanders' sexual proclivities to avoiding conflicts among laborers from different *wehi*, and even stipulated procedures for hosting feasts after work.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Keichi Yamasaki. "The Japanese Mandate in the South Pacific." *Pacific Affairs* 4, no. 2 (February 1931), 102. See also: Harlow J. Heneman. "The Administration of Japan's Pacific Mandate." *The American Political Science Review* 25, no. 4 (1931), 1039; South Seas Government. *Handbook of the South Sea Islands* [南洋群島要覧] (Tokyo: South Seas Government, 1933), 185; John Alvin Decker. *Labor Problems in the Pacific Mandates*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 12.

¹⁴⁸ Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 249, 255.

¹⁴⁹ The Pohnpei Farmer's Cooperative, which produced the seven-page manual, asserted that Pohnpeians were obsessed with sexual activity and that overseers who slept with their female workers would suffer a loss of power when word inevitably got out. The Cooperative also suggested grouping workers by *wehi* to maintain order and insisted on the use of plates, reasonable portions of neatly sliced local foods, and the singing of Japanese military songs when hosting a post-meeting "*kamadip*." Pohnpei Farmer's Cooperative [ポナペ島民生産組合], "Methods for Efficiently Mobilizing Islanders on the Worksite" [島民を最も能率的に職場に動員する方法に算する件], NLD 16B 166-173.

As Pohnpei labored through 1943 and 1944, the war's worst violence drew ever closer. Waves of Japanese soldiers began to arrive in the fall of 1943, using the island as a staging area to support fighting elsewhere and further straining local resources. A single American plane spotted flying low in January of 1944 turned out to be a harbinger of destruction to come. In February, B-24s arrived from Tarawa and dropped more than 6,000 incendiary bombs and 118 tons of high explosives on the island. The bombers incapacitated the airstrip and seaplane base at Lenger and, along with the consuming fires they triggered, leveled nearly all of Kolonia with the exception of the agriculture station and a few other buildings.¹⁵⁰ Because American military planners had designated Pohnpei a "bypassed" island, a potentially punishing land invasion was shelved in favor of daily bombing raids aimed at neutralizing the island's offensive capability. By mid-1944, American aircraft were arriving predictably each day at 8am, pockmarking the airfields at Lenger, Nanpohnmal, and Palikir and various other locations while soldiers and civilians sheltered from harm.¹⁵¹

While the destruction of Kolonia did not trigger a complete breakdown of authority on Pohnpei, it did move the island significantly closer to a state of collapse. In February of 1944, the *Nan'yō'chō* implemented the Plan for Urgent Countermeasures for Supplementing Food, imposing "self-sufficiency" on civilians in order to boost military food supplies.¹⁵² In practice, this meant settlers scattering in search of sustenance and soldiers seizing the crops Pohnpeians planted for their families, beating those who

¹⁵⁰ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 135.

¹⁵¹ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 148.

¹⁵² Higuchi, *Japanese Administration of Guam*, 102.

refused.¹⁵³ The military and *Nan'yō'chō* also restricted feasting and *sakau* consumption, and demanded that Islanders secure official permission to slaughter their own livestock.¹⁵⁴ Given the deep resonance of food and feeding for framing Pohnpeian values and relationships, these seizures amounted to a fundamental breach of the social contract. Stories of particularly egregious offenders, like the Japanese police officer who barked at Rosete Hebel that, “one drop of alcohol is more important than the lives of [Pohnpeian] people” circulated through the island and lodged deep in memories.¹⁵⁵

Many Islanders were victimized by this breakdown of the colonial order, but others found that the war had scrambled Pohnpei's hierarchies in more complex ways. Alcohol restrictions were lifted island-wide, and while liquor was still hard to come by, the effects of this “concession” were dramatic enough for one of the island's Catholic priests to declare it a “crime against humanity.”¹⁵⁶ A Pohnpeian man named Iowanis later recalled that sexual boundaries seemed to fall away in wartime, and that “after the war started we could sleep easily with Japanese women.” He then described ten Japanese women who worked at the same company as him, trailing off as he spoke, “I worked with them just like...”¹⁵⁷ Some Pohnpeians used their knowledge of the island's environment to take revenge on Japanese soldiers, positioning one under a falling coconut or fooling

¹⁵³ Kaneto Tsukahara. Interview by Wakako Higuchi. Tokyo, Japan, 18 October, 1986, in *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 46.

¹⁵⁴ Falgout, “From Passive Pawns,” 284.

¹⁵⁵ Suzanne Falgout, Lin Poyer, and Laurence M. Carucci. *Memories of War: Micronesians in the Pacific War*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 138.

¹⁵⁶ Fr. Quirino, “The Odyssey on Ponape Part 3” *El Angel* 142 (November 1946), 1-5. Francis Hezel Personal File, Micronesian Seminar Archive, Chuuk, 30.

¹⁵⁷ Iowanis. Interview by Ann Fischer. Pohnpei, March 30, 1951, in Ann Fischer *Carolines Field Notes (Mostly Ponape)*, *Typed 1957-8*, John L. Fischer and Ann K. Fischer Papers, Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives, Suitland, Maryland, Box 13, 208; Kurekohr. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, August 8, 1950, in HFP, reel 2, Disc 26, Side 1 [frame 430].

another into grabbing the sharp spine of a speared rabbit fish.¹⁵⁸ Others subverted power relationships with kindness, feeding settlers who evacuated Kolonia utterly unprepared to live off the land, and even caring for some of the island's better-natured military personnel. In many cases, the relationships they built in the process endured well after the war's end, and sparked correspondences, gift exchanges, and visits that lasted decades.¹⁵⁹

The politics of wartime feeding ascribed a power to the giver that was no less meaningful for Japanese soldiers than it was for Pohnpeians. Takehiko Akita, who commanded a small army group on Pohnpei, prided himself on his ability to keep his men fed without relying on the meager, irregular rations available from military headquarters. His unit leveled a Sokehs coconut plantation to plant sweet potatoes, stole supplies from Islanders, fished, raised snails and rabbits, tried (and failed) to smoke *sakau* leaves in lieu of tobacco, and worked to avoid treacherous foods like improperly prepared cassava. Akita later boasted that his unit managed its food supplies so skillfully that others approached them to trade.¹⁶⁰ Toshinaga Hisaichi recalled a more punishing ordeal: stealing food, fishing with high explosives, and eating everything from coconuts and bananas to snails, frogs, dogs, cats, potato leaves, and tree roots. Yet Hisaichi too framed his survival as a validation of his masculine self-reliance and, declaring he had “proved

¹⁵⁸ Falgout et al., *Memories of War*, 159.

¹⁵⁹ In November of 2014, for instance, my wife Tamaki was waiting in the Pohnpei airport when she encountered Teisuke Saito, a 91-year old former soldier who was returning to the island with his nephew. It was the fifth time Saito had come back to Pohnpei. He told her that he came to honor the memory of three of his fallen comrades and to offer his appreciation to the people of Awak for tending their graves, which he expressed through annual donations to the local elementary school. In a letter he later told us, “The first time I returned to Pohnpei, I came to U and asked if I could use the elementary school’s field for a memorial service. That was when I discovered the village had made a graveyard for those three soldiers. I had never thought to make a grave for them myself. They told me that the landowner, Bernardo, had come to pray over their graves every year before he passed away. I was deeply moved by the kindness of these foreigners, especially when journalists and politicians in Japan were so preoccupied with tiresome arguments over the war and the Yasukuni Shrine.” Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 182-183; Teisuke Saito to Tamaki Levy, December 5, 2014, original held in author’s possession.

¹⁶⁰ Akita, *War Diaries*, 92-93, 100, 102-103, 106, 116, 128.

that humans can live without eating rice,” perhaps a subtle rebuttal of the nationalistic equation of rice with the “purity of the Japanese self” as well.¹⁶¹

Emperor Hirohito’s unconditional surrender in August of 1945 now seems to signal the inevitable unraveling of the Japanese presence in the *Nan’yō Guntō*, but that unraveling did not go uncontested. Feeding continued to frame Pohnpei’s power struggles even after its daily bombing runs were replaced with airdrops of sweets, tobacco, and surrender demands. Unwilling to yield defeat without a lengthy internal debate, Japanese military command stubbornly maintained its control over Pohnpei’s remaining food reserves. In the meantime, some Japanese soldiers were dispatched to gather up the airdropped boxes and deliver them to headquarters, while settlers spread rumors that the military intended to use its remaining food supplies to continue fighting.¹⁶² Plantation overseers also briefly withheld news of the war’s end from Islanders, whether in hopes of maintaining a willing labor force or avoiding violent reprisals from harried workers.¹⁶³

Bedraggled representatives from the Japanese Army, Navy, and *Nan’yō’chō* finally boarded the USS Hyman on the morning of September 12, the “shabby remains of

¹⁶¹ Toshinaga Hisaichi, [歳長久一] “Death Fight” [死闘] in *Coconuts: Independent Hybrid*, 65; Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 93.

¹⁶² While Pohnpei’s military command adamantly refused to be fed by enemy soldiers, Akita recalled his disgust at the callousness of preventing hungry troops from eating. On the one occasion he encountered airdropped American food, he advised the soldiers under his command to use it as they pleased, but to keep it a secret. Akita, *War Diaries*, 146-147; Interview with Kaneto Tsukahara in Higuchi, *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 46; Kozo Tokumi [徳見光三]. “Memory of Pohnpei” [ポナペ島の思い出], in *Memories of the South Seas* [思い出の南洋群島]. (Tōkyō: Nan’yō Guntō Kyōkai, 1965), 185.

¹⁶³ Father Quirino, of Pohnpei’s Catholic mission, recalled that the Japanese chief of police assembled the island’s missionaries after the war’s end and, “asked pathetically if we would refrain from telling the Ponapeans that Japan had been defeated, but to tell them that the Emperor in a show of generosity had not replied to the American attack with his own A-bombs for fear of destroying the world.” After he left, Quirino writes, all the missionaries laughed. Falgout et al., *Memories of War*, 208-209; Tokumi, “Memory of Pohnpei,” 180; Fr. Quirino, “The Odyssey on Ponape, Part 5” *El Angel* 148 (May 1947), 5-8. Francis Hezel Personal File, Micronesian Seminar Archive, Chuuk, 35.

their full dress uniforms” marking a striking contrast with the well-supplied Americans.¹⁶⁴

There, Kaneto Tsukahara briefly engaged an American officer in a tense argument over the feasibility of assembling Pohnpei’s scattered population. But once the surrender documents were signed, Tsukahara later recalled, “the circumstances on the ship became friendly” and the Americans offered their Japanese guests ice cream and tobacco.¹⁶⁵

Shortly afterwards, a small contingent of American sailors crossed Pohnpei’s reef for the first time, staging a flag raising ceremony and taking command of the 5,400 Islanders, 7,800 military personnel, and 6,000 settlers remaining on the island.¹⁶⁶

As American officials took stock of work to be done and took charge of Pohnpei’s remaining food reserves, they briefly seemed to take on the role of a *nahnmwarki*, revealing their power through the generosity of their food distributions.¹⁶⁷ For many Islanders, shortages of clothing and healthcare ultimately proved most urgent, but they nonetheless accepted gifts of American corned beef and distributions of canned foods and rice from Lenger’s emergency stocks as gratefully as settlers did.¹⁶⁸ At the makeshift *Nan’yō’chō* office, Americans praised Japanese leaders for their discipline and skill in managing Pohnpei’s food supplies, compliments those leaders received with some gratitude.¹⁶⁹ As Pohnpeians returned to their homes, revived their farms, and picked up the pieces of their lives, Japanese settlers joked that losing the war had suddenly left them with too much food, some of it far less desirable than it had been a short time before.

¹⁶⁴ “Eye Witness Account of the Surrender of Ponape” in “Japanese Departure from Ponape,” Micronesian Seminar Archive, Chuuk.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Kaneto Tsukahara in Higuchi, *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 46-47.

¹⁶⁶ “On the USS Hyman, Ponape Island, Sept. 11 (Delayed),” in “Japanese Departure from Ponape,” Micronesian Seminar Archive, Chuuk.

¹⁶⁷ For a similar claim regarding the American military presence in the Marshalls, see: Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 245.

¹⁶⁸ Poyer et al., *Typhoon of War*, 189; Falgout et al., *Memories of War*, 177-178, 199.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Kaneto Tsukahara in Higuchi, *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 47; Tokumi, “Memory of Pohnpei,” 189.

Sweet potatoes were now so numerous, they teased, that anyone who crossed the bridge over the Dausokele River received more than 80 pounds whether they wanted them or not. But settlers also mocked the Japanese soldiers who fumed whenever they found once-precious potatoes abandoned by the bridge or at the bottom of a boat, seemingly chagrined over America's ability to offer a 2,200-calorie diet to anyone in need.¹⁷⁰

In spite of these friendly overtures, behind the scenes American Naval planners had determined to eliminate Japaneseness from the *Nan'yō Guntō* entirely. On Pohnpei, every settler and soldier was summarily deported without regard to family relationships or land ownership by Christmas of 1945.¹⁷¹ Before they left, however, settlers and soldiers like Takehiko Akita had time to reflect on the meaning of the colony they helped to build and the war they helped to fight. Appropriately, Akita and his men reminisced over bags of rice. Like many of Pohnpei's other Japanese soldiers, Akita's unit had flatly refused to be fed by an opposing army, citing their "bushidō spirit" and leaving American sailors to grumble over having to eat the California rice they brought themselves. As a result, the Americans offered their rice to Islanders, as Akita discovered when an unnamed Islander approached him bearing a 40-kilogram bag. "We don't usually eat rice," the man explained. "We prefer taro and breadfruit. I want to give this to you instead, and I want to talk."¹⁷²

Unwilling to be fed by the Americans, Akita's unit was happy to be fed now. Akita read the gift as a window onto the past, a sign that the man remained pro-Japanese,

¹⁷⁰ Tokumi, "Memory of Pohnpei," 192.

¹⁷¹ Some of these settlers clearly planned to return to Pohnpei. Between September and December of 1945, a number of them sought certificates of ownership for their land on the island from the *Nan'yō'chō*. TJLD, reel 20, (62) 13X-000002 through 13X-000024; Asia Mapping, Inc. *Japanese Language Documents in Ponape*, 1970, 3

¹⁷² Akita, *War Diaries*, 149-151, 169.

determined to rebuild blood ties momentarily broken by war out of sight of the Americans. Here, Akita believed, was evidence of a racial affinity that the Americans would never be able to achieve; the same affinity that struck a *Nan'yō'chō* official on wartime Palau who asserted that American soldiers believed “their white hands became dark after shaking hands with Islanders.”¹⁷³ But while Akita took the rice as a vindication of the past, the Islander offering it was already looking toward a post-Japanese future. Akita's unit was occupying the man's land, and in spite of the enormous cultural weight rice had accrued among *Nan'yō Guntō* settlers, for many Pohnpeians the war had only reinforced the value of what truly endured. Ultimately, the man was able to leverage a few deliveries of rice and some tobacco for the return of his land and a new home built by Akita's grateful men.¹⁷⁴ With the war finally at an end, his land could then provide him a foundation for managing yet another colonial regime. Across Pohnpei and the erstwhile *Nan'yō Guntō*, thousands of other Islanders were making the same calculations.

Conclusion

Japan had seized the *Nan'yō Guntō* from Germany without firing a shot, but the Pacific War left behind a territory in ruins. There were families separated, loved ones lost, bodies laboring under the effects of malnutrition or painful cases of yaws. There were scars on the land, from the bombed out wreckage of Japanese colonial towns to ruined warships and aircraft leaching oil at the bottoms of lagoons. On Pohnpei, copra plantations were uprooted, factories sat moldering, and the jungle was swiftly reclaiming monocropped farmland. The island's ecology was transformed as well. There were

¹⁷³ Interview with Seitaro Yasutake in Higuchi, *Micronesia Under the Japanese Administration*, 61.

¹⁷⁴ Akita, *War Diaries*, 169.

lingering effects of the taro blight of the 1920s, wild yams devastated by Giant African Snails, and the general destruction of wild foods by Japanese who trudged through the interior mountains during the war.¹⁷⁵ The agriculture station's rice research could only be partly salvaged through publication, but it had introduced nearly 200 unique plants to the island, of which some had longer lives as usable crops and others became invasive weeds.¹⁷⁶

Yet the level of destruction was deceptive. Many of the region's new American occupiers assumed the war's consuming fire had burned up all the legacies of Japanese rule along with colonial infrastructures and island environments. An American geographer who visited Haruki-mura in 1947 found it overgrown with weeds and vines, and interpreted the abandonment of rice culture and monocropping there as a general "revulsion against all things Japanese including Japanese crops and methods." Yet he also noted that sweet potatoes and cassava remained, incorporated within the Pohnpeian agroforestry system.¹⁷⁷ Japaneseness had not been erased, but incorporated: within the genealogies of Islander families, in the land, in brand loyalties and food preferences, and in an emergent colonial elite that would soon seek to reposition itself under a new occupier.

¹⁷⁵ The wild yams referenced here were *kehpeneir* (southern yams), which grow "semiwild, free of cultural restrictions on time of harvest and consumption" and are "regularly eaten outside of the main yam season." The wartime environmental damage to the island's interior had many causes. In 1951, a man named Federihko recalled that there had once been so many Yap bananas (*utin iap*) at Nankawad that, "in the rain it was like being in a house." Those bananas were lost to worms during the war. John Fischer, "Notes at a meeting of the council of officials at U district," October 10, 1950 in HFP, reel 2, Disc 25, Side 2, 10 [frame 421]; Federihko. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, April 25, 1951, in HFP, reel 2, Disc 22, Side 2, 15-16 [frame 368-369]; Bill Raynor, Adelino Lorens, and Jackson Phillip. "Yams and Their Traditional Cultivation on Pohnpei" in *Ethnobotany of Pohnpei: Plants, People, and Island Culture*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 41.

¹⁷⁶ Ragone, et al., "History of Plant Introductions," 298; Higuchi, "Japanese Building on Ponape," 18.

¹⁷⁷ Raymond E. Murphy. "Changing Patterns of Agriculture in the Easternmost Caroline Islands," in *Seventh Pacific Science Congress, vol. VII*, 1953, University of Hawai'i Pacific Collection, 167.

CHAPTER 3: VITARELLI'S SPAGHETTI: IMPORTED FOODS, INDIGENOUS MODERNITIES, AND IMPERIAL ANXIETIES ON COLD WAR POHNPEI

In the spring of 1984, William Vitarelli sat down to reflect on his career in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands of the 1950s. As he reminisced over his advocacy for community-based education and school initiatives aimed at making Islanders “world mobile,” Vitarelli abruptly turned to imported foods. “We were all colonialists,” he began to insist. “We couldn’t help it. There’s no way to – just being there and eating a can of – making some spaghetti and meatballs... we were changing things.”¹ This interjection of spaghetti into a discussion of colonial education policy may appear an idle remark, perhaps one rooted in longtime *mehn waii* suspicions that Pacific Islander bodies and cultures were uniquely susceptible to contamination by the harms of the modern world. But Vitarelli’s framing of spaghetti and meatballs as simultaneously irresistible and potentially ruinous also points to the indispensability of imported foods to America’s colonial project in Micronesia, and the instability of the project itself.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, as US Navy rule gave way to the Interior Department’s civilian staff families, imported foods repeatedly insinuated themselves into the territory’s most consequential political discourses. They helped remake Islander homes and kitchens and maintained the baseline standard of living needed to draw *mehn waii* families to the islands. They aided in disentangling social relations between Kolonia’s *mehn waii* and Islander communities and in drawing the town toward self-government. Imported foods lay in the background as the Ponape Women’s Association

¹ William Vitarelli, interview by Karen Peacock, April 30, 1984, folder 10, transcript, Karen Peacock Interviews, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa (hereafter KPI), 17.

grew into a multiethnic social force that articulated an indigenous modernity at times allied with and at times resistant to *mehn waii* domesticity. And they enabled American staff families to grapple with their anxieties over postindustrial life and their own indeterminate missions as they caroused at Club Kolonia, whose gatherings missionary Margery Terpstra described as the “great American pleasure” of 1950s staff life.²

This chapter traces the routes products like corned beef, canned salmon, canned milk, flour, tinned vegetables, and alcohol took through the *mehn waii* and indigenous households and bodies of early Cold War Pohnpei. It argues that the American Navy’s confident vision of postwar Kolonia as an import-dependent base town ultimately broke down in the wake of *mehn waii* unease with modernity’s impacts on Pacific Islander bodies and landscapes, and in light of Kolonia’s flowering into a multiethnic hub whose own use of imports granted it a measure of independence from outside leadership. As the Mokilese statesman Bethwel Henry notes, Islander demand for imports like rice, flour, and canned goods was “always there” through the hardships of the Pacific War and Pohnpei’s American occupation.³ But unlike Germany’s obsession with coconuts or Japan’s quixotic pursuit of a Pohnpeian rice, Americans were decidedly ambivalent about their need to surround themselves with imported foods. Nowhere was this ambivalence more pronounced than with canned goods, whose overcooking and incorporation of produce from different regions often rendered their taste and texture off-putting and their *terroir* ambiguous. Still, canned foods seemed to function for many Americans as a metaphor for their own presence in the islands: preconditions for modernity that might

² Terpstra’s family arrived on Pohnpei in 1950 and worked with the Protestant missions at Kolonia and Ohwa. Her missionary sensibilities and obligations in Madolenihmw, however, generally kept her and her family away from Club Kolonia. Margery Terpstra. Telephone interview by author. October 7, 2016.

³ Bethwel Henry. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, November 4, 2014.

cripple what was most precious in island life, harbingers of self-sufficiency that drew the region ever closer to foreign economic and political powers, and pervasive reminders that American home life could almost be reconstituted abroad, but not quite.

Pohnpei's written history has tended to pass quickly over the island's 1950s life as an American-run United Nations Trust Territory. Developmentalist critiques headline the era's economic stagnation, attacking overcautious military planners and overzealous liberals for seeking to shield Islanders from all outside influence. In this reading of the Trust Territory as "rust territory," nothing of real significance occurred between postwar reconstruction and the funding surges of the Kennedy era other than the moldering of the region's Japanese-era infrastructure.⁴ More critical scholarship has also tended to read the 1950s backward, through the lens of the territory's 1960s-era independence movement and the explosion of economic development that accompanied it. Yet in attending to 1950s Pohnpei's consumption habits, a great deal is revealed: an uncertain colonial regime undergirded and undermined by its own imports, an island at the intersection of American Cold War consumerism and a cash-poor citizenry, the remaking of Kolonia Town, and the emergence of critical new multicultural solidarities among Islanders that profoundly shaped Pohnpei's future.

Vicente Rafael has argued that "imperialism appears as domesticity on the move."⁵ In fact, colonial domesticity within American imperial spaces grew exponentially more mobile and more responsive to domestic trends over the course of the 20th century as

⁴ See, for instance: Carl Heine, *Micronesia at the Crossroads: A Reappraisal of the Micronesian Political Dilemma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1974); Roger Gale, *The Americanization of Micronesia: A Study of the Consolidation of US Rule in the Pacific* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1979).

⁵ Vicente Rafael. "Colonial Domesticity: White Women and United States Rule in the Philippines." *American Literature* 67, no. 4 (December 1995): 645-646.

production and consumer acceptability of canned and processed foods increased and logistics improved. Commercial canning operations in particular had cultivated a mutually constitutive relationship with militarism and empire almost from canned food's first appearance in the Parisian confectioner Nicolas Appert's laboratory in 1809.⁶ Canned foods supplied European voyages of exploration through Oceania, facilitated America's westward expansion, supplied the Japanese military in its war with Russia, and allowed British residents of 19th century China to spurn local cuisines and, if they wished, those who enjoyed them. In 1948, Chicago-based Libby, McNeill & Libby claimed substantial credit for American victories in the First and Second World Wars, declaring the canning industry "one of the nation's greatest bulwarks against the enemies of freedom."⁷ By the Vietnam War, the American military was flooding its war zone with a broad range of consumer goods in hopes of raising morale and strengthening its military operations.⁸

Bulk military purchasing in turn accelerated the canning industry's growth. But that growth would have been unsustainable if not for the industry's aggressive pursuit of peacetime customers. Libby's, for instance, participated in government rationing programs during World War II while targeting its advertising at American housewives who often found their local markets sold out of Libby's products. Once the war was over the company exploited the pent-up demand, praising women for their crucial aid in

⁶ Katarzyna Cwiertka, for instance, has called war the canning industry's "principal patron." Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 62.

⁷ *Annual Report for the Year Ended February 28, 1948*. (Chicago: Libby, McNeill & Libby, 1948), 3, 20-21.

⁸ As Meredith Lair notes, this trend continued into later conflicts as well, including the second war in Iraq. Meredith H. Lair, *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism & Soldiering in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4, 6.

bolstering America's military preparedness.⁹ But the postwar moment also coincided with other key boosts for the consumer acceptability of canned and processed foods. The food industry successfully concluded a decades-long joint effort with the USDA to investigate the biochemistry of canned goods and allay longstanding consumer safety concerns. The proliferation of home refrigeration made convenience foods more practical. Canned goods began to appear more widely on store shelves, and in popular cookbooks like *Joy of Cooking*.¹⁰ And Cold War America increasingly came to revolve around family values, consumerism, and a newly ascendant food culture.¹¹

This reorientation of mainstream American life meant surges in consumer spending in the home, which in turn helped establish a "new minimum standard of living" for America's middle class.¹² Interior Department families and, to a lesser extent, Naval personnel brought this minimum standard with them to the Trust Territory, making Pohnpei among the first places to experience a collision between colonial domesticity and postwar American consumer culture. Consumerism of some variety had, of course, been a fixture of Pohnpeian life since the 19th century. Pohnpeians themselves repeatedly

⁹ American canned food concerns prioritized sales to government procurement agencies during the Second World War, meaning they often lacked the supply necessary to fully stock grocery shelves in the United States. Nevertheless, American consumers could purchase the canned foods that were available using ration tickets, which became a vehicle for introducing commercially canned products to a broad new market. Gabriella M. Petrick. "An Ambivalent Diet: The Industrialization of Canning." *OAH Magazine of History*, (July 2010): 35–38; Libby's, *1946 Annual Report*, March 2, 1946, 3; Libby's, *1947 Annual Report*, March 1, 1947, 3-4; Libby, McNeill & Libby, *1948 Annual Report*, February 28, 1948, 3, 20-21.

¹⁰ A few of these cookbooks actively proselytized for canning. The *Canned Foods Cook Book*, for instance, argued that the 20th century was unimaginable without canned foods, which had "helped man push civilization to the very ends of the earth." Not only were canned foods practical and inexpensive, the book's authors claimed, modern canning represented a "magic key which opens food treasure chests from all lands," democratizing access to foods even the wealthiest Americans would have regarded as "luxuries beyond attainment" until just a short time earlier. Virginia Porter and Esther Latzke. *The Canned Foods Cook Book* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1939), vii.

¹¹ Erika Endrijonas, "Processed Foods from Scratch: Cooking for a Family in the 1950s," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 157.

¹² Lair, *Armed with Abundance*, 10.

invoked the bustling marketplaces of Japanese Kolonia during the postwar period as a critique of American economic policy. American protests that staff wives would never agree to “give up canasta and live like a pioneer” likewise recalled *Nan’yō’chō* efforts to sustain Japan’s colonial project by fostering comfortable home lives for its settlers.¹³ But never had Pohnpei seen consumerism become so central to a colonizer’s identity, nor a foreign power’s concerns over the impact of consumer goods become so urgent.

The Trust Territory’s American military personnel and civilian staffers were entrusted with a mission that could appear quite opaque. Facing a war-wounded military that vowed to never again let the Pacific Islands be used “as springboards for aggression against the United States or any other nation,” they helped facilitate the indefinite occupation of nearly three million square miles of ocean as Harry Truman declared the United States did not desire “one inch” of territory anywhere in the world.¹⁴ They governed under the novel and oxymoronic category of a “strategic trusteeship,” in theory both yielding to international pressure to foster self-government in the islands and affording primacy to American strategic interests there.¹⁵ Interior staffers were themselves split between Eisenhower conservatives and exiled New Dealers, and they repeatedly clashed over whether they were temporary consultants training an emergent

¹³ Kenneth Kugel, an Interior official deployed from Washington to conduct a survey of the territory in 1952, likewise concluded that, “a man with a bored, disaffected wife will not long remain useful.” Kugel proposed that Interior introduce a “minimum sort of extravagance” into district centers to retain its American staff. Philip R. Toomin and Pauline M. Toomin, *Black Robe & Grass Skirt* (New York: Horizon Press, 1963), 10; Kenneth Kugel, *The Governing of Micronesia: A Report on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Based on a Field Survey Conducted during February and March 1952* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Budget, Executive Office of the President, 1952), 45-46.

¹⁴ Leon S. Fiske, “Speech Concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,” 1951. Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 8; Francis X. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995), 254.

¹⁵ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 46.

class of political leaders or professionals whose work was hindered by headstrong Islanders and an obdurate colonial bureaucracy.

Americans, even those who understood their position as more camp counselor than political animal, often seemed to regard Oceania from amid a haze of literary, artistic, and filmic representation that Paul Lyons has called American Pacificism. They read Micronesia as a series of stepping-stones to the East, just as the Navy had in prosecuting its wartime “island hopping” campaign. But, to varying degrees, they also regarded islands like Pohnpei as “ends-of-the-earth, cultural limit-cases unencumbered by notions of sin, antitheses to the industrial worlds of economic and political modernity,” and compared the “unfamiliar natives” they encountered there to racial minorities already familiar to them.¹⁶ Military personnel tended to transpose anti-blackness onto the Islanders they met, or to conjure up images of vanishing Indians in considering their own impacts on island cultures and ecologies.¹⁷ Many Interior staffers, by contrast, came to the Trust Territory by way of colonial spaces like Guam, Hawai’i, or Alaska or were themselves racial minorities, and drew from an even broader range of comparison.

These men and women could be seen sporting aloha shirts, hosting luaus, arguing for English instruction in schools based on past experience teaching *Dick and Jane* to “Eskimos,” or boozily declaring that Micronesians were “hundreds of years ahead of

¹⁶ Paul Lyons. *American Pacificism: Oceania in the U.S. Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 24.

¹⁷ Anthropologist Edward Hall noted in 1950 that the “majority of Navy and civilian personnel” on Chuuk “classified the natives as Negro because of their dark skins” and as a result “place them in an inferior category.” Overt racism of this sort appears to have been less common among Interior personnel once some troublesome early staffers left the islands, however. This was probably a result of improved recruitment by the personnel office as well as efforts by staff anthropologists like Allan Smith to educate American staff on Islanders’ “average innate intelligence,” logical reasoning abilities, linguistic sophistication, cultural behaviors, “world perspective,” and work ethic. Edward Hall, “Military Government in Truk,” *Human Organization* (Summer 1950): 29; Allan H. Smith, “Attitudes and Relationships: Remarks Made by Dr. Allan H. Smith (Staff Anthropologist, T. T.) at the District Administrator Conference,” 1955, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 1- 2, 5, 7-8; Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, February 10, 1984, folder 5, transcript, KPI, 30.

Navahos” due to their readiness to sing in public.¹⁸ A few took their previous work in colonial governance as an affirmation of their opposition to imperial rule. The territory’s longtime education director Robert Gibson, for instance, grounded his evangelism for Micronesian self-determination in a nagging suspicion that his prior association with education administrations in America’s Japanese internment camps and the South Korean Interim Government had done more harm than good.¹⁹ Others leaned on more prosaic juxtapositions to think their way through Micronesia, though they helped to draw the islands into a broader universe of American colonial policymaking just the same.

The American Navy landed on Pohnpei in the fall of 1945. For the next six years, it maintained an occupying force of only 40 to 50 sailors there, supplanting some 6,000 Japanese civilians and 7,800 military personnel. The Americans thus offered Pohnpeians a stark contrast with the *Nan’yō’chō* from the very start.²⁰ The regime’s comparatively small footprint persisted well past 1951, when the Navy was itself supplanted by the

¹⁸ Many Islander elites also adopted the Hawaiian-style aloha shirt/trouser combination under American rule. The official arguing for English-only instruction was High Commissioner Maurice Goding. The official who referenced Navajos was PITTS principal George Fleishman. Office of the District Administrator, *Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1959), 7; Robert Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust: a report on Americans in Micronesia* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1959), 21. See also Toomin, *Black Robe*, 195, 235; Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, April 18, 1984, folder 9, transcript, KPI, 1; John Fischer, “Fleishman/Initiative,” March 29, 1949, Eastern Carolines Field Notes, John L. Fischer, Tozzer Library, Harvard University (hereafter HFP), reel 1 [frame 605].

¹⁹ Gibson did, however, claim that these experiences qualified him to work with non-white communities. He argued that his past work provided him with an “appreciation for the value of cultural integrity” and an unwillingness to assert the “cultural superiority of Western, industrialized society and its values.” Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, January 26, 1984, folder 2, transcript, KPI, 27; Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, January 19, 1984, folder 1, transcript, KPI, 14-17, 19-20; Robert Gibson, “Trust Territory: Cultural Education and Westernized Schooling,” n.d., folder 15, KPI, 1-2.

²⁰ Bascom writes that Pohnpei’s American garrison stood at around 50 personnel in the summer of 1946. Personnel rosters suggest Pohnpei hosted an occupying force of between 40 and 50 during 1948 and 1949 as well. Sherman Lee Pompey, “Micronesia.” (Independent Research Project for Sociology 190, Fresno State College, 1968), 89; William R. Bascom, *Ponape: A Pacific Economy in Transition*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 5; Office of the Civil Administrator, Ponape District, “Roster of Enlisted Personnel and Officers,” *Quarterly Report 2-48* (April-June 1948), Enclosure C, 1-2; Office of the Civil Administrator, Ponape District, “Roster of Enlisted Personnel and Officers,” *Quarterly Report 3-48* (July-September 1948), n.p.; Office of the Civil Administrator, Ponape District, “Roster of Enlisted Personnel and Officers,” *Quarterly Report 4-48* (October-December 1948), Enclosure C, 1-2.

Interior Department in most of the Trust Territory.²¹ Even so, Americans and the foods they imported in those early years produced an enduring legacy that belied their small numbers. As Christine DeLisle suggests, in spite of a persistent *mehn waii* tendency to equate modernity with foreign rule, indigeneity and modernity are neither mutually exclusive categories nor inherent polar opposites.²² America's true legacy in early Cold War Pohnpei, therefore, was not a modernity imposed from the top but a cluster of new ways of being indigenous and modern produced through contestation, negotiation, and encounter – which imported foods are uniquely suited to reveal.

Prehistories of postwar consumerism: making the colonial kitchen in Pohnpei

In 1936, Tokuzo Akiyama, the official chef to Emperor Hirohito, placed an article in the *Nan'yō Guntō* magazine entitled “The Tropics, Flavor, and Cooking.” Akiyama described the obstacles facing Japanese in the tropics, where the climate brought settlers sweaty bodies, itchy throats, weak stomachs, and an unpleasant taste to the mouth. With familiar ingredients in short supply and no real precedent for tropical cooking in mainland Japanese cuisine, diets became unbalanced and meals lost their flavor. But for the capable cook, Akiyama believed, the use of local ingredients, spices to cool down the body and stimulate a strong appetite, and new methods to preserve and flavor rice could produce healthy, balanced diets with an impact far beyond the domestic sphere. In fact, he argued that skillful tropical cooking was more important than fostering good

²¹ Naval rule persisted in the Northern Marianas until 1961 when it too came under Interior's purview. In the interim, the Central Intelligence Agency operated a secret program on Saipan to train Chinese Nationalists in jungle warfare techniques, using facilities that later housed the Congress of Micronesia. Hezel, *Strangers*, 283.

²² Christine Taitano DeLisle. “Navy Wives/Native Lives: The Cultural and Historical Relations between American Naval Wives and Chamorro Women in Guam, 1898-1945.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008), 210.

governance or erecting fine buildings. “Although surrounded by nature’s bounty,” he wrote, “island life becomes monotonous, settlers lose interest in food, and they yearn to return home filled with longing for the Japanese cooking they miss. This is the housewife’s shame, for it is they who run the kitchen.”²³

Like Akiyama, the *Nan’yō’chō* had maintained that kitchens, home gardens, and store shelves were critical sites for sustaining settler morale and the settler colonial project itself. But neither Pohnpei’s Japanese settlers nor the Americans who came in their wake set the long process of gendered *mehn waii* interventionism in the island’s domestic sphere in motion. In fact, what Margaret Jacobs might call Pohnpei’s “domestic frontier” had been a site of “ongoing tension, instability, and constant negotiation” since the 19th century.²⁴ The fruit of these negotiations was the Pohnpeian colonial kitchen. These kitchens appeared both in settler colonial and indigenous iterations. The former was stocked with imported foods and staffed by servants striving to reconstruct the domestic life of the metropole. The latter, by contrast, was transformed by imported goods though not dependent on them, influenced by gendered *mehn waii* ideologies yet grounded in a feasting and exchange system that asserted its own powerful, evolving notions of Pohnpeian masculinity and femininity.

In the last decades of the 19th century food imports began to penetrate the daily lives of Pohnpei’s *mehn waii* settlers, for whom a well-stocked pantry could have profound implications. Imported foods could disempower a pre-1912 *nahnmwarki* who might otherwise extract concessions for access to the fruits of his land. They could offer a

²³ Tokuzo Akiyama [秋山徳蔵], “The Topics, Flavor, and Cooking” [熱帯・味・料理], *Nan’yō Guntō* 2:6 (1936), 36-37.

²⁴ Margaret Jacobs. “Working on the Domestic Frontier: American Indian Domestic Servants in White Women’s Households in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1920-1940.” *Frontiers* 28, no. 1/2 (2007): 167.

settler the stability and independence otherwise available only to Pohnpeians who were comfortably self-reliant in food production. And they could grant settlers comfort and familiarity, smoothing their transition to island life. The Polish naturalist and ethnographer Johann Kubary must have felt just this sort of gratification in 1876 when he reassured his sister that his Nett home was “full of European delicacies,” his garden brimming with produce, and that he lacked for nothing.²⁵ In this sense, Pohnpei’s *mehn waii* were not unlike patrons of settler colonial kitchens the world over. In them were glimmers of the British residents of 1870s Shantou, China, whose disdain for Chinese food and culture drew them to a special “metallic” menu prepared entirely from canned goods. Likewise the ranchers of 1880s Montana, whose obsessive consumption of canned goods resulted in piles of tin cans moldering under each of their shacks.²⁶ As Patricia Limerick notes, these heaps of tin signified a celebration of independence and a vital tie to the world outside, seeming to represent the settlement’s continuity “simply by staying in place.”²⁷ Pohnpei’s more enduring settlers may have found a similar comfort in the rusted evidence of their own tenuous ties to home.

Household servants also became a fixture of turn of the century *mehn waii* homes. Servants were commonplace in American missionary households and the homes of German settlers, from the Chinese chef who accompanied Albert Hahl on his travels through the Pacific to the young Pohnpeian girl working in the Sokehs residence of the

²⁵ “Kubary’s Residence on Pohnpei,” n.d., Pohnpei State Historic Preservation Office Archives, Kolonia, Pohnpei.

²⁶ Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, 36.

²⁷ Patricia Nelson Limerick. *The Legacy of Conquest*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 17-18.

overseer Otto Hollborn.²⁸ The market for domestic help remained small until the *Nan'yō'chō* began actively encouraging Japanese settlement, establishing a *kōgakkō* system around the same time that was aimed largely at training boys as laborers and girls as domestics.²⁹ In fact, *kōgakkō* were linked directly to settler homes throughout the *Nan'yō Guntō*. Schools frequently assigned upper level girls and boys to do simple household chores for settler families in exchange for a small allowance.³⁰ *Mehn waii* elites also hired their own housekeepers, as did some mixed Japanese-Islander families.³¹

Yet while some housekeepers assisted with food preparation, granting servants full authority over settler kitchens seems to have been a bridge too far for most families. Recipes in the *Nan'yō Guntō* magazine, for example, were aimed directly at Japanese housewives and rarely mentioned domestics. Living in Kolonia homes the magazine had once joked were barely distinguishable from those in Osaka, housewives were

²⁸ Victor Berg reported in 1901 that around a dozen Chinese servants were working as cooks and servants on the island, most presumably in Kolonia. Berg also made several proposals that year to recruit additional Chinese emigrants to Pohnpei, including a gardener to work the land at the government agriculture station (who he hoped might also be skilled in shoemaking) and a group of Chinese peasants to farm the land nearby once he and his family had become settled. Albert Hahl. *Governor in New Guinea*. (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980), 75-76; Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, October 21, 1901 in Susanne Moyal. *Records of the German Imperial Government of the South Seas Pertaining to Micronesia as Contained in the Archives Office, Australian National Government, Canberra*. (hereafter RGIG) (Saipan, Mariana Islands: Division of Lands and Surveys, Dept. of Resources and Development, Trust Territory Govt., 1975), vol. 10, Item 121, Document 19, 3-4; Ponape to Foreign Office, Colonial Division, Berlin, October 24, 1901, RGIG, vol. 10, Item 121, Document 19, 7; Paul Ehrlich. "The Clothes of Men': Ponape Island and German Colonial Rule, 1899-1914." (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1978), 164.

²⁹ John Fischer. "The Japanese Schools for the Natives of Truk, Caroline Islands." *Human Organization* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 84.

³⁰ Advanced Palauan students in Koror's public school were dispatched in boy/girl pairs to Japanese homes after school to perform chores like heating the bath, housecleaning, laundry, and babysitting. By the 1940s most of these students received ½ yen per day for their work. Machiko Aoyagi, *Modekngai: A New Religion in Belau, Micronesia*. (Tokyo: Shinsensha Press, 2002), 87. See also: Keiko Ono and Tetsuya Ando. "A Study of Urban Morphology of Japanese Colonial Towns in *Nan'yō Guntō*, Part 4: Natsujima, Truk Islands" *Journal of Architecture and Planning* 77, no. 671 (January 2012), 212; Maki Mita. *Palauan Children Under Japanese Rule: Their Oral Histories*. (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2009).

³¹ The Uemoto family, for example, offered *nankinmai* rice and canned goods to neighbors in exchange for cleaning and laundry during Pohnpei's later Japanese era. Carlos and Simone Etscheit also employed maids during the island's Japanese era. Sei Uemoto. Interview by Tamaki Levy and author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, April 23, 2015; Yvette Etscheit Adams. *Island Traders: Memories of the Carlos Etscheit Family*. (Pohnpei, 2009), 77.

encouraged to prepare Japanese, Chinese, and Western dishes that only sometimes acknowledged their tropical surroundings: fish meunière with pickled papaya, steamed fish with lemon, roast pork, vegetable stew, French fries, chicken with eggplant, pork stew with sake, Chinese pork stew, papaya curry, tapioca balls, boiled breadfruit with sugar syrup, and banana pudding.³² Many *mehn waii* families in the Japanese era dined on these and other familiar dishes almost exclusively, relying on the mothers and daughters of the home to supervise their proper preparation. Among them was Sakae Taira, who traveled with his wife from Okinawa to work Ledau's sugar fields. All of the Taira family's home meals were Japanese, prepared with Japanese ingredients from Ledau's company store or their home garden. And, Taira recalls, all of his Okinawan neighbors ate in the same way.³³

For others, particularly Pohnpei's growing number of racially mixed families, the kitchen became a culinary middle ground. Under the care of their Pohnpeian mothers, families like the Uemotos grew and ate yams, taro, breadfruit and bananas, pounding rice and banana together until they resembled *mochi*. They cooked taro and ground tapioca together in the family *uhmw*, rolled it into balls, and dipped the balls in coconut milk. They used the *uhmw* for local bananas and Japanese pumpkins. They dined on sashimi, sea cucumber, pigs, and chickens, kept a store of canned goods, and ate both imported

³² Mitsuyuki Kaneya and Rokuro Kitahara [金谷光行,北原六朗], “*Nan'yō Travel Journal (Hizakurige)*” [南洋膝栗毛], *Nan'yō Guntō* 2:11 (1936), 46; Seiko Kimura [木村聖子], “Three Recipes for the Pacific Islands and Creating a Homemade Fish Scaler” [南洋向料理三種と簡単な鱗かきの作り方], *Nan'yō Guntō* 3:10 (1937), 55-57; Seiko Kimura [木村聖子], “Recipes for the Pacific Islands” [南洋向料理], *Nan'yō Guntō* 3:11 (1937), 60-62; Seiko Kimura [木村聖子], “Three Recipes for the Pacific Islands” [南洋向料理三種], *Nan'yō Guntō* 3:12 (1937), 68-69; Seiko Kimura [木村聖子], “Four Recipes for the Pacific Islands” [南洋向料理四種], *Nan'yō Guntō* 4:1 (1938), 67-69.

³³ Sakae Taira. Telephone interview by Tamaki Levy and author, April 1, 2015.

Japanese rice and *nankinmai*.³⁴ Some Pohnpeian women seem to have so staked their claim to their kitchens as to drive their Japanese husbands out during mealtimes. Kolonia mayor Michio Suzuki, for instance, preferred to retreat to the town's *ryōtei* for most meals in order to be served Japanese food on porcelain dishes as *geisha* attended to him.³⁵

Pohnpeian homes, particularly those of the emergent Islander elite, were in turn transformed by the settler kitchen's presence. Until the mid-19th century, Pohnpeian households did not maintain kitchens of the sort most *mehn waii* would have recognized. Most Pohnpeians lived with their extended families on farmsteads similar to the ones ethnographer Paul Hambruch observed in 1910: with dwelling houses, feast houses (*nahs*), boathouses, cookhouses (*wonuhmw*), and other structures depending on status and circumstance.³⁶ The small, open-walled *wonuhmw* was largely the province of Pohnpeian men, who used it to prepare both daily food and seasonal tributes to traditional leaders.³⁷ Women took charge of some daily food processing and feast contributions, several of

³⁴ Sei Uemoto. Interview by Tamaki Levy and author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, April 23, 2015.

³⁵ Yukio Suzuki. Interview by Tamaki Levy and author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, October 16, 2014.

³⁶ Prior to the island's missionization, Pohnpeian extended families were matrilineal, but missionary interventions in marriage culture were successful in pushing for patrilocal residence. Early 19th century Pohnpeian farmsteads therefore would have hosted matrilineal extended families, while most of the families Hambruch observed in 1910 were patrilineal. See Kim Kihleng's dissertation for a more detailed explanation of the Pohnpeian extended family's evolution. Kimberlee Sterritt Kihleng. "Women in Exchange: Negotiated Relations, Practice, and the Constitution of Female Power in Processes of Cultural Reproduction and Change in Pohnpei, Micronesia." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1996), 103-112; Seberiano Barnabas and Francis X. Hezel, "The Changing Pohnpeian Family," *Micronesian Counselor* 12 (November 1993); Mark L. Berg, "The Wandering Life among Unreliable Islanders": The Hamburg Sudsee-Expedition in Micronesia." *Journal of Pacific History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 96.

³⁷ Hambruch writes that Pohnpeian cookhouses were of simpler construction than dwelling houses, open on all sides, with blocks rather than interior purlins and no middle posts in the middle of the structure. He writes, "only the oblique, lower parts of the gable, *tisak*, and the long sides are covered with palm leaves like the roofs of the dwelling houses." Hambruch, Paul and Annelise Eilers. *Ponape, Vol. 2: Gesellschaft Und Geistige Kultur, Wirtschaft Und Stoffliche Kultur*. Ergebnisse Der Sudsee Expedition 1908–1910, II.B.7. (Hamburg, 1936), 304.

which were quite prestigious.³⁸ That participation in the island's feasting and exchange system was deeply valued, and the labor they contributed an important reservoir women drew on to maintain their high social status under colonial rule.³⁹

Most of the ingredients that found their way to the *uhmw*, however, were products of men's labor: items like breadfruit, yams, fish, and pigs.⁴⁰ The *uhmw* and the *nahs* constituted symbolically rich spaces for the performance of Pohnpeian masculinity, but their meaning for the family as a whole was more expansive. They represented the "focal point[s] for the family identity," with the *nahs* drawing the extended family together over shared meals and bolstering the family's prestige as gifts of food issued from the *uhmw* and arrived at feasts elsewhere.⁴¹ But over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, Pohnpeian women increasingly became associated with imported material goods, food, and food production. These associations became so deeply rooted that by the 1990s anthropologist Kim Kihleng could rightly assert that food and what it signified lay "at the center of formal, nonformal, and informal exchange as well as [Pohnpeian] culture as a whole," and that food production had come to be considered "quintessentially" female work.⁴²

This shift to more female-centered food production was dramatic, and driven primary by new cooking equipment and food imports, evolving housing styles, and the

³⁸ Emelihter Kihleng notes that sugar cane's ritual usage and manner of consumption lent it a reputation as the *sakau* of women. Emelihter Kihleng, "Menginpehn Lien Pohnpei: A Poetic Ethnography of Urohs (Pohnpeian Skirts)." (Ph.D. dissertation, Victoria University, 2015), 147.

³⁹ Kihleng, "Women in Exchange," 37.

⁴⁰ Glenn Petersen also offers a description of the "traditional" division of labor in Pohnpeian food preparation that also applies to most prewar Pohnpeian families. Andrew Cheyne. *The Trading Voyages of Andrew Cheyne 1841-1844* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1971), 188; David Hanlon, e-mail message to author, August 9, 2016; Glenn Petersen. *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration, and Political Organization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 97.

⁴¹ Seberiano Barnabas and Francis X. Hezel, "The Changing Pohnpeian Family," *Micronesian Counselor* 12 (November 1993).

⁴² Kihleng, "Women in Exchange," 45.

steadily growing influence of gendered colonial education.⁴³ The iron pot became a kind of metonym for this transition. First crossing Pohnpei's reef in significant numbers during the early 19th century whaling trade, the iron pot became *ainpwoat*: a method of cooking, a new category of cuisine consisting of flavored soups and stews, new nonformal feasting styles, and a nonformal female counterpoint to male feast presentations.⁴⁴ So influential were imported cooking utensils on Pohnpeian cuisine that of the five categories of daily cooking anthropologist Akitoshi Shimizu observed in the 1970s, at least three required imported metalware: *uhmw*, *ainpwoat*, *pwoail* (boiling), *pwuraing* (frying), and *inihn* (roasting).⁴⁵ Women first adapted these new utensils to outdoor cooking. But gradually, evolving housing styles began to move much of a family's cooking indoors: to the *perehn kuk*, or kitchen.

Today, the *perehn kuk* is a critical site for Pohnpeian women's labor, although many women and men continue to cook outdoors. But it spread slowly through Islander homes, starting from the small class of Pohnpeian elites who broadcast their ties to their island's emergent cash economy by building homes modeled after (or intended to overshadow) those of resident *mehn waii*. The powerful Nanpei family was among the first to build American-style residences for itself, one of which missionary Leta Gray believed was aimed specifically at outdoing the home she shared with her husband at

⁴³ Kihleng, "Women in Exchange," 187.

⁴⁴ Kim Kihleng calls *ainpwoat* "the quintessential food prestation for nonformal feasts and their proper performance," noting that an *ainpwoat* feast can be broadly defined as any feast that does not use an *uhmw*. She describes contemporary variants such as the precooked food (always consisting of some type of meat and starch) that is served informally to high ranking individuals at formal feasts, nonformal feasts meant to celebrate life events or repay certain local practitioners, and the *tehpil en Hawaii* in which long tables of precooked food are served luau-style. David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 84; Kihleng, "Women in Exchange," 143-144.

⁴⁵ Akitoshi Shimizu. "Cultural Complexes of the Ponapean Life Found around the Cooking Method of Stone Oven." *Annual Report of Social Anthropology* 2 (1976), 189.

Ohwa.⁴⁶ By 1910, Kolonia hosted a small number of Pohnpeian and outer Islander families living in houses with board walls and corrugated iron roofs, which Paul Hambruch observed might have been taken for European homes “in an off moment.”⁴⁷ The construction of these residences, most of which maintained outdoor cooking areas, increased markedly during Pohnpei’s Japanese occupation.⁴⁸

The Japanese regime’s land records reveal that a few Islander elites built *perehn kuk* into their homes during the 1920s and 1930s. Among them was William Helgenberger.⁴⁹ Sent along with another student to the German government school in Qingdao in 1910, Helgenberger enlisted in the German Navy at the outbreak of the First World War. He then spent five years as a prisoner of war in Japan and did not return to Pohnpei until 1920. Taking a position as an NBK trader, he married, farmed copra at his wife’s land at Kinakapw in Madolenihmw, and in 1927 built a three-room cottage near Kolonia’s *Kaigan Dōri* without an indoor kitchen or toilet. In 1935, he petitioned to build a larger two-story residence on the same land. Blueprints suggest the home’s Japanese

⁴⁶ Leta Gray. *Uriel of Ponape*, 1971. Micronesia Mission Hawai’i Evangelical Association Papers, Mission Houses Museum, Honolulu, Hawai’i, 54.

⁴⁷ Hambruch, Paul. *Ponape, Vol. 1: Allgemeiner Teil: Geschichte, Geographie, Sprache, Eingeborenen*. Ergebnisse Der Südsee Expedition 1908–1910, (Hamburg, 1932), 341.

⁴⁸ A booming cash economy, the spread of settlers across the island, and government-sponsored tours of Japan for selected Islanders were reason enough for the mounting popularity of this new housing style under the Japanese regime. But *Nan’yō’chō* public health advocates also urged Islanders to build “modern style” residences by offering training in home construction and subsidies for renovations, acting under the assumption that such homes were more sanitary than dwellings made with traditional materials. The *Nan’yō’chō* even went so far as to build model homes on Yap in the 1930s, though without indoor kitchens. Other than a handful of Islander families who were permitted to reside within Kolonia’s boundaries during the Japanese era, most of these settler-influenced Islander homes were built elsewhere on Pohnpei during this time. Tadao Yanaihara. *Pacific Islands Under Japanese Mandate* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Limited, 1939), 291. Japanese Government. *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Sea Islands under Japanese Mandate for the Year 1933* (Tokyo, 1933), 61-62. For a description of some of these model homes see Willard Price, *Pacific Adventure* (New York: John Day, 1936), 138-139.

⁴⁹ William Helgenberger, son of Jaluit Gesellschaft agent August Helgenberger and a Parem woman named Bermihna, was Pohnpei’s second richest Islander after Henry and Oliver Nanpei during the island’s Japanese era, and patriarch to a large family that remains prominent on Pohnpei. Hezel, *Strangers*, 56; Takuya Nagaoka, *Project Report: Archaeological Survey of Lenger Island* (Pohnpei: Division of Historic Preservation, Pohnpei State Government, 2008), 17.

influences, with sliding glass exterior doors and windows, a wood-floored hallway, two large rooms separated by a sliding door that may have been a *fusuma* or *shōji*, a decorative alcove (*tokonoma*) and closet, separate toilet and bathrooms, and a concrete-floored *perehn kuk* that opened to the outdoors.⁵⁰ The Nanpeis likewise expanded their two-story *Kaigan Dōri* home in 1927. It featured a wraparound porch, four spaces that could have been living rooms or bedrooms, separate toilet and bathrooms, and spacious interior kitchen and dining rooms.⁵¹ Both families probably maintained *perehn kuk* for female cooks and outdoor *uhmw* for men’s ceremonial use.⁵²

Even among Islander families without *perehn kuk* at home, gendered education and economic pressures slowly drew women and girls to cooking. A handful of missionary-run girl’s schools planted around the turn of the 20th century worked to instill the discipline, regular habits, spiritual understanding, and cleanliness young girls would need to become “useful Christian women,” helpers to their husbands, efficient managers of the private spaces of their households, and vessels for spreading the faith.⁵³ By the

⁵⁰ *Miscellaneous Nan’yō’chō Land Documents* [土地関係書類その他]. (Saipan: Division of Lands and Surveys, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands). Hamilton Library Microfilm Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa (hereafter NLD), 13J 133, 141-142, 144, 151; Boaz Poll, “An Account of World War One,” in *Oh Mehjwa: Chants, Songs, Accounts, and Tales of Mwoakilloa Atoll, Micronesia*, ed. Takuya Nagaoka and Barbara Hicks (Pohnpei: Pohnpei Historic Preservation Office, 2004); “At 63 He’s the New Credit Manager,” *Micronesian Reporter* V, no. II (March-April 1957), 3.

⁵¹ NLD, 9Y 23-25; NLD, 9Z 157, 161, 163, 164.

⁵² John Embree notes that the women of the women of the Nanpei family prepared food for him in the kitchen at their Rohnkitti home during his visit shortly after the Pacific War, suggesting that the *perehn kuk* may have been used as a female space there. Yvette Etscheit Adams also recalled that Oliver Nanpei built a large *uhmw* nearby his Kolonia home whenever the *Insular* came into port bearing copra from And. Nanpei invited friends and neighbors to share in feasts of pigs, turtles, chickens, and fish, probably to signal his family’s generosity and the masculine culinary prowess of his kinsmen. John F. Embree, *Field Report on Trip to Micronesia, December 14, 1945 – January 5, 1946*, 1946, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 72; Adams, *Island Traders*, 67-68.

⁵³ These quotations come from American Congregationalist missionaries, who began offering gender-specific education on Pohnpei starting in the 19th century. A group of Franciscan nuns from Strasburg planted Pohnpei’s first Catholic girl’s boarding school in 1907 for similar purposes. Ida Foss to Judson Smith, December 10, 1902, Series 19.4, Letters 1890-1899, Ida Foss Letters, Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 51; Callistus Lopinot. *Caroline Mission of the Spanish and German Capuchins 1886-1919*, 1964. Micronesian Seminar Archives, Weno, Chuuk, 19; Francis X. Hezel,

1930s, the Protestant *Nan'yō Dendō Dan*, the Mercedarian Sisters, and government *kōgakkō* were all teaching classes in cooking, meal planning, and dining etiquette.⁵⁴

Mehn waii offered home economics instruction partly under the assumption that Islander women could be made more modern, civilized, or Christian by becoming ensconced within the domestic sphere, although many also hoped to keep their own homes stocked with skilled household servants. Still, as Kim and Emelihter Kihleng suggest, these efforts did not necessarily constrain women to domestic life, nor did they render women unable to continue participating in feasting or exchange. In fact, newly introduced cooking and sewing methods perpetuated women's roles as "essential links" between Pohnpei's domestic and public spheres, and in many cases even enlarged their public influence.⁵⁵ Those skills proved doubly useful as colonial regimes drew men into wage labor, and women stepped in to fill some of the territory in home and ceremonial cooking their male family members had ceded to them.

The colonial kitchen as archetype easily survived the chaos and devastation of the Pacific War, even as bombing raids leveled most of the kitchens themselves. Postwar *mehn waii* maintained their dependence on domestic servants and food imports, while Islanders continued to adopt and adapt the *perehn kuk* to their purposes. The kitchen lived on as a quietly subversive space in the postwar era. There, Islander cooks generated demand for imports the American regime preferred to exclude from the territory and

"German Catholic Missions in Micronesia" in *Deutschen Südsee 1884-1914: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Hermann Hiery (Paderborn, Munich: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 2001).

⁵⁴ These classes featured in larger curricula that included sewing, housework, hygiene, first aid, music, morals, reading, arithmetic, and gardening, among other skills. South Seas Mission [南洋伝道団], *South Seas Mission Report of Activities* [南洋伝道団事業報告], 1930, Japan Institute for Pacific Studies, Tokyo, 7; South Seas Mission [南洋伝道団], *South Seas Mission Report of Activities* [南洋伝道団事業報告], 1933, Japan Institute for Pacific Studies, Tokyo, 16; "Spanish Jesuits – Ponape," *El Angel* papers, Francis X. Hezel Collection, Micronesian Seminar Archives, Weno, Chuuk, 8; Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar*, 173-174.

⁵⁵ Kihleng, "Women in Exchange," 4, 35, 70. See also: Kihleng, "Menginpehn Lien Pohnpei."

Americans fretted their servants might come to know them too well. In 1952, for instance, an American anthropologist warned his colleagues that Micronesians had become quite knowledgeable about the “intimate details of our everyday life and work habits,” and that this knowledge could undermine the regime’s interpretation of the character of the United States and its own aims.⁵⁶ Still, the island’s domestic frontier persisted, as much a site of negotiation under the microscope of Cold War America’s idiosyncratic anxieties as it had been before.

Susceptible bodies, consumer goods, and the evils of empire

In 1947, Deputy High Commissioner Carleton Wright issued a public warning to his colleagues at Trust Territory headquarters, then nestled within Oahu’s Diamond Head crater at Fort Ruger. Writing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Wright enjoined Naval planners to shield Micronesians from the “evils” foreign rule had already visited upon American Indians and Oceania’s intensively colonized perimeter. With islands like Guam now rendered, in his view, “at best only a poor imitation of the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic civilizations,” the way forward for the Trust Territory appeared simple: a slow-paced, limited program of reform, with imports like radios, jukeboxes, and button shoes strictly excluded.⁵⁷ Peculiar as his concern for the malevolent influence of button shoes may appear, Wright was no voice in the wilderness. Throughout the early Cold War era, the Trust Territory’s economies and social landscapes were profoundly remade by American officers, sailors, and academics who voiced concern over the deleterious

⁵⁶ H.G. Barnett, “American-Micronesian Relations,” *Micronesian Monthly* II, no. 2. (December 1952 – January 1953), 7.

⁵⁷ Wright, Carleton H. “Let’s Not Civilize These Happy People.” *Saturday Evening Post* 219, May 3, 1947.

effects imports like Coca-Cola, rice, or alcohol might have on American military security and Pacific Islander bodies.

As Don Rubinstein notes, these objections came at a moment when the American regime displayed a heightened interest in the Pacific War's effects on Islander health. But they were also voiced in the context of a "widely held conceit" that Pacific Islander populations were inherently soft, vulnerable to European disease, and doomed to extinction should they fail to adequately cope with the Western world.⁵⁸ The Navy wrote that conceit into policy in large and small ways: whether by ordering a mass deportation of the territory's Japanese residents or quibbling over whether or not customer orders constituted "essential" purchases. Some of those early regulations were overturned following a widespread consumer pushback that leveraged Cold War American faith in capitalism to compel a liberalization of the territory's import policies. But much endured: homes broken and a community diminished by deportations, an empowered traditional leadership, and a body of nutrition research that became the foundation for postwar knowledge of Islander health.

Naval strategists demonstrated a powerful skepticism of foreign influence and imported foods in Micronesia even before the Pacific War was over. The Navy envisioned the Trust Territory as a strategic buffer zone between the United States and hostile powers to the west. It therefore sought to exclude potentially subversive foreign influence by excising Micronesia's colonial pasts and stripping it of non-US foreign influence: a policy Hal Friedman has called "cultural security." Islanders' racial composition, political leanings, cultural values, language use, and consumer habits

⁵⁸ Donald H. Rubinstein. "Staking Ground: Medical Anthropology, Health and Medical Services in Micronesia" in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, eds. Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 331.

therefore took on an unlikely geopolitical urgency.⁵⁹ The Navy first deported all of the territory's Japanese residents, limited travel into and outside of its borders, and excluded foreign economic activity. Sailors then deconstructed Japanese towns, sometimes bulldozing still-usable structures but more often encouraging Islanders to disassemble prewar buildings for their own use.⁶⁰ Finally, the Navy-operated United States Commercial Company embarked on a limited program of economic development. This was meant to make US-produced "necessities" available in trade stores, nudge Islanders toward capitalism, and redevelop the region's export industries. The Navy hoped the territory might then become "practically self-sustaining at a satisfactory subsistence level" in addition to being made secure, and less costly to administer in the bargain.⁶¹

These cultural security initiatives initially manifested more as attacks on foreign influence than programs of Americanization. During their first year on Pohnpei, American sailors were therefore almost entirely absorbed with establishing a base of operations, exchanging yen for dollars, destroying Japanese ammunition, and repatriating soldiers and settlers. Needless to say, the deportations had a substantial human impact. Yvette Etscheit later recalled sobbing as she watched friends, classmates, teachers, and colleagues of her father Carlos searched and deported. Afterwards she felt utterly abandoned as she walked through a Kolonia Town that felt "dead."⁶² Islanders

⁵⁹ Hal M. Friedman. *Creating an American Lake: United States Imperialism and Strategic Security in the Pacific Basin, 1945-1947* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 95, 117.

⁶⁰ Only a few usable structures remained in Kolonia after the intensive bombing of the Pacific War: the *Nanyō Dendō Dan* church, the agriculture/weather station, the NBK store, and a few homes, bridges, and retaining walls. Some homes remained standing outside the town, as did partial structures like the NKK starch factory in Ledau or the airport at Nanpohnmal. Islanders in need of housing cannibalized many of these structures for parts shortly after the war, including much of the Ledau starch plant.

⁶¹ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 36-37.

⁶² Adams, *Island Traders*, 155-6. "Surrender of Ponape Island September 11, 1945" in Yvette Etscheit Adams. *Japanese Departure from Pohnpei*, n.d., Vertical File, Micronesian Seminar Archives, Weno, Chuuk.

experienced the deportations with a mix of emotions. There was relief at the departure of the Japanese military, joy for those reunited with family relocated for wartime labor, hope for relocated outer islanders who elected to remain and make new lives on Pohnpei, and despair for those indefinitely separated from *mehn waii* family and friends.⁶³

The Navy gave little attention to Pohnpei's economy or most other dimensions of governance as it reshuffled the region's population. Without a land invasion, Pohnpei never saw the "gratuitous issues" of food and supplies that earned Americans goodwill elsewhere in the region. Instead Pohnpei's store shelves sat bare for much of 1945 and 1946 as military planners warned against the danger of "spoiling" Islanders with an overabundance of generosity.⁶⁴ In fact, Pohnpei labored under shortages of clothing and other necessities so severe that, in anthropologist William Bascom's reading, "they would have caused violent unrest in any American community."⁶⁵ When the USCC eventually restarted the flow of imports, its employees could be remarkably strict with Islanders who ordered "luxury" products not available through the company's list of essential items. In 1946, for instance, an American anthropologist criticized sailors on Yap for engaging in "arbitrary and vicarious" cancellations of customer orders on the grounds that "natives

⁶³ This process took a number of years. Among the Islanders who were repatriated to or from Pohnpei were 75 Pingelapese plantation laborers, who were returned to their atoll in 1948, and 179 Kitti men who the Japanese military deployed to Kosrae, among others. In 1953, anthropologist Jack Fischer noted a substantial number of relocated outer islanders who had remained on Pohnpei after the Pacific War and who either planted copra or performed wage labor in Kolonia. Harold St. John. "Report on the Flora of Pingelap Atoll." *Pacific Science* 2, no. 2 (1948): 97; John Fischer to Deputy High Commissioner, John L. Fischer and Ann K. Fischer Papers, Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives, Suitland, Maryland (hereafter SFP), Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, 2; Suzanne Falgout. "From Passive Pawns to Political Strategists: Wartime Lessons for the People of Pohnpei" in *The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II*, 279–97. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 286.

⁶⁴ Post-invasion giveaways in places like the Marshalls and Palau were consequential enough for early colonial relationships there for one American to declare that foundation for American success in the Trust Territory had been laid in the "full stomachs and healthy bodies" of its residents. *History of the Islands*, n.d., Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 50; Dorothy E. Richard, *United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, vol. 1 (Washington: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1957), 381.

⁶⁵ Bascom, *Ponape*, 15.

don't need goods.”⁶⁶ Some Islanders subverted these restrictions by ordering from catalogs or asking American friends to ship them goods directly. Others took the Navy's vague assertions that Pohnpei was “liberated” seriously, refusing government work orders and returning to their farms to resolve food shortages on their own terms.⁶⁷

Ironically, the Navy's adherence to cultural security inadvertently worked to enhance the power of the traditional leaders. Fewer stores meant imports were less accessible, which enabled elites to assert control over the flow of goods to commoners. In Kitti, for example, a single trade store replaced nine prewar Japanese shops. Lieutenant Robert Halvorsen warned dramatically of a “clique” there who had become so powerful that, “unless you get down on your knees you cannot eat.”⁶⁸ The need for a return to farming also led chiefs to reassert their role of mobilizing commoners to boost agricultural productivity.⁶⁹ Some in Pohnpei's military government embraced this resurgence of chiefly power as a revival of traditional culture. Critics like anthropologist Alfred Whiting, however, attacked the Navy for its failure to “suppress” traditional leaders' power. Whiting believed traditional leaders had leveraged their ties to the Navy

⁶⁶ Pohnpei's trade stores also attempted to regulate purchasing in smaller ways as, for example, by restricting sales of dresses to women. John Useem, *Notes on Yap (and Ulithi)*, 1946. Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 20; Robert Halvorsen, “Political Conditions in Ponape,” December 2-3 1946, Correspondence Individual, Halvorsen, Box 6, Folder 61, Saul H. Riesenberg Papers, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (hereafter SRP), 7.

⁶⁷ For its 1948-1949 annual report, the Navy estimated mail order purchasing throughout the Trust Territory at \$100,000, roughly 9% of total imports. American anthropologist Saul Riesenberg's papers contain correspondences with Nett *Nahnken* Joseph Iriarte (in German) and Oliver Nanpei (in English), in which both men ask Riesenberg to ship them goods unavailable locally. Iriarte and Riesenberg discussed seeds, clothing, and curtains in 1948, and Nanpei requested a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, earrings, and a dictionary the same year. Navy Department, *Report on the Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands* (Washington: Navy Department, 1949), XII; Joseph Iriarte to Saul Riesenberg, July 23, 1948, Box 7, Folder 69, SRP, 2; Saul Riesenberg to Joseph Iriarte, August 4, 1949, Box 7, Folder 69, SRP, 1; Oliver Nanpei to Saul Riesenberg, September 7, 1948, Box 8, Folder 94, SRP, 2. See also: Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 61.

⁶⁸ Robert Halvorsen, “Political Conditions in Ponape,” December 2-3 1946, Correspondence Individual, Halvorsen, Box 6, Folder 61, SRP, 7; “Halvorsen Visits Ponape,” *Ponape-per*, December 15, 1961, 2.

⁶⁹ Bascom, *Ponape*, 15.

for political and financial gain even as they withheld support for government initiatives like road construction and plantation rehabilitation.⁷⁰ But Pohnpei's power vacuum was also deliberate to a degree, a consequence of the Navy's aim to build democratic institutions and reduce its expenses by delegating authority to the island's political class. The Navy therefore asserted its power much more unevenly than the *Nan'yō'chō* had, despite its initial crackdown on the island's ongoing relationship with Japan.

Nor were the Navy's cultural security programs capable of erasing all of Pohnpei's ties to Japan, as anthropologist John Embree found when he strolled through Nett with a man named Tomas shortly after deportations concluded. The pair chatted in Japanese with Islanders who greeted them with a bow and spoke of their *wehi* using the Japanese term *Notto*. They met a prominent Nett family in the vacated home of a Japanese carpenter who sat passing the time as a phonograph played. Women strolled down the road with Japanese sunshades, men wore *seinendan* headbands and reminisced about victories in Japanese athletic contests, and mixed race children carried younger siblings on their backs in the Japanese style. Later, Embree was told that Pohnpeians had cheered an appearance of Emperor Hirohito in a newsreel, and that some revealed to one of the island's American priests that they were happier under Japanese rule.⁷¹

Pohnpeians did adapt to American rule in subsequent years, but the Japanese era's mixed marriages left behind ties deeper than imported goods or American governance could cut. Mixed-race Islanders continued to correspond with family in Japan and lobbied the Trust Territory and United Nations for help reuniting them with relatives barred from

⁷⁰ Alfred Whiting. "Municipal Organization" in *Reports from Kiti*, 1952, Pacific Collection, College of Micronesia-FSM, Palikir, Pohnpei, 1-2; Sidney F. Glassman. *The Flora of Ponape*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 209. (Honolulu: The Museum, 1952), 11.

⁷¹ Embree, *Field Report*, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 90.

reentering the territory.⁷² In 1953, for instance, Takeshi Hadley wrote pleadingly to the UN, “there are many of us with Japanese fathers whose happiness cannot be made complete because of our longing for and [great desire] to be by the side of our fathers and brothers and sisters.” Nett *nahnmwarki* Max Iriarte petitioned for mixed families to be reunited the same year, though he specified that Pohnpeians did not support the large-scale return of all Japanese settlers.⁷³

With mail orders mounting and demand for Japanese goods still high, the Navy’s restrictive import structure and cultural security policy came to be increasingly untenable. In 1948, Pohnpei’s military government therefore began shifting away from uniform stock lists and the Naval procurement system and toward more diverse offerings and non-US importers. Japanese goods began appearing in Pohnpei’s stores the following year: canvas shoes, *jikatapi* boots, sandals, silverware, dishware, clocks, irons, lanterns, phonographs, watches, umbrellas, sewing machines, and a boat, among other items.⁷⁴ Japanese foods, including rice, followed shortly after. By 1951, the government-run Island Trading Company had so abandoned cultural security as to pursue an import partnership with NBK, the firm that had held a near-monopoly on the territory’s prewar trade.⁷⁵ Even so, Islanders continued to agitate for greater access to Japanese goods well

⁷² Alfred Whiting. “Re Family of Walter: (Insane man at jail) in *Reports from Kiti*, 1952, Pacific Collection, College of Micronesia-FSM, Palikir, Pohnpei, 1.

⁷³ Hadley submitted his petition too late for it to be considered. Iriarte’s petition called for the return of the Japanese husbands of Pohnpeian women and their half-Pohnpeian children where all parties desired the return. The petition’s sponsors estimated that about 30 returnees would be affected. Takeshi Hadley, “Translation: Petitions to UN Visiting Mission in 1953,” March 5, 1953, SFP, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, 1; Island Affairs Officer to District Administrator, “Background on petitions to UN Visiting Mission,” March 5-6, 10, 1953, SFP, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, 3.

⁷⁴ By 1950, more than 20% of ITC’s imports came from Japan. Office of the Civil Administrator. *Quarterly Report: Ponape District* (April-June 1949), 14-15; Navy Department, *Report on the Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands* (Washington: Navy Department, 1950), 72.

⁷⁵ The Island Trading Company was the short-lived successor organization to the USCC. It ceased operations in 1952, having fulfilled its mission to devolve to Islander-owned wholesalers as soon as practicable. In Spivey’s reading, the ITC’s departure signified the refusal of the United States to follow

into the 1950s. Enerico Mallarme of Nett, for example, petitioned the United Nations to open “free trading channels between Japan and the Trust Territory” in 1953, arguing subversively that the widespread poverty of American-controlled Pohnpei made cheaper Japanese goods indispensable.⁷⁶

Despite these consumer-driven breakthroughs, which emanated from population centers like Saipan and Palau as well as from Pohnpei, suspicion of imports among nutritionists and anthropologists working in the territory far outlasted the Navy’s formal efforts to restrict trade there. Early researchers had often grounded their work in what William Jarvis has called the “myth of the healthy savage.”⁷⁷ In 1947, for instance, anthropologist Rupert Murrill argued that dental caries were more common among “primitive peoples who have come into contact with the white man and his foods.” He therefore claimed the caries he found in “pure Ponapean types” gave witness to a long

previous colonizers in exploiting Micronesia economically. It also marked the culmination of a time-consuming program of education in the rudiments of capitalism, directed at Islanders he believed had been isolated even from the prewar colonial economies of their own islands. Yet the Ponape Cooperative Company’s growing position in the island’s foreign trade complicated Spivey’s paternalist narrative of American do-goodery. In fact, the PCC drew as much on Pohnpei’s American present as its past, not only in its ongoing economic links to Japan but in its reliance on the prewar professional experience and the business, clan, and kin connections of its own staff, particularly of former NBK employee and PCC president William Helgenberger. Here too, postwar Pohnpei was no blank slate. John Spivey, “History of the Island Trading Company of Micronesia,” Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Archives, University of Hawai’i at Manoa (hereafter TTA), reel 118, 1-2, 4, 6, Appendix C: 3; “At 63 He’s the New Credit Manager,” *Micronesian Reporter* V, no. II (March-April 1957), 2.

⁷⁶ “Petitions to United Nations Visiting Mission, March 4-6, 1953, from citizens of Ponape District,” SFP, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, 2.

⁷⁷ Two groups of researchers were deployed to the Trust Territory during its US Navy occupation. Researchers for the USCC Economic Survey worked between 1945-1946, while researchers for the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology were in the field from 1947-1949. Robert C. Kiste and Suzanne Falgout, “Anthropology and Micronesia: The Context,” in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, eds. Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall (Honolulu, University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 26; David Hanlon, “Magellan’s Chroniclers? American Anthropology’s History in Micronesia” in *American Anthropology in Micronesia: An Assessment*, eds. Robert C. Kiste and Mac Marshall (Honolulu, University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 68; William T. Jarvis, “The Myth of the Healthy Savage,” *Nutrition Today* 16, no. 2 (March/April 1981).

history of colonial encounter.⁷⁸ Similarly, a team from Harvard’s Peabody Museum leaned on the work of racial scientists to evaluate Yapese nutritional standards. The team’s report cited eugenicists like Earnest Hooton and the nutritionist Weston A. Price, who believed that “isolated remnants of primitive racial stocks” were generally free from “modern” diseases and tooth decay. The group also relied on head and body measurements taken by physical anthropologist Kotondo Hasebe under the *Nan’yō’chō*.⁷⁹

Elmer Alpert’s territory-wide 1946 nutrition survey has often been used as a baseline for evaluating postwar Micronesian health, but it rested on some similar assumptions. Alpert’s basic assessment was that Micronesian diets were nutritionally “deficient,” a conclusion he reached after repeatedly conflating the war’s temporary health impacts with longer-term effects of colonization. His recommendations for mitigating that deficiency included protein-rich foods, canned or fresh milk, enriched rice and flour, local foods rich in vitamin C, and a “concentrated educational campaign.” But Alpert was most troubled by the sale of soda and candy at the Navy’s trade stores. He expressed “shock” that Chamorros on Saipan were permitted to purchase Pepsi, insisting that Islanders could not help but waste their money on such luxuries “to the exclusion of much needed food.” Echoing the territory’s restrictive alcohol policy, Alpert then recommended the Navy add candy and soda to the list of items only *mehn waii* were presumed capable of consuming responsibly.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Rupert Ivan Murrill. *Anthropological Study of the Ponape Islanders*. (Pacific Science Board, 1948), 2, 44.

⁷⁹ Weston A. Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration: A Comparison of Primitive and Modern Diets and Their Effects* (Santa Monica: Price-Pottenger Foundation, 1977), 1; Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology. *The Micronesians of Yap and Their Depopulation; Report of the Peabody Museum Expedition to Yap Island, Micronesia, 1947-1948*. (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, Harvard University, 1949), 1, 118-119, 146, 148.

⁸⁰ These misapprehensions of health and culture were certainly shaped by the researchers’ own prejudices, but they were also often exacerbated by methodological issues with the work itself. Alpert, for example,

While later scholars rejected racial science, whose influence mostly vanished from the territory after the 1950s, cautions against unregulated food imports remained. Māori anthropologist Te Rangi Hīroa, for instance, repeatedly celebrated the equilibrium he found in Kapingamarangi during his fieldwork there in 1950. He praised the atoll's balanced diets and an economic stability that enabled families to provide for themselves. But he warned that an overabundance of trade goods could threaten that equilibrium, concluding that Kapingese had “nothing to gain from the outside world” beyond English education, medical attention, and a rudimentary trade.⁸¹ University of Hawai'i nutritionist Mary Murai issued a similar warning from Majuro. She reported that Marshallese laborers there lacked the time, money, and land to consume an adequate amount of nutritious food, and that their health had already been compromised.⁸² While probably rooted in a conviction that Aotearoa and Hawai'i had themselves been thrown off balance by colonial rule, Hīroa and Murai's work could also be used to validate *mehn waii*

had conducted his study without benefit of a scale, laboratory testing equipment, or the ability to communicate with his research subjects, leaving him unable to record quantitative dietary histories or “exact” qualitative data. Alpert also asserted that Saipan Chamorros possessed no “native dietary in the usual sense of the term,” presumably under the assumption that excessive colonization had shattered traditional Chamorro culture. Elmer Alpert. “Nutrition and Dietary Patterns of Micronesia,” October 1946. TTA, reel 414, 3, 14-15, 21-23.

⁸¹ Hīroa was also known as Sir Peter H. Buck. During the Trust Territory's Navy occupation, as director of Hawaii's Bishop Museum, he conducted his research on Kapingamarangi in conjunction with the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology. Hīroa wrote at the time that his interest in Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro had been kindled by a desire to trace the routes of his Māori ancestors from Hawaiiki to Aotearoa, a connection that presumably inspired him to perform a Māori chant in Kapingamarangi's church during his fieldwork there. Peter Henry Buck. *Material Culture of Kapingamarangi* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1950), 281, 285; Peter Henry Buck. “A Short Account of a Visit by an Anthropologist of Polynesian Ancestry to Kapingamarangi,” 1950. TTA, reel 509, 1. See also: School of Naval Administration Hoover Institute, *Handbook of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands* (Washington: Navy Department, 1948), 153-154; Saul Riesenber, “People... in Micronesia,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 63, no. 5 (May 1951), 25.

⁸² Other observers attributed the health issues they noticed in the Marshalls to canned foods as well. The anonymous author of a 1947 history of the region, for example, suggested that excessive canned food consumption on Ebeye resulted in “deficiencies which manifest themselves in such ailments as neuritis and a proneness to respiratory diseases.” See also: Alexander Spoehr. *Majuro: A Village in the Marshall Islands* (Chicago: Chicago Natural History Museum Press, 1949), 152; Mary Murai. *Nutrition Study in Micronesia* (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 1954), 9; *History of the Islands*, 55-56.

theories of the susceptibility of Islander bodies. Or it could simply be ignored. This became the preferred option for an Interior Department that increasingly favored cheery assessments of its success combating infectious disease over confronting the still-invisible health impacts of imported foods.⁸³

Some military personnel likewise maintained their skepticism of foreign imports throughout the territory's Naval occupation, just as civilian *mehn waii* staffers of the Interior era did. On Majuro, for instance, a Navy captain remarked to John Embree just after the war's end in 1945 that he opposed the continuation of the copra trade, movies, Coca-Cola, and "almost everything else that will change native life."⁸⁴ But at the same moment, thousands of American sailors were breathing free after years of confinement to military vessels. There, onboard stores of Coca-Cola had rapidly dwindled as the ships circulated through the Pacific, leaving sailors self-flagellating at "numerous memories of times [they had] passed up a plain hot dog and Coke."⁸⁵ In fact, Coca-Cola's president had purposefully taken the war as an opportunity to expand worldwide, vowing after Pearl Harbor to make his product available to every American in uniform. This made it something of a global symbol of Americanization, provoking opposition among Europeans and Japanese who viewed it as a sign of cultural imperialism or, in the case of

⁸³ Naval historian Dorothy Richard critiqued Murai's work directly, dismissing it as "pessimistic" and attributable to a lack of education and a poor economy, if nutrition was a matter for concern at all. A decade later High Commissioner Delmas Nucker did the same thing, arguing that Murai's findings were invalid because "it does not appear the same energy demands exist in Micronesia" as in the United States. Richard, *United States Naval Administration* vol. 3, 943-944; High Commissioner to Distad Ponape, "Addition of Enriched Rice and Flour to Micronesian Diet," May 14, 1958, Robert E. Gibson Papers, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i (hereafter RGP), Box 7, Folder 93, 1-2; Fiske, "Speech Concerning the Trust Territory," 4.

⁸⁴ Embree, *Field Report*, 10.

⁸⁵ Crist S. Lovdjeeff. "A Sketch of the Marianas," 1945, accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.kmitch.com/Huerfano/lovdjeeff1.html>.

European Communists, of capitalist decadence.⁸⁶ Yet when Coca-Cola so surged in popularity in the Trust Territory of the 1940s that Guam's bottling plant ran short of containers, Americans read the drink's popularity not in terms of their own insatiable appetite for sugary sodas but as a sign of an alarming declension from paradise.⁸⁷

The Navy departed the Trust Territory in 1951, briefly emptying Kolonia of its American presence apart from educational administrators Bill Finale and Bob Halvorsen and a handful of missionaries.⁸⁸ But Interior rule did not ease American anxieties over imports. Nor did Interior substantially alter the Navy's basic governing calculation. The territory continued to operate under a framework of minimal administrative funding and a go-slow approach to economic, cultural, and political change. It also maintained a relationship with the United Nations trusteeship system that offered some deniability (for those who desired it) that American rule in the territory was actually a form of anti-colonialism.⁸⁹ Even so, as civilian governance opened a wider range of voices within the American regime, *mehn waii* continued to fret over empire's evils amid a Kolonia that was already being substantially transformed.

⁸⁶ Anne E. McBride. "Have Your Coke and Eat It Too: What Cooking with Coca-Cola Says about Cultural Imperialism." *Gastronomica* 5, no. 1 (February 2005): 80; Karal Ann Marling. *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 274.

⁸⁷ Naval historian Dorothy Richard took the contrary position, however, arguing that Coca-Cola was at least an acceptable alternative to alcohol. Richard, *United States Naval Administration* vol. 3, 489.

⁸⁸ Margery Terpstra. Telephone interview by author. October 7, 2016.

⁸⁹ At times, this framing was quite explicit, as when Trust Territory High Commissioner Elbert Thomas mused in 1949 that trusteeship theory "may spell the end of colonialism and mercantilism and sound the death knell to the exploitation of what were termed 'backward peoples.'" The "white man's burden," Thomas asserted, was "no longer solely the white man's task." See also: Kugel, *Governing of Micronesia*, 16; Elbert Thomas. *Objectives in the Administration of the Trust Territory* (Honolulu: High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1949), 12.

Remaking Kolonia

In 1952, the *Saturday Evening Post*'s Robert Sherrod boarded a series of island-hopping aircraft for a tour through the Trust Territory. The territory had come under Interior Department rule the previous year, and was still in the process of recruiting an adequate force of civilian staffers. On his flight from Guam to Pohnpei, Sherrod noticed an American couple on board with their young child and "imminent prospects" of another. "These are the true pioneers," he reflected, "the new bearers of the white man's burden." But once the couple disembarked and caught a glimpse of their Quonset-style staff housing, they took the first flight back to Guam. Americans who remained complained of weather, isolation, electrical outages, and poor roads, but Sherrod believed no problem hit them harder than food. American palates were "not geared to the bland, almost tasteless breadfruit and taro," he wrote, and consequently nearly everything they consumed was imported, canned, and overpriced.⁹⁰ With Pohnpei's living conditions apparently unable to meet the minimum acceptable standard for many Americans, the administration was forced to expend a large proportion of its limited resources on caring for its *mehn waii* staff. Even so, turnover remained high and local institutions like schools and hospitals struggled.

The Trust Territory government of this era was often roiled by ideological disputes within its ranks. Still, nearly everyone within the regime seemed to agree on basic principles: low annual budgets, a slow-paced approach to economic and political reform, and the need to maintain foreign staff life as something of a separate sphere. Interior therefore sought to reproduce a no-frills version of American life amid the ruins

⁹⁰ Robert Lee Sherrod. "Want to Live on a Tropical Island?" *Saturday Evening Post*, December 20, 1952, 24, 68-69.

of the Navy's vacated bases and atop the fault lines it left behind, paying foreign staff higher wages than their local counterparts and working to limit sexual contacts between the two groups. This porous division served a range of sometimes-contradictory goals: to facilitate staff recruitment, fulfill trusteeship obligations by modernizing island infrastructures, hinder the spread of cultural imperialism, or present an aspirational showcase of American life. But the separate spheres cut both ways. They enabled American families to enjoy the "fellowship of the American colony" amid the comfort of familiar consumer goods, but also invited unnecessary conflict.⁹¹ Both the conflict and the colony itself proved fleeting. What remained was a Kolonia left largely to its own devices and subsequently reborn as an independent, polyglot hub united by democratic principles and the rule of law.

The backdrop for this rebirth was a Kolonia much diminished from its prewar form. After the war, the US Navy had reoriented the town around a small military base and granted Islanders temporary leases to occupy some of the land vacated by repatriated Japanese.⁹² Pohnpeians aspiring to business ownership or civil service took some of those leases. Many others went to outer Islanders relocated during the war or with ties to Pohnpei's prewar communities of Kapingese, Pingelapese, Mortlockese, Mokilese, Nukuorans, and Ngatikese. By the end of the 1940s, the American base consisted of two Quonset hut barracks for enlisted men, a Quonset hut mess hall and movie theater, a chief's quarters, a club, and various support structures, all of which sustained an

⁹¹ Toomin, *Black Robe*, 33.

⁹² Bascom, *Ponape*, 15.

occupying force of around 50 sailors and the families of a few officers.⁹³ The base was small, but its separation from the rest of the town was at least loosely enforced: local food was rarely if ever served in the mess hall, and Islanders were *de jure* barred both from the mess and from overnight visits in the barracks.⁹⁴

Colonizer and colonized maintained an amiable if often superficial rapport in the Kolonia of the 1950s, rarely tipping over into public conflict.⁹⁵ But Interior did inherit some of the distant, oppositional relationships that had characterized colonial relations in the town before their arrival. Anthropologists frequently noted the Navy's tendency to become abrupt and impatient when dealing with Pohnpeians and outer Islanders, and at times to demonstrate a seemingly willful rudeness. Officers forced even men of influence like Oliver Nanpei to wait hours past the time of scheduled meetings. They meted out arbitrary punishments, sentencing a man to six months in jail for stealing paper, for instance.⁹⁶ Enlisted men also stirred controversy as they strolled the island shirtless or drunk, used obscene language, and pursued sexual liaisons with local women.⁹⁷

⁹³ A handful of Americans lived and worked off base as well: the Burtons at the agriculture station, the Terpstras nearby the Protestant churches at Kolonia and Ohwa, and the American priests at the Catholic mission, for instance. Pompey, "Micronesia," 89; Bascom, *Ponape*, 5.

⁹⁴ Anthropologist Saul Riesenberg noted his surprise on being served canned pineapple at Pohnpei's mess hall in 1947, writing in his journal that "officers say they never have native fruits or vegetables; say cooks find it much easier to open cans." The following year, Navy epidemiologist Charles Bailey wrote that most of Pohnpei's military personnel ate "meats (beef and pork), fish, potatoes, rice, vegetables (peas, beans, asparagus, beets), and canned fruits" although some enlisted men ate local foods outside of the mess. Crist S. Lovdjieff. "A Sketch of the Marianas," 1945, accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.kmitch.com/Huerfano/lovdjieff8.html>; Charles Al Bailey. *An Epidemic of Eosinophilic Meningitis, a Previously Undescribed Disease, Occurring on Ponape, Eastern Carolines* (Bethesda, Maryland: Naval Medical Research Institute, 1948), 14. See also: Saul Riesenberg, Entry dated Friday, July 11, 1947, *Diary*, Box 2, Folder 2, SRP, 2.

⁹⁵ Toomin, *Black Robe*, 44.

⁹⁶ Embree, *Field Report*, 70, 87, 91.

⁹⁷ Bascom suggests that most of these liaisons took place between sailors and outer islander women rather than Pohnpeians because the former were "apparently more broad-minded in such matters than the Ponapeans." Bascom, *Ponape*, 16.

Political fault lines too were already in place under Naval rule. On the one hand, Islanders did not appear entirely convinced by the Navy's framing of the United States as a beneficent liberator. Many instead regarded Americans as conquerors, though perhaps conquerors less imperious or prone to corporal punishment than the Japanese had been.⁹⁸ On the other hand, Islanders had begun to pressure the military government on a range of internal issues. Traditional leaders and an emergent class of politicians argued for the settlement of war claims and a variety of incremental reforms, men declined to volunteer their labor for infrastructure projects that mainly benefited Americans, and Pohnpeians lobbied for the Navy to restore traditional titles taken from them under Japanese rule. Municipal governments and the Ponape Congress, both established during the 1940s, served as a forum to resolve some of these concerns.⁹⁹ In 1952, for instance, the Ponape Congress Noble's House passed an unsuccessful petition asking the Americans to return the *luhwen wehi*. The petition condemned Japan's seizure and subsequent leasing of the land, arguing that it had been distributed in a manner "stingy toward us Ponapeans... and generous toward themselves."¹⁰⁰ Individuals also petitioned the High Commissioner and

⁹⁸ John Fischer, "Internal Affairs Memorandum: Present and Potential Political Development of Ponapean Society," December 5, 1950, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, microfilm 594 #11, 3.

⁹⁹ Municipal jurisdictions were generally congruent with the boundaries of Pohnpei's *wehi*. Outer islands like Pingelap or Nukuoro were chartered as a single municipality. *Nahnmwarki* or other high-ranking traditional leaders made up most of the district's early magistrates, often serving a similar function as they had during the island's Japanese era. The Ponape Congress initially functioned in an advisory capacity only, leaving most day-to-day decision making to municipal governments and the Naval regime.

¹⁰⁰ Demands enumerated in this petition included devolving ownership over undistributed *luhwen wehi* land and land distributed to Japanese settlers to Pohnpei's *wehi*, designating land leased to Pohnpeians by the Japanese and American regimes as privately owned, and returning mangrove swamps taken by the Japanese regime to their rightful owners. The *luhwen wehi* remained an unresolved source of tension on the island for decades, not unlike the still-simmering controversy over the Crown Lands in Hawai'i. In fact, the *luhwen wehi* was not resolved even in the post-independence era, as the Federated States of Micronesia's national government retained control of much of the territory the Americans designated "public lands" in the 1940s. Petition from Ponape Noble's House of Congress to K.M. Carroll, May 22, 1952, HFP, reel 2 [frame 817-818].

United Nations on subjects ranging from war reparations and the restoration of prewar postal savings accounts to land disputes and a variety of other issues.¹⁰¹

The Navy had also exposed fault lines of longer standing. When the military government proposed holding elections to choose a single chief for the entire island, for instance, Oliver Nanpei began a public campaign to fulfill an ambition his father Henry had long held for himself. Nanpei scrupulously worked to build goodwill among potential constituents, using personal funds to pay down a portion of Kitti's municipal debt and sponsoring athletic games there.¹⁰² His campaign seems particularly to have targeted his longtime rival Max Iriarte, who probably desired the position as well but declined to pursue it publicly. The campaign inflamed tensions between the two men and their followers, partly because Navy officials encouraged Nanpei to pursue a vigorous American style of electioneering that was entirely at odds with the island's political norms. The campaign proved so destructive that Iriarte recalled being laughed at in public, shamed by opponents who walked past his Kolonia office bearing gifts of *sakau* and pigs for Nanpei rather than him, and driven nearly to tears as he asked those gathered at community meetings "to abandon these practices which are not good for us."¹⁰³ The campaign provoked so much division that the Navy was forced to eliminate the position of all-island chief altogether, if not to repudiate its strategy of seeking to resolve conflicts through a public airing of grievances.

¹⁰¹ See, for example: Island Affairs Officer to District Administrator, "Background on petitions to UN Visiting Mission," March 5-6, 10, 1953, SFP, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, 4-5.

¹⁰² John Fischer, "Informant: Peli," August 11, 1950, D26S1, HFP, reel 2, [frame 432].

¹⁰³ Noting the poor fit between American-style elections and behind-the-scenes Pohnpeian politicking, Fischer wrote that one Pohnpeian involved in this dispute told him, "You Americans can have an election and forget about it until the next election. We Ponapeans can not." Another suggested that the election had opened up a rift so deep that in past years it could only have been settled by war, and that some of those involved had actually proposed turning to violence. John Fischer, "Titles, etc. Makis, copy of 10/xi/50. 12/xi," HFP, reel 2, 548 [frame 1090]; Political Affairs Officer to Civil Administrator, "Present and Potential Political Development of Ponapean Society," HFP, reel 2, 564 [frame 1098].

Interior families arrived in the Trust Territory in 1951 mostly unaware of these fissures. But they did appear in dramatic fashion, many of them aboard a chartered aircraft nicknamed the “diaper special.” The vessel hopped from island to island, delivering 64 wives and children of Interior employees to district centers throughout the territory.¹⁰⁴ Those who came to Pohnpei inherited Kolonia’s Naval facilities in little-modified form. They swiftly made Club Kolonia and a ring of rusting Quonsets they called “the circle” the focal point of their social lives. They also began setting themselves apart from their Micronesian neighbors. Most opted to educate their children through the island’s small “dependent school.” Many hired maids, ostensibly to ensure that “the locals benefited from our time on the island.” All demanded, or at least desired, familiar imported goods from the island’s commissary and private shops.¹⁰⁵ Interior rule did promise to be different: accessible, responsive, and no longer subject to the accusation of running the islands “like a battleship.”¹⁰⁶ But Interior’s prohibitions against staffers pursuing sexual relationships with Islanders and its use of unequal wage scales for foreign and local staff highlighted the distance that continued to define colonial relations under the new regime.

If anything, the early Trust Territory administration was less tolerant of “fraternizing” than the *Nan’yō’chō* had been. Nonetheless, those liaisons recurred with

¹⁰⁴ Cecilia Wahl, “Diaper Special,” *Micronesia Monthly* 1, no. 1 (November 1951), 4.

¹⁰⁵ Jean Braden, *Homesick in Paradise: A Ponape Story 1965-1967* (Gresham, Oregon: Jean Braden, 2014), 3, 36; “News from the Dependent School,” *Ponape-per*, December 11, 1959, 6; “New Frontier School Opens Sept 5,” *Ponape-per*, August 18, 1961, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Trust Territory Chief Justice Edward Furber, for instance, raised the alarm in 1950 over the tendency of many American personnel to disregard the territory’s Bill of Rights and to treat Islanders as occupied peoples rather than citizens with rights. Margery Terpstra also recalls that *mehn waii* at the time jokingly referred to Pohnpei’s Naval governor as “captain” regardless of his actual rank because “he was head of the ship.” Harold Ickes, “The Navy at Its Worst.” *Collier’s*, August 31, 1946, 67; E.P. Furber to Civil Administrators, “Civil Rights of Inhabitants – Importance of Recognition of in Judicial Proceedings [sic],” March 28, 1950, SFP, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Early Texts, 1; Margery Terpstra. Telephone interview by author. October 7, 2016.

considerable frequency. Some *mehn waii* suffered failed marriages as husbands or wives strayed into the arms of Islander lovers, and rumors of indiscretions were legion.¹⁰⁷ While education director Robert Gibson merely advised his staff to “be indiscreet discreetly,” High Commissioner Delmas Nucker, his wife, and a handful of other officials took a direct interest in policing the territory’s morals.¹⁰⁸ Neither staffers nor Islanders seem to have welcomed these intrusions into their personal lives. One American teacher, for instance, complained of being subjected to a two-hour lecture on the dangers of “foreign entanglements” during his training. He later grumbled that the High Commissioner’s staff was “obsessed” with the subject.¹⁰⁹

One of Pohnpei’s most contentious couplings had occurred under Navy rule, when the military government ham-handedly dismissed Island Trading Company branch manager V.R. Braddon-Walker over his relationship with Daisy Nanpei and then ordered his transfer off island. Daisy and her sisters Luise and Keity had all married Japanese plantation overseers prior to the war, in part to facilitate their father Oliver’s ties to the

¹⁰⁷ Stories of similar liaisons in the Trust Territory during this time include sailors breaking open the Pohnpei’s first shipment of USCC goods to exchange them for sex, a 16-year old Mokilese girl interrogated by police for spending the night at Kolonia’s Bachelor Officer’s Quarters, a “native female” who spent the night at Pohnpei’s Navy barracks, a sailor stationed on Ngatik caught pilfering USCC goods for his mistress, an Interior staffer who “got drunk and raped an island girl,” a homosexual encounter between an American teacher and male student, and a female PICS teacher caught having sex with a Palauan student on the steps of a hotel. Willard Muller later recalled observing American men unable to turn away from the bare breasted women they met on field trips to the territory’s western islands and American women “equally aware of superb male bodies” they saw there. “More than once,” he writes, “I saw an American woman on a visit to one of these islands, who normally could walk with no difficulty down island paths in other parts of the district with just as many uncovered tree roots across them suddenly begin to stumble when Puluwat men came walking in their direction.” John Fischer, “Translation, Statement of Emiel taken at Police Station,” September 3, 1952, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1952, SFP; Bascom, *Ponape*, 16; Pompey, “Micronesia,” 91; Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, February 10, 1984, folder 5, transcript, KPI, 7-8; Willard C Muller, *Faces of the Islands: When Pacific Islander and American Ways Meet* (Rochester, Washington: Gorham Publishing, 2002), 38; Sherrod, Robert Lee. “Want to Live on a Tropical Island?” *Saturday Evening Post*, December 20, 1952, 69; Muller, *Faces of the Islands*, 143-144.

¹⁰⁸ Nucker served as the Trust Territory’s High Commissioner from 1954 to 1961. Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, February 10, 1984, folder 5, transcript, KPI, 7.

¹⁰⁹ The teacher, Theodore Henning, implies that personnel director Nat Logan-Smith and the territory’s chief anthropologist delivered this lecture. Theodore Henning, *Buritis in Paradise* (New York: Greenwich Book Publishers, 1961), 38.

island's foreign trade.¹¹⁰ With her husband deported and Oliver working to erase Japan's imprint on his family, Daisy was drawn to Braddon-Walker.¹¹¹ But Naval officials objected to the match, making the couple's rumored premarital liaisons an issue even after they were wed. The couple's *mehn waii* friends held the transfer to be "cruel and unnecessary." Many Pohnpeians agreed, but also understood the attack on Braddon-Walker as a potential crisis of prestige. A policeman named William, for instance, argued that, "if both people are equal than the marriage is good," intimating his anxiety that equality with *mehn waii* for even the wealthiest Pohnpeians might no longer be possible. These protests ultimately succeeded, though not without unduly inflaming tensions. Braddon-Walker remained on Pohnpei until 1955.¹¹²

The Navy's hostility to relationships like Nanpei and Braddon-Walker's resembled injunctions against fraternizing with civilians elsewhere, but Interior's concerns were particular to its conflicting aspirations for the territory. These sexual liaisons drove wedges between married couples and exacerbated staff turnover, fostered an intimacy that implied a more permanent form of colonial occupation than was intended by the territory's UN charter, and exposed a sinful underbelly of American culture that might hinder possibilities for a longer colonial presence. But in instituting

¹¹⁰ All three men were repatriated to Japan by the US Navy, while Nanpei's daughters and grandchildren remained on Pohnpei. Albert O. Momm. *Ponape: Japan's Island in the Eastern Carolines*, (n.p., 1945), 28.

¹¹¹ Eager to cozy up to the American regime, Oliver even urged Daisy (unsuccessfully) to rename her eight children so they might sound less Japanese. Daisy's eight children were Isako, Kioko, Iosimi, Sasang, Nanako or Caroline, Setsuk, Ma, and Emiko. Immediately after the war's end, Pohnpei's Naval Governor Albert Momm wrote that all of Oliver Nanpei's grandchildren had been raised "so strictly in the Japanese ways" that, although they lived in Oliver Nanpei's house, he chose not to speak Pohnpeian with them. Daisy and Braddon-Walker had one son together in 1950, whose name is Tony. Rufino Mauricio. "Family Root," 35; Embree, *Field Report*, 70; Momm, *Ponape*, 28.

¹¹² Similarly, a Madolenihmw judge named Soure offered his approval for Braddon-Walker's continued work on Pohnpei, but only under the condition that he did not work for Pohnpeians. Such an arrangement, he argued, was "unfitting" as Pohnpeians working for outer islanders. Director of Internal Affairs to Civil Administrator, "Local Reaction to Possible Removal of V.R. Braddon-Walker," December 31, 1950, Series 3 Ponape, Box 9, Documents 1950 typed, SFP, 1; John Fischer, "Informant: William, the policeman," January 5, 1951, D23S2, HFP, reel 2, [frame 386].

unequal wage scales, under which Americans were paid as much as five times the amount Islanders received for the same work, Interior followed a well-established local precedent.¹¹³ In fact, Solomon Commission economist Richard Cooper later argued that the tensions produced by wage imbalances in the Trust Territory was a “standard problem” in all colonial settings. “You have the colonialists with their pay linked to their home country,” he observed, “as it has to be in order to get them to go out there. Then you have the colonial peoples who... want to know ‘why is the American getting four times what I am getting?’” The resulting strain, Cooper maintained, tended to push local salaries above levels sustainable by the local economy and to enhance the appeal of civil service positions, even as the imported goods necessary to sustain a comfortable urban lifestyle on Pohnpei were priced out of the reach of a local worker.¹¹⁴

Pohnpei’s wage scales impacted the day-to-day lives of nearly everyone on the island. On the one hand, wage-earning Islanders and those they served objected to the struggles local staff faced in maintaining an acceptable standard of living. At a 1953 territory-wide education conference in Chuuk, for instance, a Madolenihmw-based teacher named Samson spoke of the strain salaries as low as \$17 to \$35 per month put on families. “In Ponape,” he argued, “we all know that we have much food but we do not just go out and get food. We have to work hard to get food... The money that I get each month can never support our family.”¹¹⁵ Playing on *mehn waii* tropes of the Pacific Island

¹¹³ The figure cited here refers specifically to Pohnpeian teachers, who Education Director Robert Gibson later noted received only a fifth of the salary their American counterparts were paid during the 1950s. Robert Gibson, “Trust Territory: Cultural Education and Westernized Schooling,” Trust Territory Education Materials, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa (hereafter TTEM), Folder 15, 15.

¹¹⁴ Richard N. Cooper, interview by Bruce M. Kalk, August 3, 1993 in *Oral Histories of the Northern Mariana Islands: Political Life and Developments (1945-1995)*, eds. Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer (Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands: CNMI Division of Historic Preservation, 2004), vol. 2, 250.

¹¹⁵ The teacher in question was probably Samson Alpert. *Proceedings, 2nd Education Conference*. Truk, Micronesia, 1953, 58-59.

as labor-free paradise, Samson protested that the unseen difficulties teachers faced putting food on the table compromised the entire school system. Teacher recruitment lagged, and afternoon classes could not be held when teachers returned home to farm and students left to eat lunch.¹¹⁶

On the other hand, the higher pay foreign staffers received fostered a small market for goods that were entirely out of reach for most Islanders, though in a variety that was still insufficient for some *mehn waii* consumers. Visitors to Interior-era Kolonia often commented on the “cosmopolitan racial composition” and varied origins of its foreign staff, but the forces that drove Middle American consumerism held sway there as well.¹¹⁷ Thus when the Island Trading Company took over the Navy’s commissary in 1952, it was forced to increase inventories of canned and preserved foods at a substantial loss in order to meet the needs of American personnel.¹¹⁸ Refrigerators and stoves also appeared in district centers throughout the territory, and even the rustic (by American standards) Terpstra residence at the Ohwa mission was eventually fitted with a kerosene refrigerator.¹¹⁹ In later years Kolonia stores like the Kolonia Consumers Cooperative Company continued to carry products geared toward *mehn waii* shoppers, one of whom

¹¹⁶ American officials were sympathetic to these critiques, but reticent to increase spending: some in the interest of economy and others in hopes that continued modest funding levels would help ensure schools and other local institutions were financially sustainable, community-supported, and placed in Micronesian hands as soon as possible. Robert Gibson, “Trust Territory: Cultural Education and Westernized Schooling,” TTEM, 15.

¹¹⁷ Richard Cooper later remarked of the Kennedy-era territorial staff that, “almost none of them were from the forty-eight states. They were from the fringes of the United States. The High Commissioner [Goding]... was from Alaska. There were Puerto Ricans there, there were people from the Virgin Islands, from American Samoa – this is in the Trust Territory government... Some people had gone to the lower forty-eight and left as though ‘life in the fast lane’ was too fast. I found some people who I actually considered very wise.” Goding served as High Commissioner from 1961 to 1966. Richard N. Cooper, interview by Bruce M. Kalk, August 3, 1993 in *Oral Histories*, eds. Willens and Siemer, vol. 2, 251; Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 132.

¹¹⁸ The Island Trading Company shut down this same year, though for unrelated reasons. John S. Spivey. “History of the Island Trading Company, Micronesia,” 1951. TTA, reel 118, 63.

¹¹⁹ Richard E. Drews, “Yap Highlights.” *Micronesian Monthly* I, no. 1 (November 1951), 8; Margery Terpstra. Telephone interview by author. October 7, 2016.

recalled purchasing cold storage eggs, frozen meat, canned whale, powdered milk, coffee, “lots of canned food,” and other staples at KCCA during the mid-1960s.¹²⁰

Variety was the watchword of foreign consumer demand in Kolonia’s 1950s grocery scene, which was shaped in large part by inflated *mehn waii* wages and idiosyncratic American demands. Those demands often seemed to mimic the messaging of corporations like Campbell’s Soup, which worked for decades to convince housewives that they needed to personally cook a varied menu in order to demonstrate their love for their families.¹²¹ This preoccupation with variety led many *mehn waii* to dismiss local foods as tedious and bland, and to strain against Kolonia’s limited import selection.¹²² Many therefore turned to stopgap measures: gardening, ordering food by mail, developing fusion dishes like breadfruit French fries, or playing a “cat and mouse game” with quarantine inspectors by smuggling in fresh tomatoes or bell peppers from trips to Hawai’i or Guam.¹²³ Their “ingenuity” earned the repeated praise of men like Philip Toomin, who lamented the social distance created when “the poorest American kitchen was far superior to even the best Micronesian.” Though taking a self-serving comfort in

¹²⁰ The Kolonia Consumers Cooperative Company was the successor to the Ponape Cooperative Association, which was dissolved in 1963 on the recommendation of the Ponape District Congress. “Vote to Dissolve Company,” *Ponape-per* V, no. 4, January 25, 1963, 5; Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 16.

¹²¹ Katherine Parkin, “Campbell’s Soup and the Long Shelf Life of Traditional Gender Roles,” in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 57.

¹²² See, for example: Kugel, *Governing of Micronesia*, 25; Manuela G. Maramba, *Report on Nutrition Work in the South Pacific Commission* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1961), 10.

¹²³ While Americans occasionally imply that this sort of smuggling went on during the 1950s, the “cat and mouse” reference is from 1967. “Those Delicious Tomatoes from Kwaj,” *Ponape-per* 9, no. 5, February 3, 1967, 3; “Plans Are Underway to Increase Food Supplies,” *Micronesian Monthly* I, no. 2, (December 1951), 18; Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 46-47. For recipes, see: Cecilia Wahl. “Food News.” *Micronesian Monthly* I, no. 3, (January 1952), 16; Muller, *Faces of the Islands*, 186.

the notion that Islanders admired Americans enough to forestall discontent, Toomin almost certainly misjudged the popular demand for his family's varied "tasting menus."¹²⁴

Acquisitiveness was a quality held in low esteem on Pohnpei and its outer islands. Even so, it was largely Pohnpeians and outer Islanders who built a new Kolonia at the intersection of this *mehn waii* consumerism and Islanders' diminished buying power. Kolonia residents like the Pohnpeian-Okinawan businessman Inosuke Yamada dreamed of restoring the energy and bustle of Japanese Kolonia while turning the page on a time when "all business was for the Japanese."¹²⁵ Along with Yamada's store, by the end of the 1950s Kolonia featured several groceries and general stores, a fish market, restaurants, two public movie theaters, a hotel, dental office, barbershop, and a number of local stores in addition to various administrative buildings and churches.¹²⁶ Islanders owned and operated most of those businesses alongside the Etscheit family's various commercial interests. Both helped generate tax revenues far out of proportion to their numbers. As a result, intermittent disputes over revenue sharing between Kolonia and rural Nett erupted repeatedly throughout the 1950s. Coupled with the cultural differences that increasingly distinguished multiethnic Kolonia and a resistance to the control of the Nett traditional leadership, these disputes slowly coalesced into a movement for an independent Kolonia. That movement succeeded in severing the town from Nett Municipality in 1965, making Kolonia the territory's first chartered town.

FSM President Peter Christian has suggested that Kolonia's independence movement sprang from the "distinctly diversified people" who called it home.¹²⁷ Indeed,

¹²⁴ Toomin, *Black Robe*, 131

¹²⁵ Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 61.

¹²⁶ *Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1959), 3-7.

¹²⁷ Patrick Blank. *History of Kolohnia*. Micronesian Productions, 2015.

while Max Iriarte and his supporters strenuously defended the Nett chiefs' traditional rights to Kolonia Town, they were ultimately overcome by the shrewd appeals to democratic governance and egalitarianism politicians like Mokil's Bethwel Henry used to lobby the American regime. Those arguments overcame American critics as well, some of whom attacked the movement as an urbanist, outer Islander-led assault on Pohnpeian leadership and traditional agriculture.¹²⁸ Yet as the years went on, Kolonia's multiethnic remaking increasingly spilled beyond the town's boundaries. In Madolenihmw, a homesteading program created sizeable new communities of outer Islanders from Piis-Losap and Pingelap. In Nett and Sokehs, economic migration brought outer Islanders who boosted demand for imported foods and locally grown taro, particularly after the Kennedy era's funding surges.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, Kolonia's *mehn waii* continued to maintain their explicit public separateness until, finally, doing so was no longer tenable.

Clubs in counterpoint: the Ponape Women's Association and Club Kolonia

In the fall of 1959, a trio of women's clubs on Kosrae invited Pohnpei's educational administrator Paul McNutt to observe their meetings. In Tafunsak, McNutt saw 43 women laboring over pillowslips on hand-cranked sewing machines and selling items like piece quilts, children's clothing, tea towels, and hot pad holders. In Malem, 60 women of all ages staged a Liberation Day "water carnival" that pitted female

¹²⁸ "Municipal Charters of Saipan, Tinian & Kolonia Ponape w/ discussions on Kolonia as a part of Net Municipality & 1947 Naval Administration policy on municipal governments," 1947-1956, TTA, reel 563 [frame 35]; Island Affairs Officer to District Administrator, "Comments on 'Kolonia, Ponape, Problems of Urbanism and Political Jurisdiction,' May 14, 1953, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Notes 1953, SFP, 3.

¹²⁹ The homesteading program aimed to shift "excess" population from outer atolls and "return" land seized by Japan, though in practice that land was often kept from the traditional leaders who lost it in the first place. Richard Gibbs Emerick. "Homesteading on Ponape: A Study and Analysis of a Resettlement Program of the United States Trust Territory Government in Micronesia." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960), 2, 32; Jack Wheat. "Ponape District Agricultural Program," n.d., Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 4.

competitors against one in another in canoe races and swimming.¹³⁰ But in Lelu, amid Kosrae's smattering of administrative offices, the women's club wanted to demonstrate its ability to stage a formal American dinner. McNutt received a written invitation and returned his RSVP, and on entering the island's municipal building found two long tables covered with starched white tablecloths, candles, and silverware stamped "USN." Orange juice toasts were made, speeches and prayers delivered, and a choir began a soft serenade of "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms." Roasted chicken, rice, fried bananas, mashed potatoes, fried fish, sliced pork, taro, yams, a burnt sugar two layer cake, a pineapple upside-down cake, and two double crust pies were served. A suitably impressed McNutt wrote that the eight couples present ate in the accepted American fashion and "acted as if it were old stuff to them."¹³¹

At the center of these activities was Rose Makwelung, a dynamic I-Kiribati woman who had spent the previous half-decade nurturing women's clubs throughout the Ponape District. Operating independently of counterpart organizations in Palau or the Marshalls, the clubs varied in size, the composition of their membership, and the activities they sponsored. But each articulated a unique vision of indigenous modernity within a new sort of woman-centered public sphere. Those visions evolved within a loose Pacific-wide network of "women's interest" activism and helped push food production farther into women's spheres of influence. Pohnpei's women's clubs thus crystallized an

¹³⁰ For a brief discussion of Liberation Day's development in the postwar Trust Territory see: Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 13-14. For another account of the three-month visit Rose Makwelung's made to Kosrae to prepare its women's clubs before McNutt visited, see: "Learning to Do - At Kusaie." *Micronesian Reporter* VII, no. 5, (September-October 1959), 5.

¹³¹ Educational Administrator, Pohnpei to Reports Officer, Miss Cynthia Olsen, "Kusaie Women's Club," September 11, 1959, RGP, Box 9, Folder 109, 1-2. See also Paul McNutt, "A Day With Rose," *Micronesian Reporter* VI, no. 6, (November-December 1958), 15, 24 for a detailed account of another one of McNutt's encounters with one of Makwelung's events on Pohnpei.

emergent indigenous modernity similar to what Christine DeLisle argues developed on prewar Guam. There, she suggests, Chamorro women “aided and abetted” American colonialism even as they “constructed new forms of Chamorro consciousness and new notions of Chamorro progress” in relation to practices like speaking English, adopting American fashions, and interacting with colonial institutions.¹³²

Even so, Interior’s uncertainty about its own “civilizing mission” made abetting American colonialism a more ambiguous prospect than it had been on Guam, and lent Pohnpei’s women’s clubs greater freedom to develop new “modern” subjectivities. This flexibility was evident whether clubs chose to host cooking workshops, teach sanitation or childcare techniques, market traditional crafts and cloth wealth, or provide a social space for their members. But this same uncertainty also caused Pohnpei’s *mehn waii* families to grapple with their own modernity, and perhaps never more revealingly than when they gathered to drink and socialize at the rusting former Naval officer’s club known as Club Kolonia. There, they drew the sharpest line between themselves and the Islanders around them, who were not only barred from club membership but also legally prohibited from alcohol consumption. By the mid-1960s, ongoing tensions between Club Kolonia’s exclusivity and Interior’s democratizing rhetoric culminated in the club’s permanent closure. The concurrent ascendancy of Makwelung’s women’s clubs and the decline of Club Kolonia therefore points to the formation of a powerful new set of solidarities on postwar Pohnpei. Even as women’s clubs emerged as multicultural spaces celebrated by American staffers, embraced by a substantial cohort of Pohnpeian women, and capable of offering outer Islander women an alternative to traditional exchange, the

¹³² DeLisle, “Navy Wives/Native Lives,” 2.

tensions at the heart of the American colonial project also worked to break down the separate spheres that had so marked Kolonia's early American-era sociability.

Pohnpei's women's clubs have always been sustained by grassroots community support, but they owe much of their founding vision to Rose Makwelung. Makwelung was born Rose Kaumai in Kiribati. In 1915, when she was four years old, Kaumai was adopted by ABCFM missionary Jessie Hoppin and brought to Jaluit Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Hoppin was a traveling missionary for Kiribati, the Marshalls, and Kosrae, and teacher at the Kosrae mission school where Kaumai's birth parents were enrolled. From Jaluit Kaumai could make frequent visits to Kosrae, but in 1922 Hoppin sent her first to Claremont, California and then to Pasadena for schooling. Kaumai completed her secondary education in Pasadena, and returned to Jaluit to teach in 1932. Proudly bearing the influence of her American peers, she arrived back in the Marshalls with short hair, makeup, a vocabulary of American slang, and a trunk full of short dresses.

Kaumai was put in charge of the Jaluit mission girl's school shortly after her arrival. There, she introduced uniforms and a girl's athletic program and allowed students to cut their hair short. "When the girls saw my hair," she later told the *Micronesian Reporter*, "they also wanted theirs short. I said, 'why not?'" Kaumai also caught Jaluit's attention by playing tennis in gym bloomers, and responded to her students' interest by ordering enough material to make them for the entire school. Other than opposition from missionaries like the Australian Carl Heine, she faced little community resistance in implementing these changes. "When I came back," she recalled, "I noticed there already had been some change. But I was the first native to practice those things and they didn't seem to object." Within a few years, Kaumai was in Kosrae and firmly established at the

mission school at Mwot, where she married the Kosraean pastor John Makwelung. She remained there until 1943, spending most of the balance of the war at Lelu's colonial settlement teaching Japanese to Banaban agricultural workers and their children.

After the war, Makwelung quickly rose through the ranks at education to become one of the Trust Territory's highest-ranking Islander officials. She was superintendent of Kosrae's elementary schools during the Navy era, a teacher on Pohnpei by 1952, and assistant superintendent of Pohnpei's schools, Ponape District's adult education supervisor, and the district's economic and political advisor by the end of the decade.¹³³

But her public work was most profoundly shaped by her role as delegate to the 1954 Pan-Pacific Women's Association meeting in Manila, where the organization's support for locally based women's clubs drew her toward encouraging women's participation in public life.¹³⁴ Within a year, five women's clubs were holding regular meetings at Kolonia: a Kapingamarangi club, a Ngatikese club, a Pohnpeian club, and a combined Pingelapese-Mokilese group. These groups soon incorporated as the Ponape Women's Association. As club membership grew from 120 women in five local chapters to 200 women in thirteen chapters by 1959, Makwelung remained actively involved: turning up

¹³³ Jessie Hoppin. "Letter to the Editor." *The Friend* CXVI, no. 1, January 1, 1946, 13. "Interview: Rose Kaumai Mackwelung," *Micronesian Reporter* XIX, no. 1 (First Quarter, 1971), 2-8; Educational Administrator, Ponape to Assistant Director of Education, "Additional Intermediate School Teacher," November 10, 1959, RGP, Box 9, Folder 111, 1; Educational Administrator, Ponape to District Administrator, "Annual Report," February 15, 1960, RGP, Box 9, Folder 114, 1.

¹³⁴ According to Fiona Paisley, the Pan-Pacific Women's Association was convened in 1928 to foster "an emotional as well as a political and intellectual response to the myriad changes being rapidly wrought by globalization and Westernization" in the Pacific. Its founders were women seeking to bridge a cultural internationalist ethos with the realities of the diverse racial and national origins of the group's members. The organization's name was changed in 1955 to incorporate its expanding involvement in Southeast Asia. The Trust Territory sent four delegates to the 1955 conference, three of whom were from Palau. Fiona Paisley, *Glamour in the Pacific: Cultural Internationalism and Race Politics in the Women's Pan-Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 1; Director of Education to High Commissioner, "Trust Territory Delegates to the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association Eighth Conference, Tokyo, Japan. August 20th – 31st, 1958), December 17, 1957, RGP, Box 7, Folder 88, 1.

at club meetings to teach English classes, helping to organize handicraft production, assisting with annual conventions, and arranging specialized workshops.¹³⁵

New cooking techniques were among a broad portfolio of skills the Ponape Women's Association worked to convey to its members. In 1962, for instance, Makwelung presided over an extensive six-week leadership program at the group's Kolonia clubhouse. The program featured short courses on government and the courts, land issues, schools, health and nutrition, cooperatives, soap making, handicraft techniques, cooking, sewing, and washing. It also aimed to train its members in regular daily habits and punctuality.¹³⁶ Clubs built these curricula around the contributions of their volunteer Islander and *mehn waii* teachers, but they also reflected Makwelung's ties to a broad network of mid-century "women's interest" advocates. Makwelung collaborated with territorial counterparts like Mary Lanwi of the Marshalls and Palau's Anastasia Ramarui on local projects, and joined them on networking, educational, and observational trips abroad. She returned to the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association meeting in Tokyo in 1958 and in 1961 traveled to a South Pacific Commission-hosted women's interest seminar in Western Samoa. Three years later, Makwelung embarked on a United Nations-funded tour of community development

¹³⁵ Although the Ponape District's women's clubs were unique for their close ties to the American regime there, women's organizations operated elsewhere in the territory as well. In Palau, for instance, club leader Emaimelei Bismark told *New York Times* reporter Robert Trumbull that Palau's women's clubs "led the movement" to revive taro production once it became clear that rice was harder to come by under the district's crippled postwar economy. "Ponape Women's Association." *Ponape-per (Ponape Intermediate School)*, September-December 1955, 7; Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 76, 168; Office of the District Administrator, *Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1959), 16; Educational Administrator, Ponape to Deputy High Commissioner, "Request for Transportation to Women's Club Convention," June 16, 1959, RGP, Box 8, Folder 106, 1; "Women of Ponape Are Stepping Forward," *Micronesian Reporter* IV, no. 6, (November-December 1956), 11-12, 22.

¹³⁶ Adult Education Supervisor to District Administrator, "Ponape Women's Leadership Course; report on," April 4, 1962, RGP, Box 11, Folder 127, 1-2.

projects in the Philippines, India, and Ceylon.¹³⁷ There, she demonstrated her eagerness to bring home knowledge produced in foreign colonial institutions, as when she enthused over the recipes for “delicious” tropical dishes and new techniques for coir fiber production she discovered on a visit to an industrial school in the Philippines.¹³⁸

Territorial staffers quickly embraced the Ponape Women’s Association and Makwelung’s work. Caught between the administration’s official refusal to intervene in “local custom” and their own distaste for the sexism they believed pervaded island societies, cosmopolitan Islander women like Makwelung seemed to represent an ideal mechanism to intervene vicariously in local gender relations.¹³⁹ *Mehn waii* celebrated the Ponape Women’s Association for drawing women “out of the taro patch and into community activities” even as their own regime tended to confine female staffers to secretarial and teaching positions regardless of their qualifications.¹⁴⁰ The association’s dual embrace of Western-style education and supposedly “lost native arts” like weaving

¹³⁷ Rose Makwelung, “Conference in Tokyo,” *Micronesian Reporter* VI, no. 6, (November-December 1958), 8-9, 21; “Training Seminar – Women’s Interests,” *Micronesian Reporter* IX, no. 2 (March-April 1961), 13; “Four Micronesians Awarded U.N. Fellowships,” *Micronesian Reporter* XII, no. 3 (April 1-May 15), 16; June Dena Winham, “The New Role of Women in Micronesia,” *Micronesian Reporter* XIV, no. 5, (October-November 1966), 22.

¹³⁸ “Rose Makwelung Tours Philippines,” *Ponape-per*, March 26, 1965, 2.

¹³⁹ Truk District Administrator Willard Muller, for instance, was deeply worried about American “fiddling” in extended family relations as well as the nature of family relations themselves. He frequently considered possibilities for discouraging practices such as spousal abuse, “women crawling in the presence of men,” and “spanking of wives” through the schools or by leveraging the interventions of local leaders during his tenure on Chuuk. Incidentally, Makwelung made her own sympathies with Western feminism explicit in a 1971 interview, musing, “I’m too old to head women’s lib... but we need it... If you ask me what Micronesia needs the most, the answer would be that we need more women educated so they can do more things along with the men.” Muller, *Faces of the Islands*, 85; “Ponape Women’s Association.” *Ponape-per (Ponape Intermediate School)*, September-December 1955, 7; “Interview: Rose Kaumai Mackwelung,” *Micronesian Reporter* XIX, no. 1 (First Quarter, 1971), 8.

¹⁴⁰ A few American women did hold positions of authority within the American regime of the 1950s, most notably longtime PICS principal Cy Pickerill. But officials also repeatedly hired untrained American “staff wives” to serve as classroom teachers, with predictably poor results. One staffer complained to Robert Gibson that the High Commissioner’s office staffed PICS by hiring, “the wife of any Tom Dick or Harry who happens to have a teaching certificate of some kind.” Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 74; “Ponape Women’s Association.” *Ponape-per (Ponape Intermediate School)*, September-December 1955, 7; “Education Conference: Truk District, Caroline Islands, From November 2 to November 8, 1953,” Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 42; George to Dr. Gibson, n.d., RGP, Box 4, Folder 56, 1.

and carving also helped assuage *mehn waii* anxieties over their culpability for carrying a potentially destructive modernity to island societies.¹⁴¹

These flirtations reflect the political roles women played in the territory, roles that often recalled the “militarized domesticity” Mire Koikari has observed in Cold War Okinawa. There, American women also hosted people-to-people cultural encounters, supported women’s clubs, and sponsored domestic science programming. As Koikari notes, these women fashioned their homes into “focal site[s] of imperial politics” and thereby helped rationalize and safeguard American Cold War expansionism.¹⁴² Yet here again, waters in the Trust Territory were more muddied. Less sure of their mission and more distant from a military presence, territorial staffers found themselves as likely to celebrate Pohnpei’s women’s clubs for being building blocks of political independence as they were to praise them for drawing the islands closer to the United States.

Islander women understood the clubs in different terms. While club meetings offered outer Islanders a unique opportunity for multicultural sociability that was distinct from Pohnpei’s feasting and exchange system, they also joined Pohnpeians in drawing on club resources to help them adjust to American rule. The association’s published recipes reflect this adaptive approach. Making innovative use of ingredients and cooking methods, the recipes demonstrate a more sparing reliance on imported foods than the fusion dishes *mehn waii* developed for their own use. A 1962 recipe for pumpkin pudding, for instance, calls for mashed pumpkin, lime, cornstarch, and salt to be poured into a baking pan, baked in an oven or an *uhmw*, and served with thick coconut milk.

¹⁴¹ Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 74; *Teachers Directory and Visitors Hand Book* (Kolonias: Ponape Department of Education, 1959), 7.

¹⁴² Mire Koikari. *Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa: Women, Militarized Domesticity, and Transnationalism in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4-5.

With Japanese-introduced pumpkin and local produce, a coconut milk glaze that evoked both a 1950s American casserole and Pohnpeian dishes like *piahia*, and its suitability for both *perehn kuk* and *uhmw* preparation, the pudding quietly signaled the embrace of a modernity markedly distinct from the mimicry of Americanness some at Interior envisioned.¹⁴³ This sort of responsiveness ultimately enabled the clubs to outlast both Interior's fleeting political needs and Makwelung's involvement, and helps account for their enduring presence both on Pohnpei and within its diaspora today.

The Ponape Women's Association's refusal to adhere to a more assimilationist agenda made it quite distinct from Club Kolonia, whose very reason for being was to reproduce a comforting American sociability as faithfully as was reasonably possible. Club Kolonia stood on a hillside between the district's administrative offices and the ring of staff housing known as "the circle," nearby the present-day causeway. Hosted within a Quonset the staff newsletter *Ponape-per* jokingly described as a "dingy cave," the 1950s version of the club featured a bar and recreation room done up in tropical décor that was open on the northeast side to provide a view of the harbor.¹⁴⁴ Bylaws adopted in 1951 identified the club's mission as providing "recreational and social activities" for district employees. Full membership was limited to the territory's "family head and bachelor" staff, although family members were eligible for associate membership. Permanent nonindigenous district residents could also be granted guest privileges.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ponape Women's Association, "Favorite Foods of Micronesia," *Micronesian Reporter* X, no. 6, (November-December 1962), 29; Jessamyn Neuhaus, "Is Meatloaf for Men? Gender and Meatloaf Recipes, 1920-1960" in *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food*, ed. Sherrie Inness (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 101-102.

¹⁴⁴ Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 59; Office of the District Administrator, *Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1959), 4; "You Did it! You Did It!" *Ponape-per*, February 3, 1961, 4.

¹⁴⁵ For the club's purposes, territorial employees included nonindigenous staff of the Island Trading Company, the Weather Bureau, and the United States government in addition to the district itself. "Ponape

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, visitors to Club Kolonia and the territory's other repurposed officer's clubs repeatedly noted the centrality of alcohol consumption to club life and staff sociability more broadly. While Club Kolonia entertained visiting officials, hosted holiday gatherings and family-friendly events, held regular movie screenings, organized card games, and maintained a lending library, members made most frequent use of the club during its daily cocktail hour. Groups of self-described "Kolonials" then gathered "en masse" to drink and dine from a limited menu of items like hamburgers, hot dogs, and sashimi. The liquor they consumed was available at a two-thirds discount over American rates: at prices so low, journalist Willard Price was told, "you can't afford not to drink." Price himself concluded that the territory's staffers seemed to be completing "Bachelor of Alcoholism" degrees in a "School of Hard Liquor" after he attended a series of dinner parties at which drinks and conversation flowed freely into the night.¹⁴⁶

Club Kolonia also hosted regular monthly parties, many of which were themed. By the early 1960s, advertisements for these gatherings began to appear in the *Ponapeper*. There was a shipwreck party where costumed guests hunted for "buried treasure" such as coupons for free liquor, and a beachcomber-themed event featuring a "ribald" play and "wahine" dancers from Saipan, New Zealand, and Hawai'i. Guests at the club's corral dance were encouraged to dress in "farm duds, cowboy dress, and maybe even a couple friendly Indian costumes," while attendees at a "suki-yaki" party wore *yukata*,

Patter." *Micronesian Monthly* I, no. 1, (November 1951), 13; "Club Kolonia Bylaws," April 23, 1952, Series 3 Ponape, Box 10, Record of the Ponape Congress, SFP, 1952, 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ Willard Price, *America's Paradise Lost* (New York: John Day, 1966), 176; Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 28; Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, February 2, 1984, folder 4, transcript, KPI, 13.

kimono, and *happi*.¹⁴⁷ These costume parties often relied on imagery familiar from American Pacificism or the imperial pasts of Japan and the United States. In doing so, they recalled a long history of efforts to “imagine and materialize distinctive American identities” through costumed Indian play. But they resonated especially with the new allure “authentic” Indianness had found in Cold War America, where it had become a tool to cope with a perceived loss of personal identities and the anxieties of industrial and postindustrial life.¹⁴⁸ This same pursuit of authenticity had led some of the territory’s more adventurous staffers to seek their positions in the first place. But as they found themselves pursuing an indeterminate mission in an age increasingly skeptical of the colonial project, staffers found in Club Kolonia a bridge between the flawed modernism they feared might follow them to the islands and the paradise they had hoped to find there. This may help to explain why the mode of sociability Club Kolonia offered seemed to many staffers to feel indispensable, almost urgent.

The Trust Territory barred Islanders from alcohol consumption until the early 1960s.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, clubs had been informally issuing guest passes to a handful of

¹⁴⁷ “Exotic Dances, Good Food, Ribald Drama, at Tomorrow’s ‘Do,’” *Ponape-per*, March 25, 1960, 3; “Club Kolonia Party Saturday, April 23,” *Ponape-per*, April 15, 1960, 4; “Suki-Yaki Party,” *Ponape-per* 7, no. 15, April 16, 1965, 4; Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 28.

¹⁴⁸ Philip J. Deloria. *Playing Indian*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 7, 129.

¹⁴⁹ The territory’s anti-alcohol legislation was in part a legacy of the late 19th century, when colonial Africa’s alcohol trade became a “touchstone” for global anxieties over the harms of empire. This broad unease with alcohol’s impact on the colonized body led American reformers of the time to cite Indian reservations as cautionary tales for the dangers Westernization posed to colonized peoples, and to offer the US government’s longstanding policy of imposed temperance there as a model for overseas territories like the Philippines. It also led the League of Nations to stipulate that indigenous residents of its Class C mandates be barred from consuming intoxicating beverages. But by the time these two currents converged in the Trust Territory, the pendulum had begun to swing in the opposite direction. The US federal government’s attempts to impose temperance on Indian reservations date back to the formation of the Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1832. Leonard Mason, interview by Karen Peacock, February 15, 1984, folder 3, transcript, KPI, 6; Ian Tyrrell. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 131, 133; Jill E. Martin, “‘The Greatest Evil’: Interpretations of Indian Prohibition Laws, 1832-1953.” *Great Plains Quarterly* 23, no. 1

high-ranking Islanders as far back as the Navy era, recalling the selective enforcement of alcohol law under the *Nan'yō'chō*. Visitors to Majuro's comparatively integrated Coconut Rendezvous Club could thus find men like Dwight Heine imbibing with Navy officers during the 1940s and with Interior staffers throughout the 1950s, and may have spotted a half dozen Islanders granted the same privilege in each of the territory's other district centers.¹⁵⁰ Unsanctioned drinking was even more commonplace outside of club settings. Pohnpeians regularly consumed a homebrewed concoction called "yeast" throughout the postwar era, and an associate justice for the territory's high court estimated that fully 50% of Chuuk's criminal charges and convictions during the late 1950s stemmed from drinking violations.¹⁵¹ But when the Bureau of Indian affairs devolved authority of alcohol regulation to tribal governments in 1953, it must have seemed only a matter of time before the territory's district congresses were granted the same authority. When that power came in 1962, Heinrich Iriarte of Nett swiftly introduced legislation in the Ponape Congress that further devolved alcohol policy to municipalities, though he exempted *sakau* from regulation.¹⁵²

Even before alcohol deregulation and the Kennedy administration's desegregation of federally operated recreation facilities in 1961, Club Kolonia had begun to squabble

(2003): 38; Japanese Government. *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Sea Islands under Japanese Mandate for the Year 1922* (Tokyo, 1933), 11; Hezel, *Strangers*, 215.

¹⁵⁰ Leonard Mason, interview by Karen Peacock, February 15, 1984, folder 3, transcript, KPI, 6; Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 37-38.

¹⁵¹ Ann Fischer, "Saturday May 2, '53" in *Carolines Field Notes 1957-58*, Series 3 Ponape, Box 13, SFP, 96; Toomin, *Black Robe*, 151.

¹⁵² The Trust Territory's High Commissioner approved the Ponape Congress' "hard liquor bill" in 1962. The legislation required municipalities to secure the approval of a majority of voters before amending local regulations on hard alcohol. Kolonia Town was the first municipality to approve the sale of hard alcohol, in the fall of 1962. The town's first liquor licenses were granted to Club Kolonia, Recula Germinaro (wife of Public Works staffer Frank Germinaro), Inosuke Yamada, and the town's mayor Martin Christian. Ponape District Congress, *Tiepen Kawelipak en Pohnpei District Congress: Eighth Session, April 26-May 4, 1962* (Ponape District: Education Department, 1962), 18-22; "Kolonia Town to Vote on Liquor," *Ponape-per IV*, no. 33, August 17, 1962, 2; "Kolonia Liquor Almost Ready," *Ponape-per IV*, No. 37, September 14, 1962, 6; "ABC Grants Liquor Licenses," *Ponape-per IV*, no. 42, October 10, 1962, 2.

over admitting sponsored Micronesians as members.¹⁵³ In June of 1961, a chagrined staffer named Diane Sammet complained to the *Ponape-per* that the club's definition of "private" was so vague that, "visitors from anywhere in the world excepting the islands of Micronesia are welcome." "Why," she asked, "have we chosen to restrict only the Micronesians—the very people we have come here to teach and learn from and with whom to be neighbors?" Six months of debate, polling, and editorials followed, and by the end of 1961 the club had adopted new bylaws that made any sponsored applicant eligible for membership.¹⁵⁴ By 1962, the club boasted 16 Micronesian members, most of whom, the *Ponape-per* assured its readers, "are busy each day bending their elbows at the ping-pong table and billiard table and not the bar."¹⁵⁵ Four years later a new club charter expanded membership to any district resident willing to pay a small initiation fee.¹⁵⁶

Club Kolonia's gradual decline occurred amid a series of policy reversals that transformed the Trust Territory during the early 1960s. After receiving a critical report from the 1961 United Nations Visiting Mission, an embarrassed Washington swiftly eased visa restrictions, placed the Northern Marianas under Interior control, and doubled annual appropriations. The regime also embarked on an accelerated economic program aimed at seducing Islanders into voting themselves into permanent association with the United States.¹⁵⁷ District centers like Kolonia were suddenly overrun with a new sort of Interior official Robert Gibson derisively called the "hurry-up boys."¹⁵⁸ These officials

¹⁵³ "Club Kolonia Elects Forester, Iwaniec, Ownbey, Sammet," *Ponape-per*, June 10, 1960, 1. See also: "Letter to the Editor," *Ponape-per*, January 27, 1961, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Diane Sammet, "Letter to the Editor," *Ponape-per*, June 2, 1961, 3; "Club Votes in New By-Laws," *Ponape-per*, December 15, 1961.

¹⁵⁵ "Club Kolonia Chit Chat," *Ponape-per*, March 16, 1962, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Office of the District Administrator, *Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1966), 4.

¹⁵⁷ Hezel, *Strangers*, 299-301.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Gibson, interview by Karen Peacock, April 18, 1984, folder 9, transcript, KPI, 6.

presided over a broad expansion of the colonial bureaucracy, empowered territorial and district legislatures, expanded educational opportunities for Islanders, and deployed a surge of Peace Corps volunteers to the islands. As a result, Kolonia's population doubled to nearly 3,000 residents between 1963 and 1970. With its dirt roads and profusion of bars, some of which featured swinging saloon doors and hitching posts, the town began to evoke Wild West Shows for its *mehn waii* visitors. But with its denser and increasingly diverse population, more diffuse social scene, and a rift in the *mehn waii* community created by large contingents of Peace Corps volunteers who avoided Interior staffers socially and preferred life outside of town, the town no longer seemed in need of a private club. Club Kolonia was shuttered in the early 1970s.¹⁵⁹

The Ponape Women's Association and Club Kolonia each bet on a unique vision of what it meant to be modern on 1950s Pohnpei, and club members shaped each institution according to their needs. But while the solidarities fostered by the island's women's clubs endure into the present day, Club Kolonia's reliance on a model of the colonial enclave as retreat for the colonizer and example to the colonized proved more fragile than staffers imagined. Ironically, the separate spheres and alcohol-fueled sociability that had so defined 1950s staff life became potent lines of attack during the 1960s. Critics took staffers' alleged susceptibility to alcoholism as confirmation of their suspicions that the territory was being run by carousing guardians of desultory, impotent bureaucracies. Anthony Solomon, for instance, later described much of the territorial staff

¹⁵⁹ Club Kolonia appears on the territory's 1970 welcome guide for new staffers, but was removed from the map for the 1972 edition. Ken Rehg. Interview by author. Honolulu, Hawai'i, July 26, 2014; Ann Nakano, *Broken Canoe: Conversations and Observations in Micronesia* (New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 25; Office of the District Administrator, *Kaselehlia: Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1970), 6b; *Kaselehlia: Welcome to Ponape* (Ponape: Ponape Information Center, 1972), 8c; Thomas Panholzer and Rufino Mauricio, *Place Names of Pohnpei Island, Including And (Ant) and Pakin Atolls* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2003), 121; Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 83

as alcoholics and “romantic or drop-out types” unable to tolerate life in “that God forsaken territory” for more than a few years without resorting to heavy drinking.¹⁶⁰ Those critiques were often unfair, but they did have an impact. And, as Kolonia developed and grew more urbanized, some of the *mehn waii* staffers who remained lamented the “close-knit feeling of the smaller community” they had lost.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

The alarm staffers like William Vitarelli raised over the magnetic power imported foods like spaghetti and meatballs seemed to hold over Americans, and what that power might portend for Islanders, changed along with the economic reforms and evolving *mehn waii* sensibilities of the 1960s and 1970s. But it never entirely disappeared. In fact, as the territory’s independence movement collided with a dramatic spike in imports, deliberations over the repercussions of imported goods broadened markedly. On the one hand, once the Kennedy administration stated its intention that the territory remain under permanent US control, a handful of Interior officials began for the first time to speak “in an extravagant way about how nothing but American movies and Coca-Cola and McDonalds hamburgers should be served to anybody in Micronesia.” Others pursued a range of development projects aimed at boosting exports, hoping to reduce the territory’s

¹⁶⁰ Even the more sympathetic former Director of Territorial Affairs Ruth Van Cleve noted that the territorial administration of the 1950s was “not a crackerjack organization,” adding that she believed Interior would have had much to learn from the British Colonial Service in addressing the territory’s ongoing staffing issues. Anthony M. Solomon, interview by Howard P. Willens, July 14, 1994 in *Oral Histories*, eds. Willens and Siemer, vol. 7, 82; Ruth G. Van Cleve, interview by Howard P. Willens, June 21, 1994 and June 23, 1994 in *Oral Histories*, eds. Willens and Siemer, vol. 8, 30.

¹⁶¹ Braden, *Homesick in Paradise*, 91

growing trade imbalance rather than fight a losing battle against imports.¹⁶² On the other hand, concerns over import dependence increasingly emerged from the territory's independence movement, particularly insofar as those imports might complicate an independent Micronesia's political relationships with foreign powers.

In spite of the worries *mehn waii* expressed throughout the 1940s and 1950s, imported goods did not possess the power to shatter island cultures, which adapted to new introductions much as they had in the past. Even so, just as the US Navy's cultural security initiatives crumbled under the pressure of consumer demand, *mehn waii* hopes of averting the harms of colonial rule by circumscribing Islander access to imported goods ultimately proved untenable. In attempting to hold economic development down to "the Micronesians' own capacity to absorb" while accommodating its civilian staff, the American regime reinscribed prewar colonial hierarchies rather than effacing them.¹⁶³ As a result, imported goods retained a certain prestige value throughout the postwar era.

That prestige was neither powerful enough to supplant feast foods like yams or pigs nor did it much resemble the obsessive desire for American goods *mehn waii* often assumed motivated Islander consumerism. But, along with the convenience of fast-cooking foods like rice and the advocacy of groups like the Ponape Women's Association, the prestige associated with imported goods did help maintain demand for imports through the 1950s. Once funding surges blew open access to the island's cash economy in the 1960s, stores were free to exploit the pent-up demand of the previous two

¹⁶² Van Cleve is referring to John Kirwan here. Kirwan later became Assistant Director of the Office of US Territories. Ruth G. Van Cleve, interview by Howard P. Willens, June 21, 1994 and June 23, 1994 in *Oral Histories*, eds. Willens and Siemer, vol. 8, 13.

¹⁶³ Trumbull is quoting Deputy High Commissioner Eugene Gilmartin here. Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust*, 213.

decades. Balancing that demand with the imperatives of Pohnpei's sovereignty became an urgent, and increasingly fraught, project over the following years.

CHAPTER 4: BREADFRUIT AND RICE: SOVEREIGNTY, SUBSISTENCE, AND THE RICE REVOLUTION

At Salapwuk, a small community located on an upland plateau of Kitti, a series of narrow earthen mounds and trenches have long been guarded as sacred sites. According to oral historians, the features mark symbolic pathways that link subsistence resources like breadfruit, yams, and fish to one another and bind Salapwuk to the rest of the island. One of these pathways is the *Allap en Rahk*, the Great Path of the Season of Plenty. On one side of that path lies Salapwuk, Pohnpei's great hearth (*rasalap*), whose deep history as a ritual center ties it to labor-intensive root crops like yams and the season of scarcity (*isol*). On the other side lies the island of Temwen, Pohnpei's *isilap* (forehead), whose role as political and economic hub and orientation toward the east winds link it to tree crops like breadfruit and the season of plenty (*rahk*). The deities responsible for regulating the *isol* and *rahk* seasons and the crops associated with them traverse the *Allap en Rahk*, forming a vascular system that sustains subsistence and prestige production and safeguards critical resources like breadfruit, Pohnpei's most important staple food.¹

Breadfruit is unique. It is so abundant that a tree may produce for 50 years, yielding 50 to 150 large, starchy fruits annually, with some varieties yielding as many as 700.² It requires so little labor that Pohnpeians speak of it as a gift from the gods, and recognize breadfruit feast presentations as a sign of divine abundance rather than a

¹ Rufino Mauricio, "Ideological Bases for Power and Leadership on Pohnpei, Micronesia: Perspectives from Archaeology and Oral History." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1993), 191, 200, 239, 246; Adelino Lorens and Lois Englberger, "Conservation and Documentation of Breadfruit Cultivars in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia" (First International Breadfruit Symposium on Research and Development, Fiji, 2007), 1.

² Brian A. Meilleur. *Hawaiian Breadfruit: Ethnobotany, Nutrition and Human Ecology*. (Honolulu: College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2004), 3; Diane Ragone. *Breadfruit: Artocarpus Altilis (Parkinson) Fosberg*. Promoting the Conservation and Use of Underutilized and Neglected Crops 10. (Rome: International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, 1997), 64.

reflection of the giver's diligence.³ It is so versatile that it can be eaten at any stage of its development: steamed, boiled, fried, baked, roasted in fires or stone ovens, consumed raw when very ripe, preserved in pits for as long as a century, or fed to pigs.⁴ It is so adaptable that Pohnpeians identify one major and four minor breadfruit seasons and as many as 130 unique breadfruit cultivars.⁵ Anthropologist Glenn Petersen has even speculated that hybridization and a "quantum increase" in breadfruit stocks after 1000 C.E. so reduced Pohnpei's labor needs that it fostered a "breadfruit revolution," facilitating the large-scale social mobilization necessary to build the monumental stone complexes of Nan Madol.⁶ But during the independence movements of the 1960s and 1970s, breadfruit took on a new role: as the most potent symbol of Pohnpei's food sovereignty, particularly when counterposed against the surging power of imported rice.

By 1960, rice was an established staple with a deep history on Pohnpei, but only the minority of families dependent on the cash economy consumed it regularly. When the Kennedy administration abandoned the slow-paced reforms of the 1950s for a program of rapid economic development, however, access to this previously finite commodity was democratized, making rice a true staple of Pohnpeian eating for the first time. Initially,

³ Akitoshi Shimizu. "Chieftdom and the Spatial Classification of the Life-World: Everyday Life, Subsistence and the Political System on Ponape," in *Islanders and Their Outside World*. (Tokyo: Committee for Micronesian Research, St. Paul's University, 1982), 189.

⁴ Craig Elevitch, Diane Ragone, and Ian Cole. *Breadfruit Production Guide: Recommended Practices for Growing, Harvesting, and Handling*. (Kalaheo, Kauai: Breadfruit Institute, National Tropical Botanical Garden, 2014), 31-32; Maureece J. Levin, "Breadfruit Fermentation in Pohnpei, Micronesia: Site Formation, Archaeological Visibility, and Interpretive Strategies." *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 12, no. 4 (2017), 3.

⁵ Agriculturalist Bill Raynor also estimated that roughly 800,000 breadfruit trees were growing on Pohnpei at the time, and that those trees were producing over 177 million pounds of breadfruit annually. Bill Raynor. "Structure, Production, and Seasonality in an Indigenous Pacific Island Agroforestry System: A Case Example on Pohnpei Island, FSM." (M.S. thesis, University of Hawai'i, 1989), 41, 58; Diane Ragone and Bill Raynor. "Breadfruit and Its Traditional Cultivation and Use on Pohnpei" in *Ethnobotany of Pohnpei: Plants, People, & Island Culture*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 73.

⁶ Glenn Petersen. *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration, and Political Organization*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 57-58.

the acceleration in development and its concomitant funding surge were components of a calculated strategy to entice Islanders into voting for permanent association with the United States. But as Washington worked to address domestic civil rights concerns by equalizing access to public resources, federal programs increasingly seemed to find their way to the territory as a matter of course, bringing with them cash and food aid that expanded the reach of rice consumption even further.

Among the unintended results of these reforms was a series of impacts to local economies, political systems, cultures, and health so far-reaching they might be called a rice revolution. Pohnpei's rice revolution roughly mirrored the breadfruit revolution of a thousand years prior, delivering labor reductions to the subsistence economy, offering peace of mind during food security crises, reshaping daily eating, and redirecting agricultural labor into wage work or prestige production. But unlike breadfruit, whose nutritional value was probably always marginal to its popularity, overreliance on rice and processed imports like corned beef and ramen also carried significant costs to public health. The full scope of those costs gradually became apparent during the 1970s, as reductions in exercise due to sedentary office work and automobile transportation were added to changes in diet. But the risk to Pohnpei's food sovereignty was always the era's primary concern, as the rice revolution's deep entanglements with imported goods and U.S. aid threatened to lure voters toward Washington at the very moment the territory's independence movements reached their climax.

The term food sovereignty was coined in 1996 by the transnational peasant movement *La Vía Campesina*. It therefore postdates all of the major turning points of this chapter: the 1978 formation of the Federated States of Micronesia, the end of the

trusteeship, and the 1986 ratification of the Compact of Free Association with the United States. Yet food sovereignty's emphasis on "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems" and its opposition to global corporate trade and food regimes do help to illuminate the relations of power at the heart of Pohnpei's struggles over its future political status and food system.⁷ Elsewhere in the Pacific, scholars have noted resonances between the independence movements of the 1970s and 1980s and food sovereignty's later emphasis on self-reliance, its focus on land issues, and its roots in agricultural practice.⁸ But Pohnpei also maintained a distinct food sovereignty formulation of its own, grounded in the island's enduring ethic of individual, family, and community self-care and the breadfruit-centered agroforests that sustain it.⁹

Food security, on the other hand, was a broadly used term in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet here too, Pohnpei and its outer islands maintained distinct food security formulations that powerfully shaped attitudes on local food systems and the region's sovereignty. The term food security was coined after the world food crises of 1972-73, and has come to be defined in terms of "individual access, rather than state-level availability" with an emphasis on "neoliberal discourse and ideology... free markets, and a loss of centrality for the nation-state."¹⁰ In fact, with the exception of the Navy's restrictions on "luxuries" during the 1940s, fidelity to free markets and consumer choice has constrained pre- and post-independence Micronesian governments from vigorous making interventions in

⁷ Vía Campesina. "Nyéléni declaration on food sovereignty: 27 February 2007, Nyéléni Village, Sélingué, Mali." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36, no. 3 (2009), 673.

⁸ Jagjit Kaur Plahe, Shona Hawkes, and Sunil Ponnampuruma, "The Corporate Food Regime and Food Sovereignty in the Pacific Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 320-321.

⁹ Glenn Petersen, "A Cultural Analysis of the Ponapean Independence Vote in the 1983 Plebiscite," *Pacific Studies* 9, no. 1 (November 1985), 21.

¹⁰ Jagjit Kaur Plahe et al., "Corporate Food Regime and Food Sovereignty," 320-321.

import markets. Risks to individual food access from poverty or natural disaster have shaped policymaking as well. But the region's long legacy of ruinous natural disasters and Pohnpei's rapidly changing economy also made the reliable availability of imported foods a matter of broad public concern, and many voters kept the potential risks to community food access at top of mind as they considered their political future.

This chapter explores Pohnpei's food sovereignty and food security formulations, the emotional controversies over its school lunches and an anti-poverty feeding program known as Needy Family, and the increasingly visible impacts a century's worth of interventions in the island's food system were beginning to have on Pohnpeian and outer Islander bodies. In the run-up to independence, national and district-level legislators grew progressively more empowered, and a "Micronesianization" policy installed growing numbers of Islanders in administrative positions. The administration's foreign character thus grew progressively more scrambled as independence approached, and as Micronesian leaders carried institutions, infrastructures, money economies, and legal precedents designed by an occupying government into an uncertain postcolonial era. The nation they made, and their contestations over breadfruit and rice, food security and food sovereignty, has deeply shaped Pohnpei's food system up to the present moment.

Securing food, securing sovereignty: breadfruit, natural disasters, and Pohnpei rice

As U.S. funding surged, development programs proliferated, and possibilities for political independence in Micronesia crystalized through the 1960s and 1970s, enthusiasm for potential export crops like pepper, cacao, and rice increasingly gripped Pohnpei's agriculturalists. In 1960, the agriculture station planted a one-acre test plot of

Sarawak pepper imported from Fiji. Three years later, when the pepper began to bear, Pohnpei's district administrator called for major investments in pepper production, noting that potential income per acre of pepper not only surpassed copra but was "not exceeded by any major tropical crop." A small group of Islander and *mehn waii* stakeholders then worked to identify export markets and mounted a foreign advertising effort, their marketing materials promoting Pohnpei pepper as the "freshest and most wholesome" gourmet pepper in the world. By 1972, Pohnpei's farmers were cultivating as many as 40,000 pepper vines on roughly 50 acres across the island. Over the next two decades the industry ebbed and flowed before finally reaching its peak, and then crashing.¹¹

When pepper was riding high, hundreds of Pohnpei's farmers were drawn to the crop. Among them was a man in Wapar, at Madolenihmw's southwestern edge. Esteemed around Pohnpei for the beauty and quality of his breadfruit, he resolved instead to become Madolenihmw's largest pepper producer, trading on his reputation as a farmer for prestige as a businessman. He cleared a three-acre field and two additional acres of land, felled his breadfruit trees, and replaced them with pepper vines growing in full sun, just as the bottom fell out of the pepper industry. In the end, only a vast field of paddle grass remained. Again, word of the farmer spread, but this time as a cautionary tale, a warning against forsaking the dependability of breadfruit for the uncertainty of

¹¹ Micronesian Spice Association, "The Spicy Story of Pepper" in "Pepper Development Program – Special Project in Ponape Islands," Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Archives, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (hereafter TTA), reel 213; Robert Halvorsen to High Commissioner, 10 October, 1963 in "Pepper Development Program – Special Project in Ponape Islands," TTA, reel 213, 5; William Mott. *Feasibility Study: Commercial Production of Black Pepper in Ponape, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*. (San Francisco: Agland Investment Services, 1979), 11. See: Glenn Petersen. "Ponapean Agriculture and Economy: Politics, Prestige and Problems of Commercialization in the Eastern Caroline Islands." (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1976), 245-250.

commercial enterprise.¹² Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Pohnpei rang with cautionary tales of leveled breadfruit trees, uprooted yams, and farmers whose flattened agroforests were left to bake in the sun. These stories framed a potent counterargument against the export-centered food security vision of many of the island's agriculturalists, grounded in a food sovereignty formulation that held self-reliance and breadfruit at its core.

Negotiations over balancing the imperative to keep Pohnpei food secure with the opportunity to recover its sovereignty represented perhaps the most fundamental political tension on the island during the post-Eisenhower era. Yet the Kennedy administration's reforms in the Trust Territory were primarily aimed neither at strengthening food security nor at eroding food sovereignty. Instead, Washington hoped to draw the territory permanently into its orbit, maintaining the U.S. military's strategic position there while placating international, domestic, and local critics of its 1950s-era governance. As Assistant Interior Secretary Harlan Cleveland later put it, the administration hoped "to prevent a complete independence, but also to prevent a dependent status that would be so frankly colonial that it would be vulnerable to criticism from elsewhere."¹³

Though widely seen as a response to a damning report from the 1961 United Nations Visiting Mission, Assistant Interior Secretary John Carver instead attributed the policy reversal to the administration's broader efforts to equalize access to public resources and facilities: "the Kennedy spirit of [U.S. territories] being part of the US of A and we've got to have standards out there of education and other things which were

¹² Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

¹³ Harlan Cleveland, interview by Howard P. Willens, August 9, 1993 in *Oral Histories of the Northern Mariana Islands: Political Life and Developments (1945-1995)*, eds. Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer (Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands: CNMI Division of Historic Preservation, 2004), vol. 2, 244.

consistent with it being part of the United States.”¹⁴ But Washington’s clearest articulation of its intentions appeared in a secret 1962 executive order, which proposed a “greatly accelerated program of political, economic, and social development” that might eventually persuade Islanders to exercise the “informed... realistic” choice of voting themselves into a permanent territorial relationship with the United States.¹⁵

This persuasion was aimed at a plebiscite to be held at an indeterminate future date, and was often carried out by American officials who believed they were actually preparing the territory for independence.¹⁶ It took the form of initiatives that cut across island life, from investments in education and infrastructure to economic development, the formation of the territory-wide Congress of Micronesia, and the deployment of the Peace Corps. On the one hand, nearly all of these reforms impinged on Pohnpei’s agroforests in some way, from public education that seemed to devalue traditional agricultural knowledge and labor to jobs that drew Pohnpeians from their farms and boosted demand for imported foods. On the other hand, the American regime’s heightened presence and resources revealed longstanding Pohnpeian anxieties over the ability of agroforest and fisheries resources to maintain food security in times of crisis. Thus Pohnpei’s agroforests, outwardly divorced from Cold War geopolitics and

¹⁴ John A. Carver, interview by Howard P. Willens, July 29, 1994 in *Oral Histories*, eds. Willens and Siemer, vol. 2, 166. See: United Nations Trusteeship Council. *Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*. Twenty-seventh session. 1 June-19 July 1961. (New York: United Nations, 1961).

¹⁵ John F. Kennedy, “National Security Action Memorandum No. 145,” 18 April, 1962 in Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer. *From the White House: documents on the Northern Mariana Islands and Micronesia collected from the presidential libraries, 1945-1995*. (Washington: Wilsie Co., 2005.) CD-ROM.

¹⁶ See: Anthony Solomon, *A Report by the U.S. Government Survey Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*. (Washington, 1963), vol. 1, S-7.

diplomatic deliberations, increasingly seemed to operate as silent battlegrounds over the island's food security and future sovereignty.

In fact, threats to Micronesia's short and medium-term food security were real and often quite urgent, most of them resulting from typhoons, tsunamis, and droughts. Among other disasters, the post-Eisenhower era saw Typhoon Jean, whose 190-mile per hour winds wreaked "indescribable devastation" on Saipan in 1968, and Typhoon Lola, which in 1972 swamped Pingelap with three giant 30-foot waves and ruined up to 80% of the crops on Mokil.¹⁷ There was a severe drought that left Kapingamarangi desperately short of food and water in 1973, and Typhoon Pamela, which struck the Mortlocks with such force in 1976 that 1,500 Mortlockese requested resettlement to Pohnpei.¹⁸ In 1983, a drought brought Madolenihmw less than four inches of rainfall in eight months. At the Jesuit-run Ponape Agriculture & Trade School, water shortages produced a "long and seemingly never-ending crisis," requiring drinking and cooking water to be trucked in, killing most of the school's crops in the ground, and changing the lush greenery of its campus to a sickly shade of brown.¹⁹

Natural disasters of this sort had been a fixture of island life since Pohnpei's earliest settlement, and as a result Pohnpeians and the region's outer Islanders maintained a range of strategies to mitigate their impacts. Pohnpei's intricately multicropped agroforests intentionally incorporated as many unique cultivars of major crops as possible,

¹⁷ Ruth Van Cleve, Director of the Office of Territories in Washington, happened to be on Saipan during Typhoon Jean, and cabled this message back to her office. "District Digest." *Micronesian Reporter* XVI, no. 2 (1968), 42; "Ponape Hit by Lola's High Wind and Waves." *Highlights* (June 15, 1972), 1.

¹⁸ "Briefly." *Highlights* (October 15, 1973), 7; "Relocation to Ponape Planned." *Highlights* (June 1, 1977), 5.

¹⁹ "Rev. Jim Stehr in His Second Year as Director." *News of PATS* 1, no. 1 (Winter, 1983/84), 4; FSM Government Pohnpei to High Commissioner, "Drought," 8 April 1983 in "Correspondence re Ponape's governmental operations, drought & political affairs," TTA reel 5007, 1-2.

providing skilled practitioners a staggered harvest schedule even through the difficult *isol* growing season. The resulting biological diversity promoted stability, making agroforests more resistant to pests and disease and more able to stage a quick recovery after major disruptions.²⁰ During the most severe disasters, stores of pit-fermented breadfruit (*mahr*) sustained households and communities until agroforests began to bear again.²¹ Outer atolls maintained inter-island ties for trade and mutual assistance, and kept such close watch over their agricultural resources that dying patriarchs commonly divided the branches of household breadfruit trees among their offspring.²² Yet disaster recovery could still be perilous. A typhoon that struck Mokil around 1770 killed numerous Mokilese outright, sparked a deadly famine, and then led to several intentional killings. The same storm probably caused the near-complete depopulation of Pingelap, leaving as few as nine people remaining on the atoll.²³

Added to these risks were more novel threats to food security. In 1957, researchers noted an epidemic decline of breadfruit at Pingelap resulting from a mysterious disease that killed mature trees down to the roots. Two years later, with most

²⁰ Bill Raynor. *Agroforestry Systems in Pohnpei - Practices and Strategies for Development*. (Kolonia, Pohnpei: College of Micronesia Land Grant Programs, 1991), 28, 34.

²¹ *Mahr* could be fermented in smaller household pits or in larger community pits. Some of these communal pits held as many as 10,000 fruits at a time. The archaeological presence of breadfruit pits on Pohnpei dates back 1,600 years. Kitti oral historian Pensile Lawrence has suggested that there was a sharp decline in *mahr* production during Pohnpei's Japanese occupation. Maureen J. Levin. "Breadfruit Fermentation in Pohnpei, Micronesia: Site Formation, Archaeological Visibility, and Interpretive Strategies." *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 12, no. 4 (2017), 2-3; See also: Diane Ragone and Bill Raynor, "Breadfruit and Its Traditional Cultivation," in *Ethnobotany of Pohnpei*, ed. Michael Balick. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 80-83; Jennifer Atchley and Paul Alan Cox. "Breadfruit Fermentation in Micronesia." *Economic Botany* 3, no. 3 (1985), 333.

²² Damian Sohl describes this method of leaving portions of live breadfruit trees to descendants as "a traditional method of food security." Shimizu, "Chiefdom and the Spatial Classification," 153; Damian Sohl. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 21 October, 2014.

²³ David Damas. *Bountiful Island: A Study of Land Tenure on a Micronesian Atoll*. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994), 21; Dirk H.R. Spenneman. *Typhoons in Micronesia*. (Saipan: Division of Historic Preservation, 2004), 77; Joseph E. Weckler. *Land and Livelihood on Mokil: An Atoll in the Eastern Carolines, Part I*. (Washington: Pacific Science Board, 1949), 52-53.

of the atoll's mature breadfruit trees bare and blackened, breadfruit had become so rare that families were reserving it for their children and some Pingelapese wondered aloud whether God knew that "we cannot live without breadfruit." After burning through the atoll, the "Pingelap disease" dissipated, leaving younger trees mercifully unharmed. But between 1960 and 1966, the disease jumped to the Marshalls, then to the Marianas, then to American Samoa, and then to Kiribati.²⁴ By 1968, High Commissioner William Norwood was warning of "grave threats" posed by the loss of some 250,000 trees across the affected area, and "virtually complete losses" of breadfruit on some Marshallese atolls and on Guam, whose large stands of dying breadfruit researchers said resembled a fire-ravaged forest from the air. The scale of the crisis seemed to demand a proportionate administrative response, which in turn seemed to vindicate the presence of some colonial or other strong federal authority: costly agricultural research, strictly enforced quarantine regulations, and formal entreaties to the South Pacific Commission and U.N. Development Programme for technical assistance.²⁵

But even as they welcomed outside technical assistance and improvements in disaster relief, many Pohnpeians continued to view agroforests as guarantors of their island's long-term food security, pillars of their subsistence and prestige economies, and a foundation of their collective identities and political autonomy. Throughout the post-Eisenhower era, this underlying conservatism repeatedly clashed with the regime's economic development planning, and particularly with the sweeping development reports

²⁴ D. Zaiger and G.A. Zentmyer. "Epidemic Decline of Breadfruit in the Pacific Islands." *FAO Plant Protection Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (April 1967), 25; D. Zaiger, "The Tree of Life is Dying." *Micronesian Reporter* XV, no. 1 (March-April 1967): 31.

²⁵ William Norwood to Ruth Van Cleve. January 16, 1968. "General correspondence regarding Pingelap breadfruit diseases project," TTA, reel 501, 1; Zaiger and Zentmyer, "Epidemic Decline of Breadfruit," 25; D. Zaiger, "The Tree of Life is Dying." *Micronesian Reporter* XV, no. 1 (March-April 1967), 34.

it solicited from outside consultants. Few of these development experts were as forthright as the agriculturalist who insisted in 1969 that “we may not have true farming on Ponape until the people are starving or there is an overpopulation of the land,” evoking the radical development schemes and hostility to agroforestry of Japanese and German rule.²⁶ Yet the era’s development proposals were sweeping, and many promised complete overhauls of the island, from the bottom up.

In 1966, for instance, Robert R. Nathan Associates comprehensively targeted the territory’s “underdevelopment” in a proposal likely informed by the firm’s work in places like South Korea. There, its distillation of the consensus view on economic planning in the 1950s had become the “touchstone for all development activities.”²⁷ In the Trust Territory, however, that institutional knowledge repeatedly led Nathan Associates to development schemes that targeted local subsistence economies with impressive precision, and perhaps to a failure to consider the cascading impacts “maximizing development” might have on island cultures, political systems, health, and human relationships as well. This maximalist approach found its adherents among Americans and Islanders alike. But opponents, like the American official who declared the Nathan

²⁶ At times, Pohnpeians have expressed this same sentiment, as a joke. Glenn Petersen recalls being told by a state legislator, tongue-in-cheek, that “the only way to foster economic development on Ponape would be to chop down all the breadfruit trees, thus forcing people to work for a living.” Nat J. Colletta. “Economic Survey: Ponape Island, Eastern Caroline Is.” n.p., 1969. Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 7. Petersen, “Cultural Analysis of the Ponapean Independence Vote,” 20.

²⁷ As in Korea, Nathan Associates’ recommendations for the Trust Territory focused on economic modernization and encouraging more widespread participation in capitalist consumption and production. The firm proposed to offer Micronesians “expanded opportunities to participate more fully in modern economic life – as employees and employers, as farmers and consumers, as investors and owners, and contributors and beneficiaries.” David Ekbladh. *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 139; Robert R. Nathan Associates, Inc. *Economic Development Plan for Micronesia: A Proposed Long-Range Plan for Developing the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Part I*. (Washington: Robert R. Nathan Associates, 1966), 3.

plan a recipe for “comprehensive, manipulated revolution,” helped ensure that no consulting firm ever saw its development proposals fully implemented as policy.²⁸

Agriculturalists’ persistent efforts to revive Pohnpei’s prewar rice paddies revealed the radical consequences that could result from these seemingly anodyne development proposals. No longer intended to support a settler population or Japanize the landscape, the postwar iteration of Pohnpei rice promised to provide cash to farmers, reduce the flow of one of the island’s largest imports and, by supplying other districts, boost the food self-sufficiency of the entire territory.²⁹ In fact, American officials had envisioned replanting Pohnpei’s paddies even before the first U.S. troops crossed its reef, with the Navy’s initial plan of occupation warning that excessive imports might someday produce an “unbalanced economy” there.³⁰ But Pohnpei rice did not resurface until 1963, with an initial pilot project at Sapwalap. The next few years then saw a flurry of activity: new yield and test trials at the Kolonia agriculture station, rice specialists arriving from Okinawa and the Philippines, and Pohnpeians enrolling in intensive agriculture training in Taiwan. By 1966, there were 12 acres of rice in production across the island.³¹

²⁸ Peter Hill. *Comments on Nathan Report*. Truk Education Department, 1966, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, A2: 2.

²⁹ Japan’s paddy cultivation had, of course, relied heavily on forced labor. Yet a barely concealed enthusiasm for this style of rice production ran through American planning materials. A preliminary 1962 feasibility study recommended reclaiming abandoned prewar paddies, planting them with seed, fertilizer, and equipment imported from Japan, and “implementing the Japanese intensive form of culture and processing” there. Manuel Sproat. “Rice Production Program for Ponape District.” November 5, 1962, in “Correspondence, study proposal on rice and its development in Ponape,” TTA, reel 236, 1, 10-16.

³⁰ U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, “Sub-Area IV – Eastern Carolines: Agriculture” in *Plan for the Occupation and Naval Government of Pacific Island Areas*, 1945. Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 7.

³¹ M.W. Goding to District Administrator, Ponape, May 9, 1962 in “Correspondence, study proposal on rice and its development in Ponape,” TTA, reel 236; Manuel Sproat, “State of the District Message,” April 28, 1966 in “Correspondences, Laws & Resolutions Passed by Ponape District Legislature, 2nd thru 10th session,” TTA reel 11 [frame 276], 4; Malcolm G. Cook to Y. Baron Goto, February 17, 1967 in “Correspondence, study proposal on rice and its development in Ponape,” TTA, reel 236.

In 1968, the Trust Territory brought Hawai'i-based American Factors Associates to Pohnpei to draft a comprehensive rice feasibility study. The firm declared up to 1,000 acres suitable for cultivation, but warned that production costs would be prohibitively high without mechanized farming. Among its specific proposals was a plan to quickly clear large areas using aircraft or tractor sprayers loaded with 2-4-5T, a now-banned herbicide that was also a main ingredient of Agent Orange. When sprayed over rice-producing areas in Nett, the study promised, 2-4-5T "could kill almost everything and the mass of organic matter would burn." The consequences for public health and agroforestry can only be imagined, but the firm's other prescriptions would have had widespread impacts as well, from road construction and irrigation projects to the extensive use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides.³²

The American Factors proposal was never fully implemented, but by 1975 a series of false starts, setbacks, blunders, and partial victories had brought agriculturalists to two large government paddy sites in Lukop and Nett. Brimming with optimism that their 228 acres would yield 300 tons of rice annually within two years, they deployed wide-track bulldozers for grading and watched as ditching dynamite sent earth and stone flying 400 feet skyward, gouging out drainage canals below.³³ But even here, results fell short. By 1983, the now-independent Pohnpei State government was condemning this

³² American Factors Associates, Limited. *Proposal for a Survey to Determine the Feasibility of Commercial Rice Production on Ponape, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands* in "Correspondence, study proposal on rice and its development in Ponape," TTA, reel 236. June 1968, 1-7.

³³ James Hiyane. "Ponape Rice Project Nears Completion." *Micronesian Reporter* XXIII, no. 4. (1975, Fourth Quarter), 24.

project too as an “expensive failure,” and then in the next breath musing over how to revive Pohnpei rice properly, perhaps by bringing in Southeast Asian laborers.³⁴

Postwar Pohnpei rice was no clear-cut colonial scheme. Its seductive power was broad, and its promise to reduce the need for external resources found adherents within the independence movement and Trust Territory administration alike.³⁵ Ultimately, however, even Pohnpei’s political leaders may not have fully grasped the scale of the demands rice placed on farmers, its long-term environmental and political impacts, or the challenges it faced on the local market. District agriculturalist James Hiyane finally concluded that Pohnpei rice should never have been revived in the first place. The constant attention rice demands, he concluded, isolates farmers, “interferes with local culture” and, if production is to be maximized, diverts cash away from family and community and toward commercial fertilizers and pesticides.³⁶ Bermin Weilbacher recalls that when he served as Pohnpei’s district administrator “the problem was getting

³⁴ Ponape State Government. *Ponape State Development Plan (1985-1989)*. (Kolonia, Pohnpei: Ponape State Government, 1983), 165.

³⁵ Prominent politicians like Bethwel Henry and Olter Paul frequently spoke in favor of commercial rice production, and both the Ponape District Legislature and Congress of Micronesia appropriated funds to support it throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In 1968, Bethwel Henry told the Rotary Club of Saipan that Pohnpei held 4,000 acres of potential rice-producing land, and noted that replacing Pohnpei’s rice imports would bring the island’s farmers over \$200,000 annually. The following year, Olter Paul wrote territorial agriculture director Manuel Sproat to advocate for enhanced rice training, noting that rice had “the potential of being a major contributor to the economy of Ponape, perhaps... the whole territory through the elimination of imported rice.” Legislative appropriations included a \$59,000 bill introduced into the Congress of Micronesia by Heinrich Iriarte in 1969, a 1970 allocation by the Ponape District Legislature for \$4,800, and a large portion of the \$300,000 designated for commercial crops in the early 1970s as part of the Ponape Capital Improvement Project. Bethwel Henry to Rotary Club of Saipan, Royal Taga Hotel, 1968 July 23 in *Public Speeches: The Congress of Micronesia, July-August 1968*. (Saipan: Office of the Legislative Counsel, 1968), 39; Olter Paul to Manuel Sproat. 20 August, 1969 in “Correspondence, study proposal on rice and its development in Ponape,” TTA, reel 236; “Rice Bill,” *Senyavin Times* III, no. 17. Kolonia, Pohnpei. (1969 July 28), 10; “An Act establishing an appropriation to supplement the General Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1970.” Second Ponape District Legislature, Fifth Regular Session, 1970. L.B. No. 68, L.D. 1 in “Second Ponape District Legislature, 1970, Fifth Regular Session Resolutions #1 and 9 and Act #68,” reel 2049, TTA; “Ponape Rice and Commercial Crop Project,” 1971 September 30, in “Ponape Rice Project,” TTA reel 201, 1.

³⁶ James Hiyane. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 March 2015.

[farmers] to live on an acre” adjacent to the paddy, and marketing a local rice whose taste, texture, and color consumers judged inferior to California rice.³⁷ As a result, few farmers adopted rice as a permanent crop, or volunteered to settle on government paddies.³⁸

The appeal monocrops like rice, cacao, or pepper held for politicians, American officials, and independence advocates never fully resonated with Pohnpei’s farmers, for whom the benefits of full-time cash income rarely outweighed the risks of abandoning time-tested, breadfruit-anchored agroforestry. In fact, only cash crops adaptable to agroforestry, like copra or *sakau*, have ever maintained a lasting presence on the island. But even as Pohnpei rejected rice cultivation, it embraced imported rice. By the end of the 1970s, the growth of wage labor and federal programs arguably made rice a truly widespread staple on the island for the first time.³⁹ Increasingly, imported rice and canned foods appeared reliable enough to weather natural disasters, convenient enough to overtake local food like breadfruit in ease of preparation, and palatable enough to fuel the body for prestige production or office work. But it was a series of USDA feeding initiatives aimed at schoolchildren, the elderly, disaster victims, and the needy that most

³⁷ Many people who lived on Pohnpei during the 1960s and 1970s have vivid recollections of the rice grown on the island at the time. Although agriculturalists did conduct test trials, they began large-scale production far earlier than Moritarō Hoshino and his team had. As a result, strains like the fast-growing “Miracle Rice” of the Philippines’ Rice Research Institute reached the market and fell flat, earning all of the island’s locally grown rice a poor reputation. Robinson Frederick, whose uncle grew rice on his land in Kitti, recalls eating the unmilled rice and being unimpressed with how it compared to the flavor of store-bought version, which “came out white and nice.” Peace Corps linguist Ken Rehg recalled seeing Pohnpei rice marketed in stores with special instructions on how to prepare it “so it didn’t turn to mush.” Damian Sohl recalled that Miracle Rice “doesn’t match the taste that Pohnpeian are used to,” continuing, “I hope we’re not brainwashed, but my father was a teacher during the Japanese time, and he speaks favorably about Japanese rice. He told me Japan produced the best rice in the world, and I believe that, because I think the country spent a lot of resources doing research and they’ve been planting rice for centuries.” Bermin Weilbacher. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 December 2014; Robinson Frederick. Interview by author. Honolulu, Hawai’i, July 7, 2014; Ken Rehg. Interview by author. Honolulu, Hawai’i, July 14, 2014; Damian Sohl. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 21 October, 2014.

³⁸ Adelino Lorens. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 5 March, 2015.

³⁹ Lois Englberger, Geoffrey C. Marks, and Maureen H. Fitzgerald. “Insights on Food and Nutrition in the Federated States of Micronesia: A Review of the Literature.” *Public Health Nutrition* 6, no. 1 (2003), 6.

urgently evoked anxieties over food security, tensions over food sovereignty, and fears of “dependency” as Pohnpei hurtled toward political independence.

Indispensible hazards: school lunches and disaster relief

As a child in the 1950s, Damian Sohl made the long walk home from his Kolonia school every afternoon, hungry. Passing through the Panuelo land opposite Sokehs Island, he and his classmates scavenged amid the coconut groves, cracking open young coconuts and poaching fallen mangoes. “My parents were not educated to understand that we need to have our stomachs filled so that we can learn,” he recalls. “So they would send us to school and hope we survived walking home after.” Gesturing toward the Panuelo property, he continued, “we survived on this land.”⁴⁰ In the past, most of Pohnpei’s children had the freedom to forage for snacks when hungry and eat what they chose. But in the pre-Kennedy Trust Territory, public schools could neither allow children to roam free nor provide them with lunch. As a result, schools dismissed in the early afternoon, putting aside whatever community-donated produce or C-rations they happened to have to feed the rural and outer Islander students in their dormitories.

By 1975, things had changed. That year, as a classroom teacher in Sokehs Powe, Sohl saw the U.S. National School Lunch Program enter his own school, and witnessed its overwhelming popularity with both students and parents. But then, just a decade later, Sohl himself was tasked with terminating the program in his role as Director of Education for Pohnpei State. He then saw that popularity turn to wrath. “I couldn’t walk at night here,” he recalls. “People hated me... we had meetings around the island, and people used

⁴⁰ Damian Sohl. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 21 October, 2014.

nasty language. To me. They said, ‘why can’t you be a responsible director and do something about keeping the school lunch program?’” Sohl had explained that any administrator would want to keep the USDA lunches, but the resources were no longer there. In a post-independence state, he argued, “It is better that we continue to cut the umbilical cord right now, because the longer we stay on... when they stop it many of us are going to die from starvation.”⁴¹ But even without funding to restore it, the shuttered school lunch program has remained a simmering political issue on the island ever since.⁴²

The politics of the Trust Territory’s school lunches were explosive, their ties to children and food rendering them just as persistently popular and “fraught with powerful cultural and symbolic significance” as they were in the United States.⁴³ But the territory’s other federal feeding programs could be political minefields as well, from disaster relief aimed at the desperate to anti-poverty initiatives that promised to feed anyone who met U.S. income guidelines, indefinitely. Participation in these programs peaked as the territory’s independence movement reached its climax. USDA food therefore became invested with enormous meaning in the islands, appearing at turns compassionate and menacing, indispensable and corrosive. On Pohnpei, the feeding programs also unmasked abiding food security anxieties at a moment of rapid economic and political change, and

⁴¹ Damian Sohl. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 21 October, 2014.

⁴² In Pohnpei’s 2007 gubernatorial election, for instance, John Ehsa campaigned on the reestablishment of the school lunch program as a cornerstone of his economic development strategy. According to the *Kaselehlie Press*, Ehsa suggested that “local farmers and fishermen would have no problem selling their produce with a school lunch program for 8,000 students. If Pohnpei State, every Tuesday, put one banana on a plate for each student, farmers will sell 8,000 bananas. This will, if Pohnpei can afford it, redistribute the wealth down to the grass roots.” Lacking the substantial resources necessary to revive the program, however, Pohnpei State never fully reintroduced it during Ehsa’s terms in office. Instead, public school lunches on the island since the early 1990s have been more limited, usually consisting of rice and some type of soup. Bill Jaynes, “Candidates Answer Questions and State Their Views.” *Kaselehlie Press* 7, no. 24, October 31, 2007, 9; Bill Jaynes, “Pohnpei Legislature investigates Governor’s School Lunch program spending.” *Kaselehlie Press* 10, no. 9, March 31, 2010, 1, 5.

⁴³ Susan Levine, *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America’s Favorite Welfare Program* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 3.

played a critical role in democratizing access to a previously exclusive import-based diet: one that promised to dislodge breadfruit as the foundation of Pohnpei's food security strategy and replace it with ubiquitous, 50-pound sacks of imported rice.

The food that flooded into the Trust Territory during the 1970s was rooted in longstanding U.S. government efforts to find an outlet for America's surplus agricultural commodities. Depression-era efforts to aid struggling farmers through commodity supports and technical assistance had first diverted surplus food into American school lunchrooms, and by the 1950s the USDA was also sending large quantities of food abroad as foreign aid. As historian Susan Levine suggests, by the Kennedy era food was a "staple in Cold War diplomatic strategy" with "shipments of wheat, corn, and other commodities [serving] as symbols of American democracy and prosperity, shoring up regimes threatened by internal revolutionary movements and external Soviet support."⁴⁴ But USDA food was also finding new uses at home, as Washington diverted the nation's growing agricultural surplus into their domestic welfare programs. By the early 1970s, USDA food could be found everywhere from school lunchrooms and foreign aid shipments to summer camps, day cares, hospitals, charities, disaster relief agencies, Meals on Wheels, homes for the aged, elderly group dining programs, and supplemental food programs for women and children.⁴⁵

In the Trust Territory, these foods made their first intermittent appearances in institutional meals during the 1950s. In the 1958-59 academic year, for instance, Palau's

⁴⁴ Levine, *School Lunch Politics*, 46, 107.

⁴⁵ Edward J. Hekman, "Statement by Edward J. Hekman, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service United States Department of Agriculture before the General Subcommittee on Education House Education and Labor Committee, April 22, 1974" in "Correspondence and related documents regarding all the federal categorical assistance programs such as Hill-Burton, Economic Opportunity and USDA food programs." TTA reel 1456, 1-3.

schools received 13,900 pounds of rice, 8,800 pounds of flour, 1,196 pounds of dried skim milk, 1,664 pounds of butter, and 170 pounds of cheese through the Donated Commodities Program. Along with community-donated local foods and the 4,000 pounds of produce harvested from school farms, Palau thereby reduced its costs to between three and eight cents per meal, a savings that one administrator marveled “seems unbelievable.”⁴⁶ Pohnpei participated in the program as well, and by the early 1960s its schools and hospitals were receiving staples like rice, flour, milk, butter, cheese, and eggs and, occasionally, items like peanut butter, poultry, and meat.⁴⁷

Pohnpei’s education officials and administrators had been calling for healthy, locally sourced institutional meals throughout the 1950s, advocating for local foods in school lunches, reductions in rice imports, and “an improved dietary program among the indigenous people.”⁴⁸ But the cost reductions donated foods offered were hard to resist, especially given the enthusiasm with which the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were pushing American food into “underdeveloped” areas. In 1963, for instance, the *Ponape-per* carried a Thanksgiving message from U.S. Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman that praised the Food for Peace program for showing the world “what free men in a free society can achieve to secure the blessings of abundance.” Freeman then

⁴⁶ Heinz E. Meyer to Robert Gibson. September 10, 1959. Robert E. Gibson Papers, Box 10, Folder 109, 2; See: Art Wolfe to Robert Gibson. September 16, 1959. Robert E. Gibson Papers, Box 10, Folder 109, 1.

⁴⁷ “Freeman Cites President’s Goal of Redoubled Food Drive to Aid Needy.” *Ponape-per* 5, no. 51. December 20, 1963, 6; George Bussell to Hq. Hospital Administrator. “USDA Food Distribution to TT Hospitals.” November 29, 1978 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information Regarding TT Wide Food Service Program, 1977-1979” TTA, reel 208.

⁴⁸ “District Administrator’s Speech to Ponape District Congress, Delivered March 16, 1960” in “Correspondence, Laws, & Resolutions Passed by Ponape & District Legislature 2nd Thru 10th Session,” TTA, reel 11, 5-6; Ponape District Congress, *Doadoahk: Kelimau en Ponape District Congress, October 17 to November 4, 1960*, (Ponape District: Education Department, 1960), 3; “Education Conference, March 12-21, 1961, Saipan, Mariana Islands. Recommendations and Appendices,” Trust Territory Education Materials, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, Folder 12, 17-18.

enjoined Americans to be grateful for the agricultural productivity “which has made this Nation the best fed at the lowest real cost in all history.”⁴⁹ An “acute” rice shortage on Pohnpei the following year, and administrators’ unsuccessful attempts to alleviate it by illegally rationing USDA rice to government workers, suggests how easily abstract administrative commitments to food self-sufficiency and nutrition fell away in this political environment, even in the face of limited, temporary incidences of hunger.⁵⁰

The Trust Territory’s growing tendency to overwhelm hunger with government aid, particularly after natural disasters, linked Freeman’s framing of a free America standing against global hunger and Communism directly to Islanders’ food security anxieties. Whereas the territory’s Japanese and German regimes had deployed emergency food rations conservatively, in the post-Eisenhower era those provisions began to seem inexhaustible.⁵¹ Those affected mostly received the food gratefully, as gifts of a wealthy power generously given. But for others, disaster relief provoked a range of objections, from the duration of their use to their deployment where damage seemed minimal. Anthropologist Vern Carroll, living on Nukuoro after a 1963 tidal wave that inundated the atoll’s taro patch, protested that emergency rations were doing more harm than the disaster itself. He told journalist E.J. Kahn that Nukuoroans were “open[ing] cans of peanut butter” rather than rebuilding the taro patch, and later puzzled over the seeming contradiction between Nukuoro’s abundant resources and his impression that “in the

⁴⁹ “Freeman Cites President’s Goal of Redoubled Food Drive to Aid Needy.” *Ponape-per* 5, no. 51. December 20, 1963, 6.

⁵⁰ “Sohte Rais.” *Ponape-per* 6, no 10. March 6, 1964, 6.

⁵¹ After a 1927 storm in Palau, for instance, the *Nan’yō’chō* disbursed funds for immediate food and shelter needs, but then encouraged Islanders to make special plantings of sweet potatoes, yams, tapioca, papaya, bananas, and other crops on ¼ acre of their land. According to the regime, within four months the potatoes and tapioca were ready for harvest and government food relief was no longer necessary. South Seas Government. *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Sea Islands Under Japanese Mandate*. (Tōkyō: Japanese Government, 1927), 131.

minds of the natives... a shortage of food is always imminent.”⁵² In later years, anthropologists like Mac Marshall recognized that “totally self-sufficient” island societies were a “well nurtured myth,” but did object to the territory’s “indiscriminate” distribution of relief supplies and their potential to deepen economic and political dependency.⁵³

Increasingly, it was local politicians who grappled with these issues, as the territory’s “Micronesianization” policy began elevating Islanders to positions of executive authority.⁵⁴ Leaders like Bermin Weilbacher, who held various roles at the top of Pohnpei’s executive branch through the 1970s and 1980s, therefore found themselves standing between food security and food sovereignty concerns on the one hand and the tense politics of U.S. welfare policy on the other. After one typhoon, Weilbacher accompanied an American agriculturalist on an island-wide survey to determine relief needs. “We went to a funeral,” Weilbacher recalls, “and we see all the rice packed in aluminum foil... all over. And he looked and said, ‘no way you’re going to get USDA food.’” With America’s own racialized debates over who “deserved” government food aid playing in the background, Weilbacher viewed this conspicuous feasting as “almost like an insult,” and was embarrassed by frequent territory-wide reports of Islanders selling disaster provisions as well. But he was also a fierce advocate for Pohnpei’s food sovereignty, a defender of disaster relief when needs were high, and mindful that “it was

⁵² E.J. Kahn, Jr. *A Reporter in Micronesia*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966), 166, 183; Vern Carroll. “Nukuoro Kinship.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1966), 16.

⁵³ Mac Marshall. “Natural and Unnatural Disaster in the Mortlock Islands of Micronesia.” *Human Organization* 35, no. 3 (1979), 267.

⁵⁴ Among the first Pohnpeians to be so elevated was Leo Falcam, who became the territory’s first Micronesian Assistant District Administrator in 1964. Francis X. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995), 316.

very rude to reject” disaster aid, suggesting he understood the entangled politics of food gifts in a way many American officials did not.⁵⁵

Disaster relief and school feeding programs ultimately penetrated into the territory’s food systems just as deeply as wage work, which in the post-Eisenhower era shifted labor from farm and fishery into offices at an increasingly rapid rate. As a student at Sokehs Powe Elementary in the 1970s, for instance, Alice Ehmes chose the status-leveling sociability of free school lunches rather than eating at her own home just two doors down. The USDA lunches combined familiar rice and meats with exotic foods like powdered milk, peanut butter, and canned peaches.⁵⁶ “That’s where I developed a taste for corn,” Ehmes recalls, “I still eat corn, like I prefer corn to anything else, and I guess it was just from that time.” The lunches left fond memories, but she stresses that the stakes were higher for some of her classmates, for whom a school lunch may have been their only “full meal” of the day.⁵⁷ In later years, leaders like Damian Sohl came to believe these USDA lunches were “taking the responsibility away from parents to feed their kids.” Anthropologist Martha Ward went even farther, declaring the program “haunting” and accusing it of creating a generation of children who preferred white bread and rice to

⁵⁵ Bermin Weilbacher. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 December, 2014.

⁵⁶ In theory, these USDA lunches met the standards of “Pacific Type A” meals, a region-specific adaptation of the Type A lunches served in domestic U.S. classrooms during the 1970s. In practice, a range of procurement, transportation, and spoilage issues created more variation in the content of USDA meals from island to island.

⁵⁷ Alice Ehmes currently lives on Pohnpei, but has also lived in Oregon and on Oahu. She has taught at the College of Micronesia, worked for Pohnpei State’s Department of Economic Affairs, and worked with the Children’s Health Project at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa. Alice Ehmes. Interview by author. Honolulu, Hawai’i. 18 June, 2014.

breadfruit and yams, as healthy local foods “rotted on the ground.”⁵⁸ But its appeal amid the rapid changes to Pohnpei’s economy and broader food system is hardly surprising.

In fact, as Ehmes shared USDA lunches with her classmates, the eating habits of her Pingelapese parents and grandparents were diverging as well. Her grandparents supported themselves by farming crops like taro, bananas, coconuts, and Polynesian chestnuts (*mworopw*) in the forest and uplands, and by relying on her grandfather’s early morning canoe fishing. Meanwhile, her father found a job in Kolonia and her mother began to shop at Ambrose, Pohnpei’s first American-style grocery store. The imported foods available from Ambrose were, Ehmes believes, “just a matter of convenience” for her mother, though they offered the added security of “having the food right there” as well. Similar divergences were taking place all over the island, as younger and wealthier Islanders made rice the foundation of their daily eating, then often retained it indefinitely.

Musing over the “really bad” eating decisions of her adulthood, Ehmes admits she prefers breadfruit, but more often chooses rice.⁵⁹ But, particularly for those who have circulated within the cash economy as Ehmes has, rice offers a number of clear benefits over breadfruit. It is a seemingly inexhaustible, non-seasonal commodity that is inexpensive in terms of both cash and labor and, in addition, offers a baseline access to the prestige associated with cash wealth on an island where prestige is critical. Those benefits took center stage in one of the Trust Territory’s most heated public debates, staged over an aid initiative that never actually reached Pohnpei: the Needy Family

⁵⁸ Damian Sohl. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 21 October, 2014; Martha Ward. *Nest in the Wind: Adventures in Anthropology on a Tropical Island*. (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2005), 95.

⁵⁹ Alice Ehmes. Interview by author. Honolulu, Hawai’i. 18 June, 2014.

Feeding Program. A particularly awkward fit between U.S. welfare policy and island food systems, Needy Family struck a nerve both in the islands and the United States.

Rice politics: the Needy Family Feeding Program

Aimed at adults as well as children, at the comfortable as well as the hungry, and appearing when the chance to recover Pohnpei's sovereignty was most at hand, Needy Family was the Trust Territory's most controversial, and most political, feeding program. Adopting U.S. poverty guidelines, the program classified nearly everyone in the territory as poor, and therefore potentially eligible for indefinite supplies of USDA food. Needy Family caused alarm among food sovereignty advocates and administration officials alike. But it also found fervent supporters, both in the two districts where it was implemented, and on islands like Pohnpei where it was not. As the territory moved steadily from the 1969 convening of the Congress of Micronesia's Future Political Status Commission to the formation of the Federated States of Micronesia in 1978, Needy Family became Pohnpei's most urgent, most revealing site of encounter between the island's food sovereignty roots, elected political system, and the deepening reach of its rice revolution.

Throughout the independence process, Pohnpeians joined a traditional ethic of autonomy and self-care to American advocacy for self-sufficiency, maintaining a food sovereignty formulation that guided them through the complex negotiations and plebiscites of the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, anthropologist Glenn Petersen's assertion that these food sovereignty principles also led Pohnpeians to "refuse to accept the free food" from the USDA is misleading.⁶⁰ Not only was there an impressive groundswell of support

⁶⁰ Petersen, "Cultural Analysis of the Ponapean Independence Vote," 26.

for bringing Needy Family to Pohnpei, most of the officials at territorial headquarters were much less enthusiastic over the program than the man who became its public face, the bombastic Food Services Officer George Bussell. In fact, Bussell's attacks on Micronesian leaders and assertions that Islanders "can't survive by themselves" set up a binary opposition between American officials and independence advocates that never accurately reflected Needy Family's reception on the ground.⁶¹

The Needy Family Feeding Program was deeply rooted in domestic U.S. politics, and never intended for export. For years, anti-poverty and civil rights activists had sought to equalize access to federal welfare programs, which had often been administered capriciously by state and local officials, and in 1965 successfully secured the creation of a federal poverty line. When the Nixon administration embarked on an "unprecedented expansion" of federal food and nutrition programs, those national poverty standards then helped limit the exclusion of minorities like African Americans from federal food assistance. USDA commodities increasingly reached low-income households and the institutions that served them in the United States, but began to appear with growing frequency in the Trust Territory as well. There, the poverty line was neither equipped to assess local food needs nor could it be reconfigured to account for the abundance of food produced through farming and fishing, still the lifeblood of the territory.⁶²

Needy Family first appeared in the Trust Territory in 1971 at Kili, the small, inhospitable island in the Marshalls that served as the temporary home of Bikini Atoll's

⁶¹ Frederick H. Marks, "US Food for Micronesia Debatable," *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 22, 1978, H-3.

⁶² Ironically, Washington's food aid ballooned just as inflation and rising prices were reducing government access to surplus commodities, in a sharp reversal of the old "farm problem" of overproduction. The loss of donated commodities was felt in the territory, which by the mid-1970s began shifting toward cash reimbursements for purchased food. Levine, *School Lunch Politics*, 120-121, 153-156.

nuclear exiles. After two decades of deprivations and relocations, the Bikinians were undergoing another period of “extreme food shortage,” and territorial headquarters submitted a federal application for Needy Family to alleviate it. Procedures required the territory apply as a whole, and thus when Kili was approved every other district became eligible as well, subject to review by headquarters.⁶³ Just one year later, citing typhoon-related crops damage and nutritional deficiencies among children, officials in the Northern Marianas secured Needy Family for their entire district, where it reached 80% participation by the end of the decade. In 1977, typhoon damage brought Needy Family to Chuuk’s outer islands as well, and then to Chuuk Lagoon the following year.⁶⁴

The scale of these Needy Family distributions quickly raised eyebrows. On Chuuk, Xavier High School students and their American teacher produced a short film aimed at documenting its impact. They interviewed businesspeople who worried over “dramatic” declines in food sales and noted increases in sales of building materials, boats, and cars. They also conducted a short survey that indicated slight declines in farming and fishing. The end of the film features two Chuukese men eating from cans of corned beef. One tells the camera, “What are we to say about this USDA Needy Family food program? If we didn’t have this food we would not be alive today. This food is very delicious. If it were not for this USDA Needy Family Food Program I don’t think any of us would be alive today.” Continuing their effusive praise for several more minutes, the men explain that USDA foods are convenient to prepare, needed because “we are jobless and we don’t

⁶³ “Feeding Program in Truk Islands,” in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands,” TTA reel 71, 1-2; “Non-TT Funded U.S. Federal Programs Administered by the Procurement and Supply Division,” 14 October 1971 in “Correspondence and Comments on the Needy Household Commodities,” TTA reel 421.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Udui, “Feeding the Multitude,” *Micronesian Reporter* 27, no. 1, 8-9; John C. Deleon, Henchy C. Bualuay, Albon J. Jelkan and Anthony N. Oiterong, “Report on the Needy Family Program on Moen,” *Micronesian Reporter* 27, no. 1 (First quarter, 1979), 14.

have enough to eat,” enable them to farm and gather firewood, and allow the elderly to avoid “picking out the bones from our local fish.” They then ask the filmmakers to “tell the U.S. government to extend this program until we die,” neatly framing Needy Family as both a long-term food security solution and a remedy to the failures of U.S.-led economic development.⁶⁵

As the magnitude of Needy Family’s potential economic, social, and political repercussions became clear, widely circulated accounts of Islanders feeding USDA food to pigs and Chuuk apparently approving more than 41,000 applications to feed 36,000 people were fueling a broad political backlash.⁶⁶ Over the next several years, that backlash grew. On the floor of the Congress of Micronesia, legislators protested that USDA commodities would swing votes away from independence, or hinder the transition to self-rule.⁶⁷ Members of Hawaii’s congressional delegation investigated Needy Family’s economic impact on the territory and their own constituents.⁶⁸ Importers and local merchants grew distressed over USDA foods monopolizing cargo space and displacing their products.⁶⁹ The American media attacked the unrestrained growth of domestic feeding programs, even to islands that appeared to have no need of them.

⁶⁵ Eric Metzgar. *The USDA Needy Family Food Program in Truk, 1978-1979*. Triton Films, 1979; Micronesian Seminar, *US Federal Programs in Micronesia: A Report on a Conference Sponsored by Micronesian Seminar, Kolonia, Ponape March 12-14, 1979*, 18.

⁶⁶ John C. Deleon, Henchy C. Bualuay, Albon J. Jelkan and Anthony N. Oiterong, “Report on the Needy Family Program on Moen,” *Micronesian Reporter* 27, no. 1 (First quarter, 1979), 14.

⁶⁷ William D. Jackson to All Federal Program Managers, 1978 March 23 in “State Plan of Nutrition Operations Under the Provisions of the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 as Amended Dealing with TTPI and CNMI for Fiscal Year 1979” TTA, reel 512, 2.

⁶⁸ Daniel K. Inouye to Ruth Van Cleve, March 26, 1979 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands,” TTA, reel 71.

⁶⁹ Micro Congress Ponape Islands to High Commissioner. 14 November 1978 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208.

While Micronesian critics of Needy Family often invoked the longstanding administrative priority of self-sufficiency, American critiques of the program were also tinged with fantasies of Pacific abundance and the incommensurability of those fantasies with racialized stereotypes of welfare users in the United States. A California-based exporter complained that Needy Family was not only dampening his hiring but also “discouraging” Islanders from work, “as if your wife were trying to keep a tight budget while your neighbor stole your money and invited your children to have steak and lobster every night.”⁷⁰ *60 Minutes* spun a tale of “malignant generosity” in the territory, where a “Micronesian who is not employed and has no intention of ever being employed is feeding his favorite pig prime U.S. beef,” with his “unique, traditional, scattered island society” being treated like “Inner City, U.S.A.”⁷¹ As racial anxieties fueled the perception that feeding programs disproportionately favored people of color in the U.S., blowback against the “racial profile of public assistance” began to reach the islands as well.⁷²

In October of 1978, in the midst of this brewing storm and just seven months before the FSM inaugurated its first president, Food Services Officer George Bussell departed for Washington. There, he shopped a plan to expand Needy Family to the territory’s remaining districts. Had it been enacted, Bussell’s proposal would have

⁷⁰ Dan R. Neblett (Albatross Trading Co.) to Cecil Andrus, 5 May 1979 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands.” TTA, reel 71, 3.

⁷¹ This *60 Minutes* report circulated widely through the islands. Tourist officer Adeline Reyes, for instance, attacked the American media’s sensationalism in a conversation with a reporter, telling her “Did you see ‘Sixty Minutes?’ Showed us feeding USDA food to the pigs. It’s disgusting. I’m not sure we wouldn’t be better off without the tourists. What do we need tourists for anyway?” The program was also said to have a “big impact” in Washington, where officials briefly considered stationing USDA agents in the islands to either purchase and distribute local food or work to increase local production. “Correspondence and the Transcription on Micronesia (‘Who Gives a Damn’) by the CBS’s ‘60 Minutes,’” 1980. FSM Microfilmed Archives, FSM National Archives, Palikir, Pohnpei [hereafter FMA], reel 29, 1-4; Ann Nakano. *Broken Canoe: Conversations and Observations in Micronesia*. (New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 285-286; Linda L. Parkinson to Resio Moses. February 25, 1980 in “Corres, Reports & Other Info. T.T Wide Food Services.” TTA, reel 192.

⁷² Levine, *School Lunch Politics*, 156.

brought feeding program spending from \$8.8 to nearly \$40 million annually, and enrolled 19,800 people in Ponape District alone. Participants would have received 20 pounds of rice and 10 cans of evaporated milk every month, with enough flour, peanut butter, corned beef, margarine, butter, shortening, macaroni, and canned fruits and vegetables for three meals per day. On Pohnpei and its outer islands, those shipments would have amounted to more than 14 million pounds of food per year.⁷³

The plan spurred a flurry of responses. There was an “alarmed” call from the Department of Agriculture to the Office of Territorial Affairs over the spending increase, and a letter from that office to the territory’s High Commissioner calling for Needy Family to be “thoroughly re-evaluated” if U.S. poverty standards were delivering food to 80% of the territory’s households.⁷⁴ U.S. Ambassador Peter Rosenblatt offered his “dismay” over the program’s expansion and his opposition to federal programs that failed to contribute to Micronesian self-sufficiency.⁷⁵ Leo Falcam, months away from becoming Pohnpei State’s first elected governor, warned that the administration was “literally going all out to put these programs into effect... despite repeated objections by the Congress of Micronesia,” and that Bussell aimed to extend Needy Family indefinitely after independence in the form of foreign aid.⁷⁶ Yap Senator John Mangefel, referencing the

⁷³ Bussell’s estimates for the Ponape District excluded Kosrae, which became a separate district in 1977. Ruth G. Van Cleve to Adrian Winkel. October 25, 1978 in “Attorney General File – Food Services – General Correspondence.” TTA, reel 3820; “Related Correspondence on USDA, The Needy Family Feeding Program (FY 1977) and Charts Showing the Estimated Numbers of Recipients and Dollar Value of Commodities,” 1978. TTA, reel 429, 3.

⁷⁴ Bussell’s estimates for the Ponape District excluded Kosrae, which became a separate district in 1977. Ruth G. Van Cleve to Adrian Winkel, October 25, 1978 in Attorney General File – Food Services – General Correspondence.” TTA, reel 3820.

⁷⁵ Peter Rosenblatt to Nancy Snyder, 13 November 1978. “Attorney General File – Food Services – General Correspondence.” TTA, reel 3820, 3.

⁷⁶ Leo Falcam to Tosiwo Nakayama, 20 October, 1978. “Attorney General File – Food Services – General Correspondence.” TTA, reel 3820, 1-2.

Food for Peace Program, joked that “instead of only giving [USDA food] to their enemies like Russia and China, [the United States] is trying to give it to us,” and reworked the familiar warning for the Trojan Horse: “don’t look a gift horse in the mouth, and the stomach, too.”⁷⁷ An article in the *Honolulu Advertiser* counterpointed Acting Pohnpei Governor Bermin Weilbacher’s argument that Needy Family was unwanted and unneeded with Bussell’s claim that ending it meant “allowing these people to die,” and his insistence that any local political opposition stemmed from “the old tribal system – if you keep them dumb, you can control the people.”⁷⁸

Bussell’s fondness for such broadsides raised Needy Family’s profile, but also numbered his days in the Trust Territory. In late October of 1978, the Congress of Micronesia’s House Committee on Education and Social Matters held public hearings on Pohnpei concerning the district’s feeding programs. There, Representative Kikuo Apis offered a sarcastic resolution proposing that Bussell be promoted to a higher position outside of Micronesia, while District Agriculturalist James Hiyane insisted that Pohnpei neither suffered from starvation, acute malnutrition, nor a shortage of arable land. But Resio Moses, acting as administrator for the district’s Department of Community Services, defended Bussell and the program, noting that Needy Family could help “grassroots” people divert their limited income toward necessities like school expenses or building materials. Further, Moses suggested, “whether the feeding program comes or not the people (of Ponape) will still eat rice.”⁷⁹ By the end of the year, Congress of

⁷⁷ “Mangefel’s Last Warning,” *Marianas Variety News & Views*, November 10, 1978 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands.” TTA, reel 71.

⁷⁸ Frederick H. Marks, “US Food for Micronesia Debatable,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 22, 1978, H-3.

⁷⁹ “Food Program Stirs Controversy.” *Micronesian News Service*, October 27, 1978 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands.” TTA, reel 71.

Micronesia leadership had issued a formal protest over the “disturbing reports” of Bussell’s behavior, the High Commissioner promised disciplinary action, and Bussell submitted his resignation.⁸⁰

Bussell had compounded tensions over the territory’s feeding programs, but those tensions preceded and exceeded his tenure. In fact, shortly before Bussell arrived in Washington, the Ponape Legislature had held its own “extensive” hearings with community members in Kolonia and rural Pohnpei, and then passed a resolution formally requesting Needy Family for the district. That resolution cited “rapidly increasing costs of living,” “extreme scarcity of available jobs and meager wages,” “the skyrocketing rate of inflation far in excess of inflationary trends in the continental United States,” and the nutritional benefits USDA foods might offer to children.⁸¹ The nutritional arguments may have been specious, but the inflation and soaring food prices were real. The price of imported rice on Pohnpei had more than doubled in the early 1970s, and institutional purchasing was so expensive by 1975 that the island’s jail was forced to create a new “prisoners’ farm” to feed its inmates.⁸² Community concern over Micronesia’s post-

⁸⁰ Shortly before resigning, Bussell complained in a letter to High Commissioner Winkel, “My name has been bandied in the news media to wit I am some sort of mindless, unfeeling demagogue whose primary purpose in life is to demean Micronesian culture (if there is any such thing)... Personally impugned, slandered in the [Congress of Micronesia], misquoted by the media, am I to be maligned for doing my job?... In retrospect, I know why Brigham Young kept moving west and how Custer got to the Little Big Horn.” Tosiwo Nakayama and Bethwel Henry to Adrian Winkel, 7 November 1978 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208, 1-2; Adrian Winkel to Tosiwo Nakayama, 23 November 1978 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208, 1; George Bussell to Adrian Winkel, 13 November 1978 in “Attorney General File – Food Services – General Correspondence” TTA, reel 3820, 2.

⁸¹ “A Resolution Relative to the Denial of the Administration to Extend the Needy Family Feeding Program to Ponape District,” L.R. No. 288. 4th Ponape District Legislature, 7th Regular Session. (1978) in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208, 2; “A Resolution Requesting the High Commissioner to Solicit the Extension of the USDA Needy Family Feeding Program to Ponape District,” 4th Pohnpei District Legislature, 7th Regular Session. (1978) TTA, reel 2077.

⁸² “Prisoners Start Farming in Ponape,” *Highlights*, 1975 March 15, 4.

independence economic development was mounting as well. Nonetheless, the High Commissioner's office denied the legislature's request.

The most impassioned debates over how to address these escalating costs of living took place at the district level. At the Congress of Micronesia, where members acted as the territory's primary catalysts for independence and the de facto "opposition party to the Trust Territory administration," programs like Needy Family received a lower priority than avoiding long-term dependence on the U.S.⁸³ Thus, when Interior pledged in November 1978 not to expand the territory's existing federal programs or seek new ones, and to eliminate programs of "marginal or of low priority," the Congress was supportive.⁸⁴ But in the districts, legislators and administrators faced more pressure to respond to immediate community demands. On Pohnpei, demand for USDA food was robust enough to coax national politicians previously hostile to certain feeding programs to defend those same programs after taking new positions in district administration. Resio Moses frequently spoke out against USDA foods in the Congress of Micronesia, but took a different tack as Director of Community Services, where he viewed his role as "supporting the government's efforts to heal, to educate, and when necessary to feed the hungry."⁸⁵ Other opponents of USDA foods, like Congress of Micronesia Representative Kikuo Apis, maintained their resistance and were voted out of office.⁸⁶

⁸³ John Haglelgam. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 9 December 2014.

⁸⁴ Adrian Winkel to All Distads/Governors, et al., "Policy Statement on Federal Programs," November 17, 1978 in "Feeding Program in Truk Islands." TTA, reel 71.

⁸⁵ John Haglelgam. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 9 December 2014; Micronesian Seminar, *U.S. Federal Programs*, 15.

⁸⁶ David Hanlon. *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses Over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 177.

Its first request for Needy Family denied, the Ponape Legislature continued to agitate for the program.⁸⁷ In December of 1978, legislators passed a second resolution accusing the administration of ignoring the merits of their initial request, violating its “solemn obligation to promote the social advancement” of the territory, and denying equal protection to its citizens by implementing Needy Family in some districts and not others. The resolution also argued that cost of living increases had enforced reliance on “budget, low-nutrition food commodities” by Islanders “without adequate training or knowledge in food values,” and resulted in the people of the district “acquiring habits of food consumption increasingly more detrimental to their health.”⁸⁸ Grassroots support for Needy Family was becoming more apparent as well. In January of 1979, Pohnpei assembled a petition that ultimately reached nearly 2,800 signatures, requesting that Needy Family be extended to the district for the remainder of the trusteeship. Hand-carried to Saipan by District Legislature member Peter Christian, the petition’s size was unprecedented, and included signatures from nearly 16% of the island’s population.⁸⁹

These signatures, many of them grouped by surname, revealed both the kin networks through which Pohnpei’s grassroots politics operated and the participation of women within those networks. Women still exerted influence through prestige production and clubs, but they engaged in new forms of activism as well. In 1971, for instance, more

⁸⁷ Adrian Winkel to District Administrator, Ponape. 20 November, 1978 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands.” TTA, reel 71.

⁸⁸ “A Resolution Relative to the Denial of the Administration to Extend the Needy Family Feeding Program to Ponape District,” L.R. No. 288. 4th Ponape District Legislature, 7th Regular Session. (1978) in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208.

⁸⁹ On the first page of this petition stood the signatures of Nett *Nahnken* Salvador Iriarte and Interim FSM Congress Speaker Bethwel Henry. Their support may have resulted from the proximity of Iriarte’s municipality to Kolonia and the heavy concentration of outer Islanders in Henry’s district, which encompassed Sokehs, Mokil, and Ngatik. Adrian Winkel to Ruth Van Cleve, 15 January 1979 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information” TTA, reel 208; “Ponape Petition.” *Highlights*. January 15, 1979, 3.

than 150 women protested the sale of liquor by the drink to Islanders, bringing their demands to the District Administrator and then picketing a meeting of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.⁹⁰ Two months later, citing the protests as evidence that “women are starting to take some action,” Madolenihmw’s Antalihse Shoniber launched a campaign for the Ponape Legislature.⁹¹ But women’s participation in the cash economy was deepening as well, facilitated by special trainings like those offered by Oahu’s East-West Center in areas like nursing, beauty management, and dietetics. As Teresia Teaiwa suggests, these programs were both “an insidious colonial reinforcement of women’s supposed traditional assignment to the private sphere” and unequipped to counter women’s exclusion from political office or underrepresentation in higher education. Yet the increased buying power did boost women’s influence in a meaningful way, both in the home and in the island’s consumer markets.⁹²

Headquarters remained unmoved by Pohnpei’s repeated requests for Needy Family, but Christian decided to lob one further volley in the program’s defense. In a lengthy letter to the Office of Territories, he accused American officials of a “protective and paternalistic attitude” that revealed a “lack of faith” in the growth and development of the Micronesian people over the course of the trusteeship. Asserting the prerogative of

⁹⁰ According to the *Senyavin Times*, the women urged the DistAd to “prohibit Ponapeans from consuming alcohol but to allow only Americans and other foreigners to drink, claiming that they know how to control themselves when drinking.” Later, the women carried signs reading “we do not like the importing of liquor any more for it takes away the lives of our people.” The protests may have been a veiled form of resistance against alcohol-related domestic violence, in addition to an objection to the fighting associated with Kolonia’s beer bars, the first of which opened in 1972. “Women Demonstrating Against Re-open Bars.” *Senyavin Times* 5, no. 14, December 10, 1971, 1; Barbara Demory, “The Commercialization of Sakau (Ponapean Kava)” (Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, Asilomar, California, 1974), 1.

⁹¹ “Lady Candidate.” *Senyavin Times* 5, no. 2, February 4, 1972, 1-2.

⁹² Teresia Teaiwa. “Microwomen: U.S. Colonialism and Micronesian Women Activists” in *Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference*. (Mangilao: University of Guam Press, 1992), 134; Kimberlee Sterritt Kihleng. “Women in Exchange: Negotiated Relations, Practice, and the Constitution of Female Power in Processes of Cultural Reproduction and Change in Pohnpei, Micronesia.” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 1996), 196-198.

indigenous leadership to decide whether to implement and how to manage federal feeding programs, Christian countered each of the arguments leveled against Needy Family in turn. USDA foods did not hinder economic development, he argued, but boosted it. Good agricultural land on Pohnpei and its atolls was not abundant, but scarce. Community health was not robust but in decline, and termination of the Women, Infants, and Children feeding program in the face of an “alarming death rate among infant children” revealed the administration’s “appalling lack of sensitivity.”⁹³ Pohnpei’s sovereignty was its own concern, and Christian urged Interior not to “become blinded by a preoccupation with thoughts concerning the future status of our islands.” But his letter also characterized the territory as a “small isolated community of developing islands, limited in skilled manpower and resources and basically in need of outside help,” with indigenous leadership best equipped to direct those outside resources to local needs.⁹⁴

On the one hand, pro-USDA leaders like Christian made savvy use of Pohnpei’s newly empowered legislature during this time, advocating for feeding programs that stood to offer significant, meaningful short-term benefits to their constituents. As David Hanlon suggests, the outer Islander communities Christian represented may have been especially supportive of programs like Needy Family, wagering that “reliance on the wealth of distant colonizers was preferable to dependence on their more physically proximate, considerably less wealthy, and oftentimes less hospitable Pohnpeian hosts.”⁹⁵ Outer Islanders were also more likely to be landless, to live in or near Kolonia, and to

⁹³ In fact, the decision to terminate WIC had originated in Resio Moses’ Department of Community Development. “Food Program Stirs Controversy,” *Micronesian News Service*, October 27, 1978 in “Feeding Program in Truk Islands.” TTA, reel 71.

⁹⁴ Peter Christian to Ruth Van Cleve, 5 January 1979 in “Corres. Meetings, Report and Other Information.” TTA, reel 208, 2.

⁹⁵ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 177.

rely on store foods for their survival, and therefore more likely to benefit from easier access to an imported food diet that many had adopted already.

But access to USDA foods offered considerable advantages to Christian's landed Pohnpeian constituents as well, both for their ability to assuage food security anxieties and to divert agricultural labor away from subsistence production and toward the prestige economy. While cash had intruded into traditional feasting as early as the 1930s, when some traditional leaders began selling the yams gifted to them at feasts, the ballooning bureaucracy of the 1970s was expanding participation in the cash economy at an unprecedented rate.⁹⁶ As a result, a growing number of Pohnpeians were conserving labor for prestige production by consuming imported foods like rice or ramen rather than subsistence crops like breadfruit or taro, or purchasing high-value yams, pigs, and *sakau* from others. By the 1980s, a kind of inflation was reshaping the island's feasts. Cash fueled contributions of larger and larger yams and pigs, and imported household goods became an increasingly common feature of women's feast contributions. Whereas traditional feast contributions enabled any landed Pohnpeian farmer to compete for titles on an equal footing, access to the cash economy was uneven. Just as the island's burgeoning economic inequalities were starting to transform feasting, therefore, USDA foods offered cash-poor Pohnpeians a chance to level the playing field.⁹⁷

On the other hand, elected leaders' advocacy for programs like Needy Family may have reflected a perverse incentive toward short-term planning inherent in the democratic system itself. Adelino Lorens, Pohnpei's chief of agriculture since 1986, has proposed an analogy between breadfruit and traditional leadership on the one hand, and

⁹⁶ Kurekohr. Interview by John Fischer. Pohnpei, December 19, 1950, in HFP, reel 2, [frame 29].

⁹⁷ Bill Raynor. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 19 November 2014.

rice and elected leadership on the other. “Elected officials are in their official capacity for limited terms,” he suggests, “But when we really look at the real development of a country, it should be longer-term. And rice is really short-term. Breadfruit is long-term... They say if you plant one breadfruit in your lifetime, that’s enough.”⁹⁸ This capacity for farsightedness may have contributed to traditional leaders’ particular wariness toward dependence on U.S. funding. At a 1974 traditional leaders conference, for instance, a Pohnpeian delegate worried that the territory lacked the capacity for meaningful self-governance without ongoing U.S. support, and that “if we cannot stand it means that the United States is not fulfilling their obligations.”⁹⁹ For many Pohnpeian traditional leaders, the prospect of a future state neither developed enough to support its own government nor capable of self-support with traditional local resources was a matter of deep concern, and they did not hesitate to use their considerable influence to make their feelings known.

Politicians like Bethwel Henry and traditional leaders like Johnny Hadley did work to bridge these two systems. Henry recalls attending a feast in Sokehs in the late 1970s where traditional leaders argued over whether USDA foods meant “things would be very easy” or whether it was better to grow food locally to avoid dependence on the U.S. and to “guarantee that it will be there.” Sympathetic to these food sovereignty concerns and his constituents’ food security anxieties, Henry was a vocal advocate for self-sufficiency, diversification of exports, and economic growth, at times advocating for Needy Family and at times yielding to the Sokehs traditional leadership on food

⁹⁸ Adelino Lorens. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 5 March, 2015.

⁹⁹ “Second Annual Micronesian Traditional Chiefs Conference: Unity of Micronesia,” November 11, 1974. Pacific Collection, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 89.

sovereignty issues.¹⁰⁰ Henry was deferential to traditional leadership throughout his career, and maintained a reputation as a leader uniquely emblematic of Pohnpeian virtues like respect, humility, cooperation, and even-temperedness. Yet, in his efforts to negotiate a tangle of competing local, national, and international interests, he ultimately faced the same political pressures as any other elected official.¹⁰¹

Hadley, son of the late Madolenihmw *nahnmwarki* Samuel Hadley, served as the first official liaison between the FSM's newly elected government and its traditional leadership. Concerned for the new nation's food sovereignty, Hadley worked to model it in his personal life, farming and fishing and refusing luxuries like washing machines. In 1981, he told a reporter, "our appetites are standing in the way of progress... As long as we pass the taro patches on our way to buy bread at the supermarket we are going to have to import foreign food within a money economy. If we can remain self-sufficient then we can govern ourselves. I explain this to the people but their stomachs don't want to listen."¹⁰² While Pohnpei's chiefs traditionally held jurisdiction over the island's foreign trade, Pohnpeians had been subverting that prerogative since the early 19th century, when commoners used sexual commerce and petty theft to gain illicit access to trade goods from foreign vessels.¹⁰³ After independence, traditional leaders maintained social and

¹⁰⁰ Describing his current position on imported foods, a now-retired Henry told me "I really don't care about imports. I care about exports. We don't have enough exports... there are some things we shouldn't import, but we should continue to import [rice] because people would just starve if we didn't have rice." Micronesian Seminar, *US Federal Programs*, 11; See, for instance: "Speaker's Opening Speech." *Senyavin Times* VI, no. 1, January 25, 1972, 2; Congress of Micronesia, *Public Speeches 1968*, 2; Bethwel Henry. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 4 November 2014.

¹⁰¹ Daniel T. Hughes. *Obstacles to the Integration of the District Legislature into Ponapean Society*. n.p., 1972, Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 12-13.

¹⁰² Ann Nakano. "Food Stands in Way of Self-Gov't," *The National Union* 2, no. 2, January 30, 1981, 7.

¹⁰³ David Hanlon. *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 78-79.

cultural leverage, but community demand for imports rising from stomachs that “don’t want to listen” largely overwhelmed their power to persuade.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it had been commonplace for Pohnpei’s traditional leaders to hold elected office, or to quietly direct voters toward their chosen candidates. But by the 1970s, voters increasingly recognized that the skills needed for traditional and elected leadership did not always overlap, and worried that electoral politics threatened to degrade the traditional leaders who participated in it. As a result, the roles of traditional and elected leaders diverged, and neither system was left with all the tools to reverse Pohnpei’s rice revolution, nor to guide the global economic forces that increasingly pushed commercial foods around the world. The irony of a postcolonial government that disempowered traditional leadership and reproduced features once aimed at comforting U.S. administrators was not lost on leaders like Senator Pedro Harris, who complained in 1983 that Micronesia had inherited a “three-legged” government it could not afford to fund.¹⁰⁴ But neither was it likely that the people of Pohnpei would have welcomed a heavy-handed effort to enforce food sovereignty on their island, or to reduce their access to a foreign trade their ancestors had participated in for centuries.

As the FSM entered into negotiations over its political future in the gap between its 1978 independence and the 1986 ratification of the Compact of Free Association, Pohnpei’s food sovereignty and food security tensions only gained in urgency. Meanwhile, the potential health impacts of the island’s changing food system were beginning to receive more attention. Stakes were high, and Pohnpei’s voters were poised to render what might be a final verdict on their future relationship with the United States.

¹⁰⁴ “Ponape Delegation Votes for Self-Determination.” *The National Union* 4, no. 17. September 15, 1983, 4.

Voting for breadfruit

In the summer of 1981, Bermin Weilbacher found himself aboard a flight bound from Honolulu to Pohnpei, struggling to describe breadfruit to a stranger. A Kosraean by birth, Weilbacher had been Chief of Agriculture for the Trust Territory, Ponape District Administrator, Acting Pohnpei State Governor, and was then serving as Chief of Agriculture for the FSM at the new national capital in Kolonia. As he recounted breadfruit's remarkable versatility, Weilbacher hit on an idea for the next edition of his "Go Local Club" column in the FSM government's official newspaper, *The National Union*. "Our breadfruit need not rot on the tree or [get] fed to the flies or pigs," he wrote. "If you [have], at any time, made excuses to your friends for eating breadfruit, you should be ashamed of yourself." Americans, he explained, didn't apologize for eating hamburgers or hotdogs, nor were Japanese ashamed of sashimi, Filipinos of balut, or Chamorros of fruit bat. Not only should Micronesians be proud of their breadfruit, and by extension of their national identity, traditional crops presented a golden opportunity for export to land-poor regions like the Marshalls or Nauru. "GO LOCAL," Weilbacher concluded, "expand your farm production."¹⁰⁵

The era between the FSM's independence and ratification of the Compact of Free Association found the new nation in a remarkable state of creative flux, with future access to U.S. funding still unclear and schemes to bolster Pohnpei's sovereignty springing up everywhere. Weilbacher's "Go Local Club" was itself a sign of this creativity. As Weilbacher explains, "there was no club *per se*, no place where the club

¹⁰⁵ Bermin Weilbacher. "The Go Local Club." *The National Union* 2, no. 16, August 30, 1981, 6.

met. I tried to build it in the mind.”¹⁰⁶ The club’s fictive “chapters” were spread across Oceania, and Weilbacher’s columns a device to relay the innovative sovereignty-building initiatives he encountered in his travels to a Micronesian readership. Columns most often promoted local produce and goods, but also called for energy conservation, river bathing, limiting use of telephones, recycling auto parts, hiring local workers, driving safely, taking pride in historic sites, supporting local music, improving agricultural production and animal husbandry, healthy eating, and exercise.¹⁰⁷ The range of these proposals suggests how profoundly the islands had been transformed under a century of colonial rule. Yet they also reveal the range of decolonized futures that seemed possible as Pohnpei prepared for its final political status vote: a 1983 plebiscite to reject or endorse free association that many Pohnpeians framed as a decision between breadfruit and rice.

Free association was an idiosyncratic political arrangement partly modeled after the Cook Islands’ postcolonial relationship with New Zealand. Falling into a hazy third space between colonization and independence, its potential ramifications were not always apparent. Much of the territory saw free association as a tolerable compromise, offering an acceptable degree of self-government without an abrupt end to U.S. funding. But most of Pohnpei’s traditional leaders were opposed from the start, warning of a corrosive

¹⁰⁶ Bermin Weilbacher. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 December 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 1, January 15, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 3, February 15, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 4, February 28, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 8, April 30, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 9, May 15, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 22, November 30, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 2, no. 24, December 30, 1981, 6; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 3, no. 3, February 15, 1982, 7; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 3, no. 5, March 15, 1982, 7; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 3, no. 8, April 30, 1982, 7; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 3, no. 9, May 15, 1982, 7; Bermin Weilbacher. “The Go Local Club.” *The National Union* 3, no. 14, July 30, 1982, 7.

deepening of acculturation to foreign values and dependence on the United States.¹⁰⁸

Heinrich Iriarte, an influential traditional leader in Nett and mainstay of the island's elected leadership, argued in 1970 that the only true alternative to full independence was a "permanent, unbreakable union with the United States." Both free association and commonwealth status, he suggested, would render Islanders "half-American and half-Micronesian," leaving them as captive to the U.S. as Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, or Guam. While free association was ostensibly terminable, Iriarte argued, Micronesians would inevitably become "too comfortable with the large American budget and the American standard of living" to fully break with the U.S. in the future.¹⁰⁹

Such arguments, particularly when delivered by traditional leaders, were influential. But Ponape District's non-binding 1975 referendum on future status revealed a more complex political landscape. The referendum offered five status options, among which independence captured a convincing plurality of 40.9%. But each of the other four options involved some continuing relationship with the United States, muddling the mandate for independence. The vote also laid bare the district's ethnic divisions, with Pohnpeians far more supportive of independence than outer Islanders. Still, sovereignty advocates took heart from the vote, even as the prospect of leaping into the unknown provoked worry among their neighbors. Some mothers, for instance, began warning of an

¹⁰⁸ Pro-independence sentiment among Pohnpei's traditional leaders was not unanimous. In a 1973 conversation with a visiting U.S. official, for instance, Senator Bailey Olter described the traditional leaders as favoring independence, shortly after the Nahmwarki of U had shared his "strong anti-independence views" with the U.S. ambassador. Henry Schwalenberg, S.J. "Independence and Unity or Money: The Plebiscite in FSM." Memo #10 (January 1984) in "Micronesian Seminar Plebiscite Correspondence & Info Regarding FSM Compact." FMA, reel 186, 12; J.M. Wilson, Jr. to Franklin Haydn Williams. January 2, 1973 in Willens and Siemer, *From the White House*, 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Heinrich Iriarte to House of Representatives, Congress of Micronesia, 26 August 1970 in *Public Speeches: The Congress of Micronesia, 1970-1971*. (Saipan: Office of the Legislative Counsel, 1971), 103-104.

imminent return to the production of breadfruit barkcloth, leaving children to wonder whether Americans were “going to come and take our clothes away.”¹¹⁰ The question, guileless though it may have been, was revealing. It evoked both precolonial Pohnpeian autonomy and the still-recent deprivations of the Pacific War, and suggested the unnerving range of possibility for daily life in a post-independence state.

By the end of the 1970s, the Trust Territory had broken into four pieces: the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. The latter three eventually ratified Compacts of Free Association with the United States, intricate legal documents that bridged the U.S. military’s longstanding demand to maintain control of the region’s defense with the funding imperatives of the three independent Micronesian governments. The FSM’s Compact offered 15 years of grants, access to certain federal programs, and visa-free travel to the United States for Micronesian citizens. Official FSM government representatives were publicly supportive and, outside of Pohnpei, resistance to the agreement was limited.

A final agreement on the draft FSM Compact was reached in October of 1982, with a plebiscite to be held in June of the following year. That plebiscite offered Pohnpei a final opportunity to pore over free association’s implications for everything from sovereignty, funding imperatives, state-national relations, food security, and identity to

¹¹⁰ These figures exclude Kosrae. According to Glenn Petersen’s calculations, in 1975 Pohnpei and its outer islands voted 40.9% in favor of independence, 27.9% for free association, 22.4% to continue the trusteeship system, 5.8% for commonwealth status, and 3.8% for U.S. statehood. 21% of outer Island and Sokehs voters chose independence, as opposed to 56.7% of the predominately ethnic Pohnpeian voters in the rural municipalities. Glenn Petersen. “Breadfruit or Rice?: The Political Economics of a Vote in Micronesia.” *Science & Society* 43, no. 4 (Winter 1979/1980), 479-480, 483.

the legitimacy of the negotiations themselves.¹¹¹ But those early years of independence also presented an opportunity to experiment with ways to reclaim Pohnpei's autonomy through economic development, and to bear out decades of accusations against distant, unresponsive Trust Territory bureaucrats in the bargain. The resulting enthusiasm for local manufacturing was galvanizing, but stimulating production over such a short period proved challenging. One project aimed to manufacture flip-flops using soles and machinery imported from Taiwan, but poor market research resulted in an untested product consumers believed was inferior.¹¹² Copra remained the federation's bedrock export, and Madolenihmw's Ponape Coconut Products was busily producing soaps and shampoos, boasting it could supply "all the needs of Ponape."¹¹³ But global copra prices were so volatile that a crash after 1979's peak more than halved the total value of the nation's exports within four years.¹¹⁴ Fisheries appeared promising, particularly given the 1977 establishment of a 200-mile exclusive economic zone around the islands, but also seemed unlikely to generate the imminent surge in tax revenue needed to change Pohnpei's short-term funding equation prior to the plebiscite.¹¹⁵

In spite of this uncertainty, in 1983 Pohnpei became the only state to reject the Compact, with 51.1% voting no. Because the federation's other three states approved the

¹¹¹ For Glenn Petersen's extensive analysis of the 1983 plebiscite vote, see: Petersen, "Cultural Analysis of the Ponapean Independence Vote;" Glenn Petersen. *Decentralisation and Micronesian Federalism: Pohnpei's 1983 Vote against Free Association*. (Suva: USP Sociological Society, 1986).

¹¹² Ponape State Government, *State Development Plan*, 178; Bermin Weilbacher. Interview by author. Kolonia, Pohnpei, 14 December 2014.

¹¹³ Ponape Coconut Products was launched in 1974 under the direction of the Jesuit-run Ponape Agriculture & Trade School. It was incorporated as an independent private enterprise in 1989. Jessica Chapman, "Ponape Coconut Products powers Pohnpei engines." *Kaslehlhie Press* 6, no. 15. 16 August, 2006, 6; Ponape State Government, Federated States of Micronesia. *Ponape State Development Plan (1985-1989)*. (Kolonia: Ponape State Government, 1983), 179; *PATS of Ponape*. (New York: P.E.A.C.E. Foundation, 1980), 19.

¹¹⁴ Federated States of Micronesia. *First National Development Plan, 1985-1989*. (Kolonia, Pohnpei: Office of Planning & Statistics, 1984), 73.

¹¹⁵ Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 143.

agreement with more than 75% support, it was ultimately ratified. But while President Tosiwo Nakayama celebrated the vote as a “landslide,” reaction on the ground was more mixed. Pohnpei Governor Resio Moses was conciliatory, arguing that voters had not necessarily rejected the Compact or the unity of the federation, but lodged a protest against the plebiscite process itself and “asked for more time” to consider their options.¹¹⁶ The Pohnpei Legislature issued a report objecting to the Compact on three grounds: language that seemed to permit a unilateral U.S. military presence in the islands, fiscal provisions that encroached on sovereignty and the federation’s balance of powers with a system of U.S. government audits, and deficiencies in the negotiations and plebiscite processes.¹¹⁷ Some Pohnpeians complained that an inadequate voter education campaign had rushed them ill-prepared into a high stakes vote, and worried that the Compact would deliver localized economic benefits to Kolonia while “casting a foreboding military threat” across the rest of the island.¹¹⁸

Outside political observers weighed in as well. The Catholic Mission’s Henry Schwalenberg called the plebiscite a “successful exercise in nation-building.” But he also pointed to the Pohnpei vote, and to a partial boycott of the plebiscite in Chuuk, as evidence of the federation’s “fragile unity,” resentments over pressure to trade sovereignty for foreign aid, and “the extent certain factions would go in pursuit of self-

¹¹⁶ “Compact Wins in Landslide: Observers Praise Conduct of Plebiscite.” *The National Union* 4, no. 12, 30 June, 1983, 5.

¹¹⁷ Resio S. Moses. “Statement of Resio S. Moses on Senate Joint Resolution No. 286 before the United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, May 25, 1984.” Micronesian Seminar Archives, Xavier High School. Weno, Chuuk.

¹¹⁸ Henry Schwalenberg, S.J. “Independence and Unity or Money: The Plebiscite in FSM.” Memo #10 (January 1984) in “Micronesian Seminar Plebiscite Correspondence & Info Regarding FSM Compact.” FMA, roll 186, 16.

aggrandizement.”¹¹⁹ Glenn Petersen noted rural Pohnpei’s overwhelming “no” vote and the broad support for free association in Kolonia and the outer islands, a disparity some warned signaled a future worsening of ethnic, class, or rural-urban tensions. But Petersen championed the result as a Pohnpeian defense of self-reliance and *manaman*, a term roughly analogous to power or sovereignty, echoing a man who juxtaposed the Compact vote with the Needy Family controversy: “we Ponapeans voted for *manaman*. The rest of Micronesia voted for USDA.”¹²⁰

Of course, Pohnpei’s district and state legislators’ fervent advocacy for Needy Family, and their equally enthusiastic opposition to the Compact a few years later, suggests that the distance between *manaman* and free association may not have been as irreconcilable as plebiscite-era sloganeering implied. The legislature’s 1978 Needy Family resolutions, for instance, could be read as strategies to secure a quick surge of development funding, remedy decades of inept colonial economic policy, and set Pohnpei on a path toward long-term self-reliance, as well as a scheme to meet short-term constituent demands. In fact, while the Pohnpei State Legislature did lodge a final show of resistance against the agreement, the Compact’s ratification brought a *détente* over free association that enabled leaders to turn to other issues.¹²¹ In the meantime, hopes for clawing back autonomy turned to the Compact itself, whose initial funding boost supporters hoped would accelerate economic growth, expanding the local tax base as U.S. funding was stepped down.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Schwalenberg, “Independence and Unity or Money,” 1.

¹²⁰ Petersen, “Cultural Analysis of the Ponapean Independence Vote,” 22, 26.

¹²¹ “FSM Ratifies Compact.” *The National Union* 4, no. 17. 15 September, 1983, 1.

¹²² Ultimately, this strategy proved unsuccessful, and the funding drawdown did not occur as planned. But as the Compact’s 15-year term drew to a close, Pohnpei again launched into a creative reimagining of its

Foods like breadfruit and rice had become fixtures in Pohnpei's visions of its postcolonial future, as vivid tropes underpinning food sovereignty or material assurances of future food security. The public health impacts of dietary change, however, rarely seemed to break through, despite warnings from sovereignty advocates like Bermin Weilbacher.¹²³ But cautions from nutritionists and community advocates across the region, many of them women, had been building. In 1971, for instance, Carmen M. Tun warned that "undernutrition" in Yap was increasing susceptibility to infectious disease, causing digestive and respiratory problems, and leading to pregnancy complications. Tun, a co-founder of the Yap Women's Association, criticized nutrition workshops that promoted unaffordable imports like beef and foreign vegetables, implied that local foods were "unfit for consumption or for maintaining good health," and left participants feeling "hopeless, helpless, and frustrated." "Merely educating the people on what to eat," Tun had argued, was not enough. Restoring Yap's food system demanded village-level community development linked to collaborative, interdepartmental policymaking. Only then could "food production, distribution, storage, preservation," and shifting social patterns be comprehensively addressed.¹²⁴

Tun's approach to restoring Yap's public health was radical, even in the context of the independence movement, given its potential to cut against the region's

postcolonial future. That reimagining concluded with a second Compact agreement, ratified in 2004, whose provisions were mostly familiar but which included a number of changes critics argued circumscribed FSM sovereignty even further. See: John Hagelgam, "Sovereignty Undermined: The Devil Is In the Fine Print." *Pacific Magazine* (April 2004); David Hanlon. "The 'Sea of Little Lands': Examining Micronesia's Place in 'Our Sea of Islands.'" *The Contemporary Pacific* 21, no. 1 (2009), 101.

¹²³ See, for instance: Bermin Weilbacher. "The Go Local Club." *The National Union* 3, no. 9, May 15, 1982, 7.

¹²⁴ In addition to her work with the Yap Women's Association, Tun later served as Second Lady of the FSM and Yap State's Postmaster General. Carmen M. Tun. *Nutritional Problems and the Role of Community Development in Remedial Measures*. (Utrecht-Zeist: International Course in Food Science and Nutrition, 1971), 1, 3-4.

longstanding elevation of free markets and consumer choice over the social impacts those systems produced. But most of Micronesia's dieticians played it safe, hewing closely to administrative preferences for promoting local agricultural production and consumption of healthy foods, and working to change individual behaviors through education and diet counseling. Nancy Rody, for instance, argued in 1981 that malnutrition resulted from parents unaware of "how to correctly use the new foods now being eaten in the Pacific," and therefore advocated a "balanced diet" using nutrition data culled from U.S. and Pacific-based researchers.¹²⁵ Anthropologist Barbara Demory echoed a perennial *mehn waii* critique of feasting as she worried over how Pohnpei had managed to produce such productive agroforests and so many "underfed and poorly nourished" children at the same time. Responsibility, she argued, lay with "values inherent in the traditional political prestige system" that had produced a "deleterious" effect on home eating, as families cultivated healthy crops for feast presentations while eating rice and ramen at home.¹²⁶

But Demory's formulation was backwards. It was the rice revolution, spurred along by the funding increases of the post-Eisenhower era and then by the Compact, that had collided with Pohnpei's subsistence economy while its prestige economy remained as healthy and vibrant as ever. That rice revolution has become the most visible dietary legacy of Pohnpei's colonial rule, as many on the island now consider rice an indispensable component of any meal.¹²⁷ Yet the FSM's second Compact of Free Association, revised in 2004, is set to expire in 2024, and Pohnpei remains heavily reliant

¹²⁵ Nancy Rody. *New Pacific Nutrition*. (Saipan, Marianas Islands: Marianas Dept. of Education, 1981), 2

¹²⁶ Barbara Gail Horing Demory. "An Illusion of Surplus : The Effect of Status Rivalry upon Family Food Consumption." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1976), 1, 12-13.

¹²⁷ Allison Corsi. "An Exploratory Study of Food and Nutritional Beliefs and Practices in Pohnpei, FSM." (M.P.H. thesis, Emory University, 2004), 47.

on the funding it provides to operate critical institutions like schools and hospitals. As 2024 draws near, many dormant questions over food security and food sovereignty may well become urgent once again.

Conclusion

The transformations in Pohnpei's food system and politics in the post-Eisenhower era were so dramatic as to appear almost disconnected from its earlier colonial past. Certainly, Washington's use of outside funding and social programs to make policy represented a departure from prior colonial governance, and the endurance of so much of that policy speaks to the period's ongoing influence. Yet many of the building blocks of that change were in place long before. Copra had expanded access to the cash economy, and Pohnpeians had accepted a land reform that broadened its influence. Cash wealth had become a new form of prestige, one that mostly lay outside the traditional prestige system but that held value nonetheless. Rice was never quite as pregnant with meaning for Pohnpeians as Japanese settlers, but its use among those with access to Japanese currency did foreshadow a larger rice revolution four decades later. Even the ostensibly uneventful 1950s had built Kolonia into a powerful center of multicultural influence.

Yet the food sovereignty and food security tensions that so shaped Pohnpei's independence movement were more than a response to American policymaking. Their roots lay in centuries of calamitous natural disasters and in the food politics of the *nahnmwarki* system, perhaps even of the Saudeleur era. Those tensions therefore stand to reemerge as 2024 draws closer, though perhaps in a much different form, as Pohnpei grapples with its relationships within the FSM, with the United States and, increasingly,

with China. The long-term impact of the island's rice revolution may then come into sharp focus once again.

CONCLUSION: GOING LOCAL

The three decades since the Compact of Free Association have seen predictably uneven forward lurches in Pohnpei's economic development, and a corresponding expansion in the influence of its cash economy. Less predictable has been a dramatic surge in the number of Pohnpeians and outer Islanders living abroad, especially in the United States. With a resident population hovering around 35,000, Pohnpei may have sent as many as 15,000 additional people to the U.S., to more established destinations like Guam, Hawai'i, and Oregon and to large cities and small towns across the U.S. mainland.¹ FSM citizens have also joined the U.S. military at high rates, and deployed to bases and conflict zones across the world.² The airport at Dekehtik now facilitates a vibrant informal trade, as those leaving the island pack coolers with local fish and those returning bring t-shirts and smartphones, or the occasional specialty food.

Pohnpei's boundaries have grown, but its colonial legacy remains tightly woven into the fabric of the island. At Our Lady of Mercy High School in the fall of 2014, my Micronesian Civics class sometimes used the panorama outside our window as a way to consider that legacy. Our school sits in a place once called Mesenieng, named for its association with resurrection and new life.³ Claimed by Congregationalist missionaries in 1865 and rechristened Canaan, two decades later it was the seat of Spanish government.

¹ The FSM government does not maintain official figures on its residents abroad. In a 2014 conversation with me, however, FSM Consulate Kandhi Eliesiar estimated that 10,000-15,000 citizens of Pohnpei State currently reside in the United States. On other Micronesian migrations to the U.S., see: Donald H. Rubinstein. *Micronesian Migrants to Guam and Saipan Post-Compact (1987)*. (New South Wales, Australia: The Centre for South Pacific Studies, University of New South Wales, 1990); Mac Marshall. *Namoluk Beyond the Reef: The Transformation of a Micronesian Atoll*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004); Lola Quan Bautista. *Steadfast Movement Around Micronesia: Satowan Enlargements beyond Migration*. (New York: Lexington Books, 2010); Hezel, Francis X. *Micronesians on the Move: Eastward and Upward Bound*. Pacific Islands Policy 9. Honolulu: East-West Center, 2013.

² See: *Island Soldier*. Directed by Nathan Fitch. (Durham, North Carolina: Atoll Pictures, 2017).

³ David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 152.

There, Capuchin priests and colonial officials mingled within thick fortress walls that still stand just beyond the school's gates. In a promise of collaboration and mutual respect, German officials opened the doors of that fort, and then slammed them shut in the chaos of the rebellion. To our west, German priests erected an imposing church, which towered over a Shinto shrine enclosed by an orderly park well into Japanese rule. There, Pohnpeians and settlers bowed toward Tokyo, seeking Hirohito's divine favor as war approached. Only the bell tower now remains, standing watch over a baseball diamond whose outfield wall incorporates the Spanish ruins. A visitor might read the games played there as a transparent signifier of U.S. influence, unless they happen to overhear the Pohnpeian term for baseball, *iakiu*, and note its similarity to the Japanese *yakyū*.

But in seeking clarity on Pohnpei's position within circuits of imperial rule, we might just as well have looked at ourselves. Our principal was a nun from Saipan, serving with the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, Spain. Our class president's American father practiced law in Kolonia, and with her German mother was a fixture of the expat community. My own path to Pohnpei began a decade ago, through a teaching non-profit whose director forged ties in the region during her years on Kwajalein. My wife came through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and our courtship took place almost entirely within the colonial town both our nations once occupied. Our class was from Pohnpei and Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae, from outer islands in between, and from Kiribati and Korea. Some had already spent childhood years in the U.S., others were on their way to American colleges, and nearly all maintained family ties abroad. Even in Pohnpei's public schools, where students may be less well-heeled, family names reveal complex

lineages, with foreign ancestors joining Islander forebears drawn in by labor, natural disaster, or the tireless mobility that has characterized Oceania for millennia.

Amid this complexity, which is now embedded in Pohnpei's flora as surely as its bodies and built environment, Island Food Community has been staging a vigorous "go local" campaign. Since its founding in 2004, Island Food's workshops, classroom presentations, television and radio programs, posters, billboards, political lobbying, and scientific research have made the "go local" message nearly ubiquitous on the island.⁴ A colorful billboard placed near Pohnpei's hospital in 2006, for instance, pictures a man teaching his son how to plant a yam. In the foreground, the boy's mother acts as a "supporting figure," perhaps preparing a piece of taro for cooking. Surrounding the family is an assortment of foods, from pandanus fruits and *karat* bananas to coconuts, breadfruit, and papaya.⁵ Absent are the cucumbers now growing abundantly in the Pohnpei countryside, or any sign that "local" crops like the *utin pihsi* (Fiji banana) or *kehpin sapahn* (Japanese yam) may have originated elsewhere.

So what, and who, is local on Pohnpei? If Island Food believes *utin pihsi* can become local, can cucumbers? Can rice? In 2015, I posed these questions to Island Food's Executive Director Rainer Jimmy. He responded:

...what we grew up with, anything that comes in that has a similar taste or texture is local. For example, bananas. There were bananas way, way back. And then other bananas came in. They are categorized as local. Cucumbers, green leafy vegetables, they were not, so they're not local. Although they were grown locally, they are not categorized as local because they do not meet our meaning of local

⁴ A 2008 survey, for instance, found that an Island Food billboard placed on the circumferential road near the state hospital two years earlier had been seen by 98% of participants. Laura Allison Iler Kaufer. "Evaluation of a Traditional Food for Health Intervention in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia." (School of Dietetics and Human Nutrition, McGill University, 2008), 55.

⁵ Lois Englberger, A. Lorens, M. Pretrick, B. Raynor, J. Currie, A. Corsie, L. Kaufer, R.I. Naik, R. Spegal, and H.V. Kuhnlein. "Approaches and Lessons Learned for Promoting Dietary Improvement in Pohnpei, Micronesia" in *Combating Micronutrient Deficiencies: Food-Based Approaches*. (Cambridge: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011), 235-236.

food. And I think the locals need to clearly define what they mean by local. But my understanding is that local is what Pohnpeians have, what is still there, and what will be there.... people know that rice was never part of Pohnpei. It was something imported... there are varieties of banana that came from Fiji, Taiwan, Manila. But they're bananas. They're not rice. They're bananas. Pohnpei can relate to bananas. So those varieties become local because Pohnpei can relate to them and they understand them. And I think they've seen these around for a long time, and it is part of the knowledge passed down from generation to generation.⁶

Jimmy's slippage between local foods and local people suggests a broad definition of locality, and even of Pohnpeian indigeneity, one expansive and distinct enough to encompass the complexity of the postcolonial island and its people. In Jimmy's reading, locality is a taste and a texture, that which precedes and exceeds the colonial encounter. It is an ongoing relationship between the people and their land, one that remains fluid enough to carry to the island into an uncertain future.

Yet Pohnpei's public health crisis remains urgent. Its food system cuts lives short, fosters illness, and strains healthcare infrastructure. Imports erode subsistence agriculture and litter the landscape with packaging waste, while school systems and wage labor draw young and old away from farm and fishery. The damage to the food system is systemic, and its flaws are increasingly ingrained into young bodies as each new generation of eaters comes of age. Invasive species impact the island's ecology, and climate change now disrupts the seasonality of crops like breadfruit, causing them to ripen at unexpected times. Young Pohnpeians raised in the U.S. face their own struggles, as American food systems consistently deliver rosier health outcomes to wealthier eaters. The island's activist organizations, like Island Food or the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, can have real impacts, especially on the individual level. But activists and NGOs lack the power to set the food system right on their own.

⁶ Rainer Jimmy. Interview with author. Kolonia, Pohnpei. January 13, 2015.

Reclaiming a healthy food system for Pohnpei often feels just within reach, especially with the outbreak of its public health crisis still within living memory. The island's agroforests endure, and retain much of their power to sustain the island. But much has changed over a century of colonial encounter, and much of that change is irreversible. Perhaps Pohnpei may mount a coordinated action, prioritizing long-term public health and the health of the food system, with agroforests at the heart of the solution. Perhaps local food can be brought to local people, helping to layer new and healthier histories on Pohnpei's colonial pasts. But the pain that now rests in Pohnpei's land and in its bodies runs deep, and appears unlikely to be easily or swiftly resolved.

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GLOSSARY⁷

And atoll 8 eight miles southwest of Pohnpei.

Dauen Neu river that currently marks the southern boundary of Kolonia Town.

Dekehtik small island in the Pohnpei lagoon directly north of Kolonia, site of the Pohnpei airport since 1970.

Enipein region in Kitti now made up of two *kousapw*: Enipein Pah and Enipein Powe.

Fefan third largest inhabited island in Chuuk Lagoon.

Haruki-mura Japanese agricultural settlement established in Palikir in 1931, whose name means “Coming of Spring” village.

Herbertshöhe (Kokopo) capital of German New Guinea, located in East New Britain,” from which Germany governed its “Island Territory” in the Carolines and Northern Marianas.

Isol Pohnpei’s season of scarcity, yam season.

Jaluit Gesellschaft German copra trading firm founded in 1887 from the merger of the Deutsche Handels und Plantagen-Gesellschaft and Robertson & Hensheim. The firm purchased the San Francisco-based A. Crawford & Co. five years later.

Kaigan Dōri Kolonia Town’s waterfront road under Japanese rule, and center of commercial activity at that time.

Kamadipw traditional Pohnpeian ceremonial feast.

Kapingamarangi atoll 465 miles north-northeast of Pohnpei.

Kinakapw *kousapw* in northeast Madolenimw.

Kōgakkō Japanese-era schools established to teach Islanders Japanese and train them for colonial labor.

Kousapw section or local chiefdom.

Ledau *kousapw* in eastern Madolenimw.

Lehn Diepei river in Rohnkitti that flows into the Dauen nan Kepinpil.

⁷ Many entries adapted from Thomas Panholzer and Rufino Mauricio, *Place Names of Pohnpei Island, Including And (Ant) and Pakin Atolls* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2003) and Damian Sohl, Kenneth Rehg, and Robert Andreas, “Pohnpeian-English Online Dictionary,” accessed 12 July 2018, www.trussel2.com/pnp.

Lelu one of Kosrae's five municipalities, located on the island's northeastern side, and site of the Kosrae State capital at Tofol.

Lenger small island and *kousapw* just northeast of Dekehtik, in the Pohnpei lagoon. Site of Japanese seaplane base and American airport until 1969.

Luhwen wehi "remainder of the *wehi*," the land remaining in each *wehi* after the 1912 German land allotments.

Lukop *kousapw* in Madolenihmw.

Mahr preserved breadfruit.

Malem one of Kosrae's five municipalities, located on the island's southeastern side.

Mehn waii foreigner.

Mokil atoll 109 miles east of Pohnpei.

Mortlock Islands group of large atolls 150 miles southeast of Chuuk.

Mpwoampw area directly to the southeast of Kolonia Town, just past the Dauen Neu river. Mpwoampw was purchased by Johann Kubary, then by the Etscheit Family. Nett traditional leaders have contested ownership of the area for decades.

Mwalok a community in Sokehs Powe known for its sizable Pingelapese population.

Nahlaimw second ranking title in the Nahnken title line.

Nahnken title of the highest chief in the "B" title line of Pohnpei's *nahnmwarki* system.

Nahnmkwari title of the highest chief in the "A" title line of Pohnpei's *nahnmwarki* system.

Nahs Pohnpeian feasthouse and community meeting house, formerly used for religious purposes.

Naichi (内地) Japanese term for domestic, or inland. Used to measure the distance of people, colonies, nations, and objects from "domestic" Japanese space.

Naichi hakumai domestically grown Japanese white rice.

Namiki Dōri road that led from the Spanish wall park, past the Kolonia kogakko, hospital, and government offices, and led to the town's agriculture/weather station under Japanese rule. Presently Kaselehlie Street.

Nankinmai an undesirable rice imported to Japan widely associated with Nanjing, although by the 1920s it was mostly produced in Southeast Asia.

Nanpohnmal Nett *kousapw* just south of Kolonia Town. Prior to the rebellion of 1910-1911, Nanpohnmal was part of Sokehs. Site of a sizable airport under Japanese rule.

Nanshin Japanese political doctrine of “southward advance” toward Oceania and Southeast Asia, pursued especially by Japan’s Navy between the 1920s and the Second World War.

Nan’yō Bōeki kaisha (NBK) South Seas Trading Company.

Nan’yō Dendō Dan South Seas Mission.

Nan’yō Guntō South Sea Islands.

Nan’yō Kōhatsu Kabushiki kaisha (NKK) South Seas Development Company.

Nansapw cultivated, settled, arable land, the sphere of most human activity on Pohnpei.

Nanwel forest, jungle, overgrown or uncultivated land.

Nan’yō’chō South Seas Government.

Ngatik atoll 88 miles southwest of Pohnpei.

Nukuoro atoll 245 miles south of Pohnpei.

Ohwa village located in Northern Madolenihmw, site of Protestant mission station and considerable conflict between Protestant and Catholic forces under Spanish rule.

Oroluk atoll 202 miles west-northwest of Pohnpei.

Pakin atoll 21 miles west of Pohnpei.

Palikir large area in southwest Sokehs, currently the site of the FSM national capital.

Parempi lagoon island located northeast of Kolonia, and *kousapw* of Nett.

Pehleng *kousapw* in northwest Kittu.

Perehn kuk Cookhouse.

Piis-Losap atoll in the Upper Mortlock Islands, 50 miles southeast of Chuuk Lagoon.

Pingelap atoll 188 miles southeast of Pohnpei.

Puluwat atoll 170 miles west of Chuuk Lagoon.

Rahk season of plenty, Pohnpei's main breadfruit season.

Rohnkitti *kousapw* in Kitti, site of Pohnpei's first Protestant church, major shipping port and seat of several influential *nahnkens* during the 19th century, and center of the Nanpei family's power.

Ryōtei upscale Japanese restaurant, which traditionally featured entertainment by geisha and offered a venue for business and political leaders to hold meetings discreetly.

Uhmw Pohnpeian oven built from loose stones, which are heated and placed on the ground around the food being baked.

Sakau kava.

Sapwalap large region in central Madolenihmw.

Sapwtik small island just north of Dekehtik, in Pohnpei's lagoon.

Seinendan youth groups established under Japanese rule, which sponsored various athletic contests and community events, many of which were easily lent to nationalistic purposes.

Shōgakkō Japanese-era schools established to educate settler children, using a curriculum similar to those used on the Japanese mainland. Islander schools were also known as shōgakkō between 1915 and 1918.

Sokehs Pah the east side of Sokehs Island.

Sokehs Powe the west side of Sokehs Island.

Tafunsak one of Kosrae's five municipalities, located on the island's northern side.

Tarawa atoll in Kiribati, seized by U.S. Marines from Japan in November of 1943.

Tiahk custom, manner, behavior, culture.

Wahu respect, honor.

Wakamoto Company pharmaceutical company founded in 1929, originally known for an over the counter supplement based on beer yeast that was meant to alleviate malnutrition in Japan.

Wapar *kousapw* in southern Madolenihmw.

Wehi autonomous paramount chiefdom, or turtle.

Wonuhmw a cookhouse containing an uhmw.