Book Reviews


In the preface the authors state “this book has been designed for reading by the general public and for possible use as a text book in the schools of Guam.” This well-illustrated, well-balanced book will serve both needs. This is not a dry, dull history but one that reads smoothly and interestingly with certain features that make it well suited as a text. The authors used extensive quotes when the primary source material was unlikely to be available and provided each chapter with a good summary.

The book’s organization is chronological. The opening chapter is devoted to a physical description of the island and the pre-Spanish period. This is followed by a most interesting chapter dealing with the islands discovery and a thumb-nail sketch of European history. By providing a background to this era of exploration and discovery the authors have avoided the “isolation” complex from which many histories suffer. This will be another strong feature of the book if used as a text.

The Spanish and United States Naval periods are each given full coverage with the last three chapters of the book devoted to specific topics i.e., Religion, Education, Organic Act with emphasis on the post World War II period.

Like any region’s history certain aspects of Guam’s history are controversial. The authors have not dodged these, i.e., location of Magellan’s landing in the Mariannas; Spanish conquest of the Chamorros; self-government in the post war period; rather they have treated them fully and objectively.

In view of the authors statement regarding the book, “it is intended to be an introduction to the study of Guam,” one would expect to find an extensive bibliography, happily such is the case. However, one should not construe the authors statement to mean the book is not a thorough study. This is a well-researched, well-documented work which is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature devoted to Guam.

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This attractive and well illustrated monograph stems from research undertaken in the Ellice Islands between July 1960 and March 1961. The author is to be congratulated for making his research findings available so soon after completion of field work. Previous studies of Ellice Island culture by Charles Hadley and D.G. Kennedy were focused on Funafuti and Vaitupu, respectively, in the southern part of the group. In order to avoid duplication, as well as to gain a broader perspective, Koch concentrated on two northern atolls: Niutao and Nanumanga, and on one southern atoll not previously studied: Nukufetau. His presentation is no bare catalogue of artifacts. Items of material culture are