

Micronesia: The Americanization of Eden

By DAVID S. BOYER

National Geographic Foreign Staff



I HAD NO MORE THAN set foot on the little island, lost in a corner of the western Pacific, when I met a small boy named Cigarette. And another named Maybe. A third was called Careful. Then, inevitably, came a young girl with the captivating counterpoint, Careless. Two others responded to KissMe and LoveMe. There was also a child, bearing both her name and her soul in her large round eyes, called Kindly—a soft symbol of her Micronesian people.

Half a dozen such barefoot youngsters took me hiking one day, up a rain-soaked volcanic mountain covered with coconut palm and breadfruit trees. Wearing rubber sneakers, I kept slipping and falling in the mud. I suppose I looked ridiculous, wildly trying to save three cameras each time I lost my feet. The Micronesian kids, at any rate, were hysterical over my embarrassment.

One of them, named Radio, gave me a name, too—"Mr. Accident."

Then he delivered the coup de grace. When I slipped again and landed on my back, Radio got into the act before I'd even stopped sliding. Flinging his arms and palms outward and downward like a baseball umpire, he screamed, "Safe!"

Radio and Cigarette and LoveMe and their realm of little islands, Micronesia, are gravitating toward the United States of America,

as the names given them by their parents indicate. Considering that Micronesia is flung across a stretch of blue water broader than the United States mainland and 5,000 miles distant, this is a curious movement. It began, slowly at first, when U. S. forces captured the islands from Japan in World War II.* Today, the Americanization of Micronesia gathers momentum almost by the hour.

One Stadium Could Seat All Micronesia

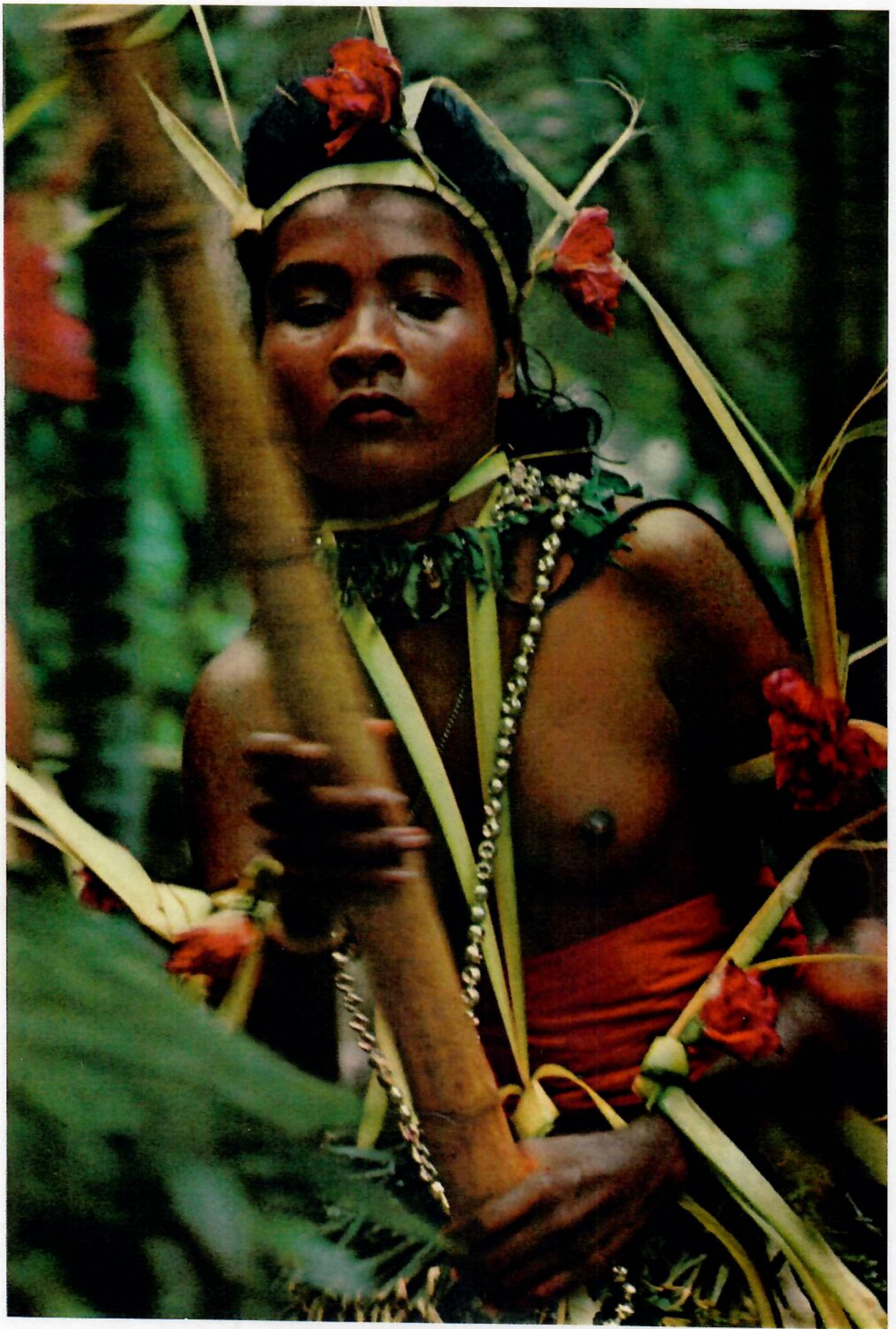
Although Micronesians are an ocean away from the United States—south of Japan, north of Australia (maps, pages 714-15)—their drift toward the U. S. A. shows everywhere: in their births and baptisms, their language, their thinking, and their habits, good and bad.

What makes this eastward orientation most startling is that some Micronesian islands are barely surfacing from the Stone Age, or, more precisely, from the shell-and-coral age, for the tools of the islanders have been coral and shell. Not even the most advanced island has truly caught up with the 20th century.

If all the Micronesians in all this wide blue world were to come together, they wouldn't fill the stands of the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

*An earlier account of our Micronesian stewardship, by W. Robert Moore, appeared in the July, 1948, GEOGRAPHIC: "Pacific Wards of Uncle Sam."

Swirling, swaying girl of Yap joins her high-school troupe in a spirited stick dance. Jeweled with hibiscus blossoms and a gleaming necklace, the grass-skirted coed keeps alive her heritage while studying for the future. Currents of anticipation sweep the scattered Pacific islands of Micronesia as its seafaring people—bruised by World War II and jarred by nuclear testing at Bikini and Eniwetok—look for a place in the modern world.





Even with the population explosion, there are only about 93,000 of them.

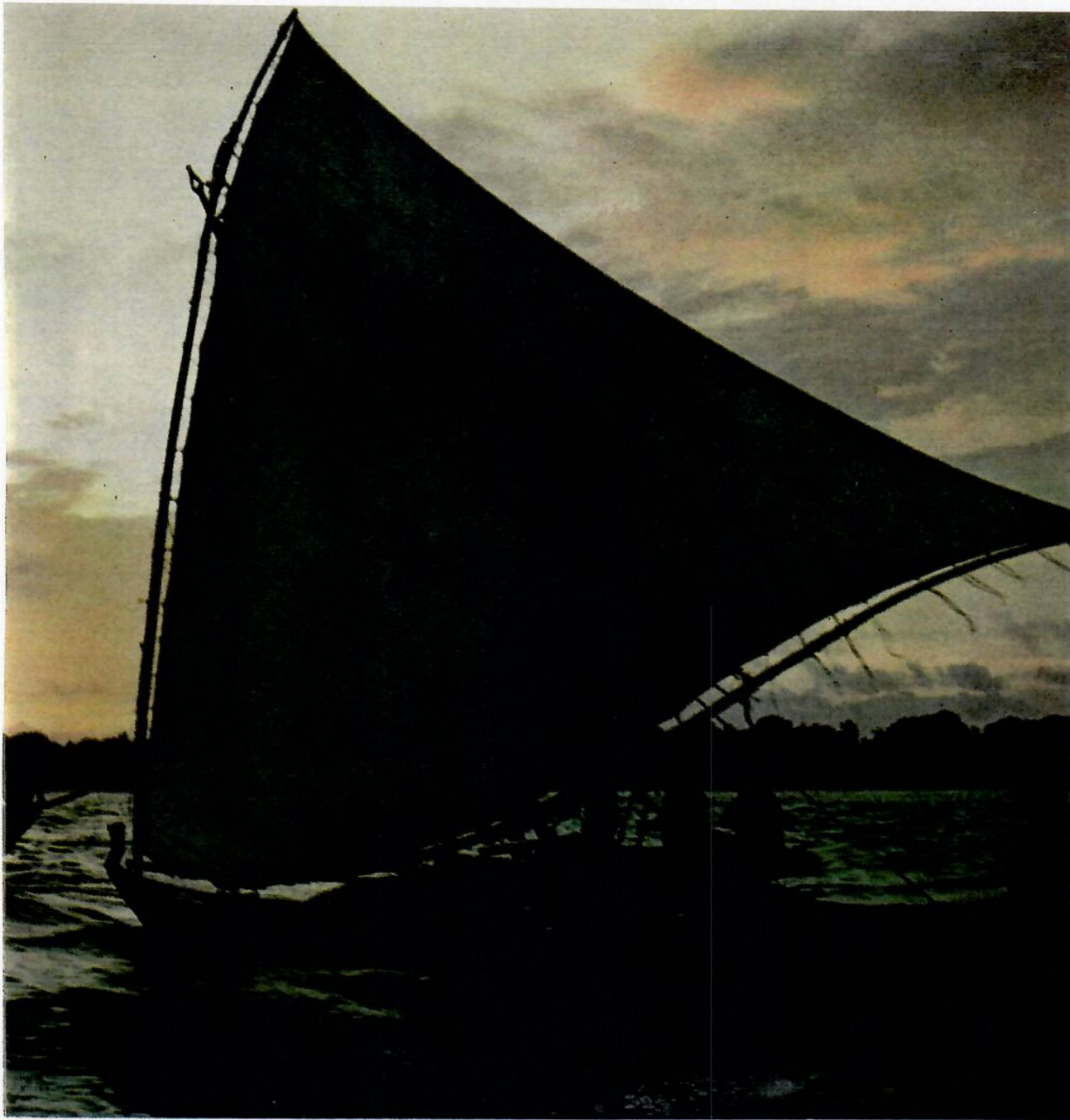
In land area, Micronesia—known also as the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands—adds up to very little. Lumped together, its 700 square miles would cover barely two-thirds of Rhode Island. Only 96 of the 2,100 islands and atolls, all but lost in three million square miles of ocean just north of the Equator, are inhabited.

By ship and by plane and by hook and by crook, I managed to find 47 of them in four months. Each lonely island, as I sighted it, rose like a mirage out of a salt-water Sahara.

I flew into Micronesia via the U. S. island of Guam, physically part of the island group but politically distinct. It has been under our flag since Spain ceded it to us in 1898.

After a quick briefing at the nearby Trust Territory headquarters on Saipan in the Mariana Islands, I flew to Truk—famed Japanese naval base during World War II—in the Caroline Islands. It was there that I met Radio and his colleagues. Then I flew on to Yap, to catch an island-hopping boat to the outer Carolines, home of the most isolated and primitive of the Micronesians.

These Re Mathau, meaning People of the



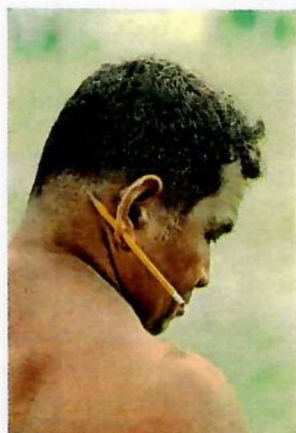
KODACHROME BY DAVID S. BOYER © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Deep Sea, are inhabitants of flat coral atolls that stretch across a broad sweep of the Carolines. They acquired this condescending name from the more civilized people of the "high island" of Yap.

Atolls, a geologist had explained to me, occur after the death of high islands. They were originally volcanic mountains spewed up from the sea. Then they subsided and, sinking, left memorial records of their onetime shorelines in the form of coral reefs that grew upward even as the land sank. These irregularly shaped atolls—rings of living coral—may be a mile across, or fifty (page 722).

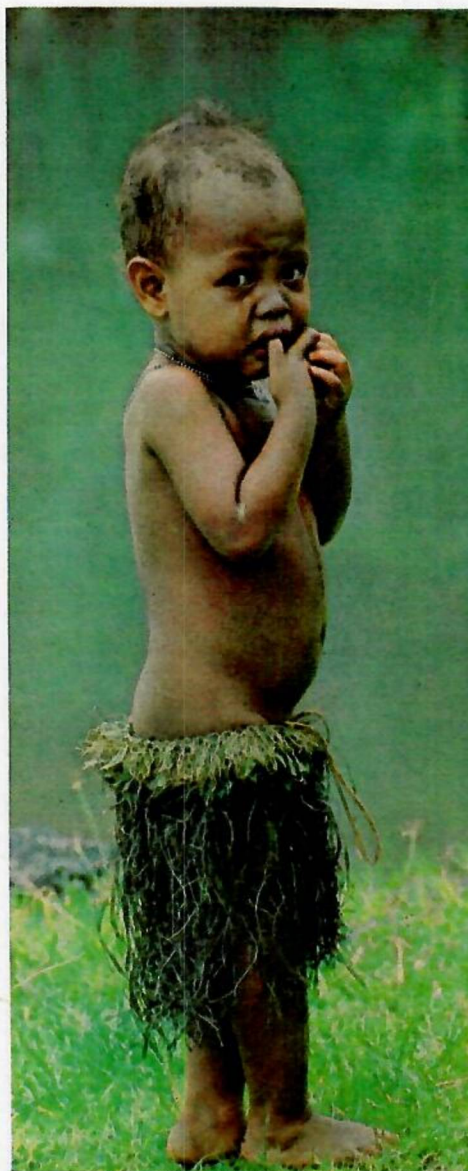
Sails set high at sunrise, Re Mathau, or People of the Deep Sea, leave Satawal Island for tuna-fishing grounds beyond the horizon. These residents of small atolls between Yap and Truk (map, pages 714-15) voyage hundreds of miles in outriggers made from breadfruit planks. Such craft brought the ancestors of today's 93,000 Micronesians, who inhabit 96 of 2,100 islands and atolls flecking three million square miles of ocean. American forces wrested this vast region from the Japanese; in 1947, it became the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under an agreement with the United Nations Trusteeship Council.





Micronesian ingenuity adapts old ways to new uses. The foreman of a construction project finds his earlobe a handy place to keep a pencil. Today, young men seldom pierce ears for ornaments, but the older generation still adorns itself with heavy metal rings.

With need for keys but no pockets, another man clips a holder to his *thū*, the loincloth worn by men in the Carolines. Cotton goods, introduced by missionaries and trading companies, slowly replace the scratchy hibiscus homespun used for *thūs* and lava-lavas.

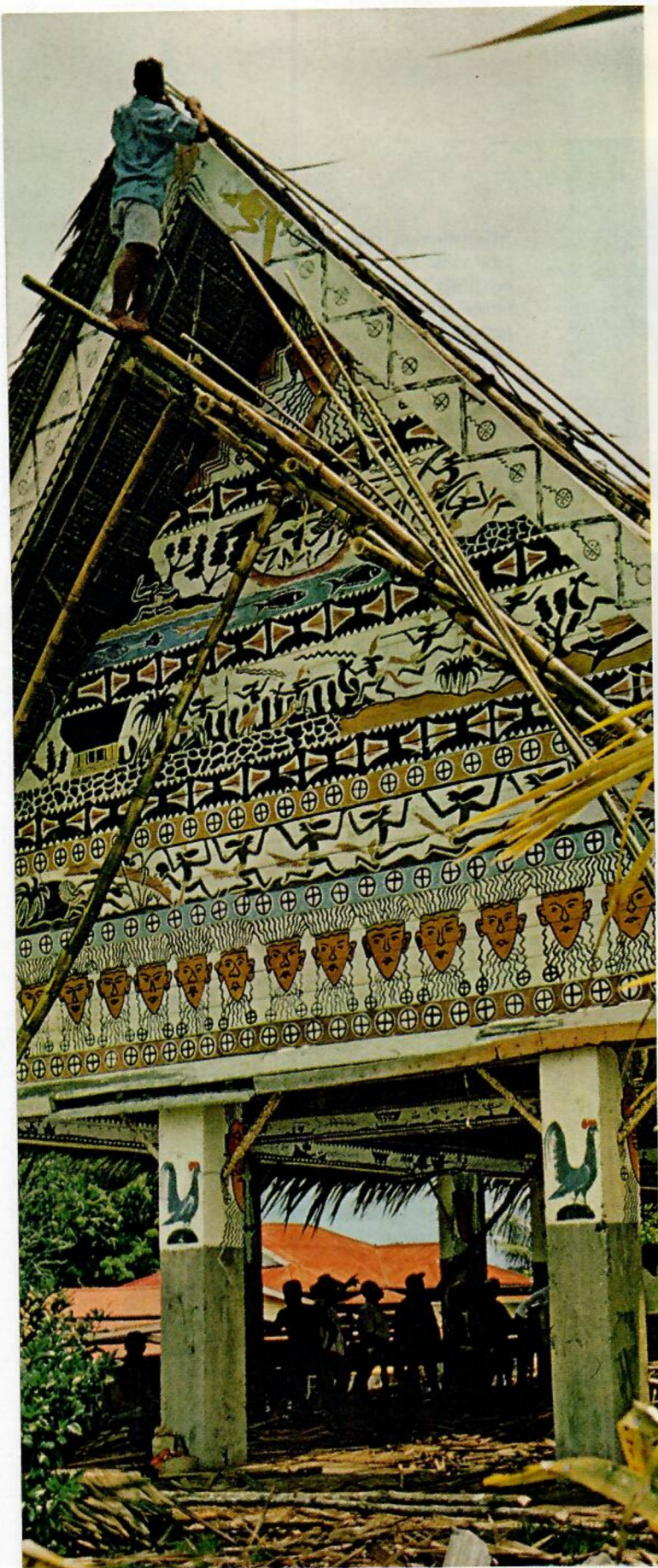


Innocence of Eden still sets Yapese styles

AT THE THRESHOLD OF CHANGE, a woman from Ulithi ponders a purchase in a Yap department store. Old customs still prevail on Yap and its outer islands, where a strict tradition of modesty accepts bare breasts but prohibits uncovered thighs. This shopper's boldly striped lava-lava, woven of shredded hibiscus bark, marks her as a visitor from a distant atoll. Yapese women prefer ankle-length grass skirts; an abbreviated version hugs the hips of the shy toddler at right.

Both women and men tote personal belongings in woven palm-leaf bags. Micronesians learned to use *zori*, thonged Japanese footwear, during 30 years of occupation.

KODACHROME (ABOVE) BY WALTER MEYERS EDWARDS; EKTACHROME (OPPOSITE) AND KODACHROMES BY JACK FIELDS © N.G.S.



KODACHROME BY JACK FIELDS © N.G.S.

The green of my first outer island rose no higher above the ocean than a pancake of coral sand could thrust a thick spread of tropical foliage. I landed, by chance, during a burial ceremony in a tiny cemetery darkened by a jungle of coconut palms.

The People of the Deep Sea stepped forward across the coral sand, some of the brown-skinned women clutching naked babies to their breasts. In turn, they tossed tropical wildflowers soundlessly onto the lid of a coffin. Only days before, the coffin had been a canoe. It had sailed the blue island seas until its owner had died. Now it was going with him into the grave.

Male mourners at the funeral were dressed only in brilliant red *thūs*, loin-cloths that waved like flags fore and aft. Women wore lava-lavas, waist-to-knee sarongs woven from the inner bark of hibiscus; in Micronesian tradition, a woman's thighs must be modestly covered, but her breasts may go bare.

Small girls sported little ponytail switches of shredded hibiscus bark belted around their waists in pairs, front and back. Toddlers were completely naked.

Dead Were Formerly Set Adrift

These bereaved islanders might simply have pushed the burdened canoe away from shore. Consigned to the currents, the departed one would drift westward. His Micronesian ancestors had come from there long ago, sailing similar canoes, from Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

He might have been cast adrift westward, except that his survivors were—culturally—moving eastward, toward the United States.

"I would be happier if they'd put their dead out to sea as they used to, but they've heard that Americans bury their dead in the ground. You notice that we've got the cemetery a long way from any houses or wells. The only drinking water is from the rain.

Old look on a new idea: Row of trophies from head-hunting days and, above it, misadventures of a prodigal son decorate Koror's community center, here being rethatched. Communal projects help Palauans overcome local rivalries.

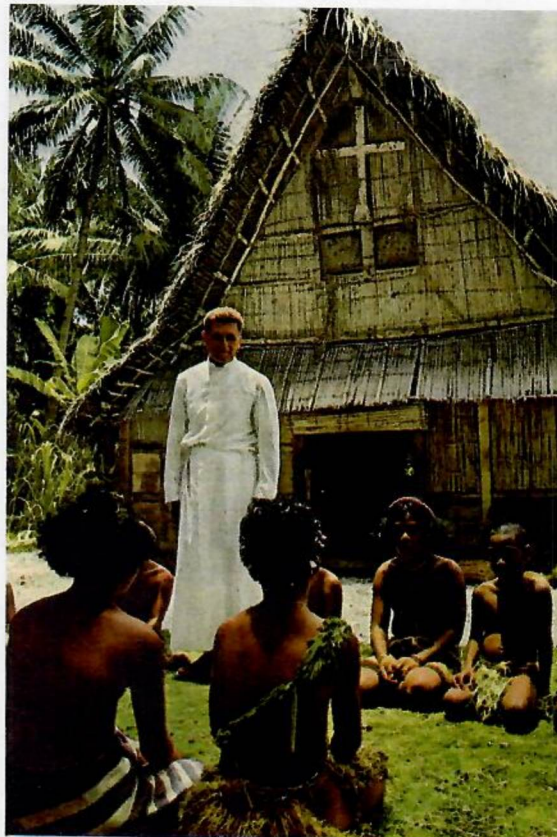
It lies underground, close to the surface, floating in pools on the denser sea water that saturates the coral underneath."

The words were whispered to me during the service by Jesuit missionary William J. Walter of Buffalo, New York (right). Now he moved forward to pronounce phrases that would dedicate this Christian grave.

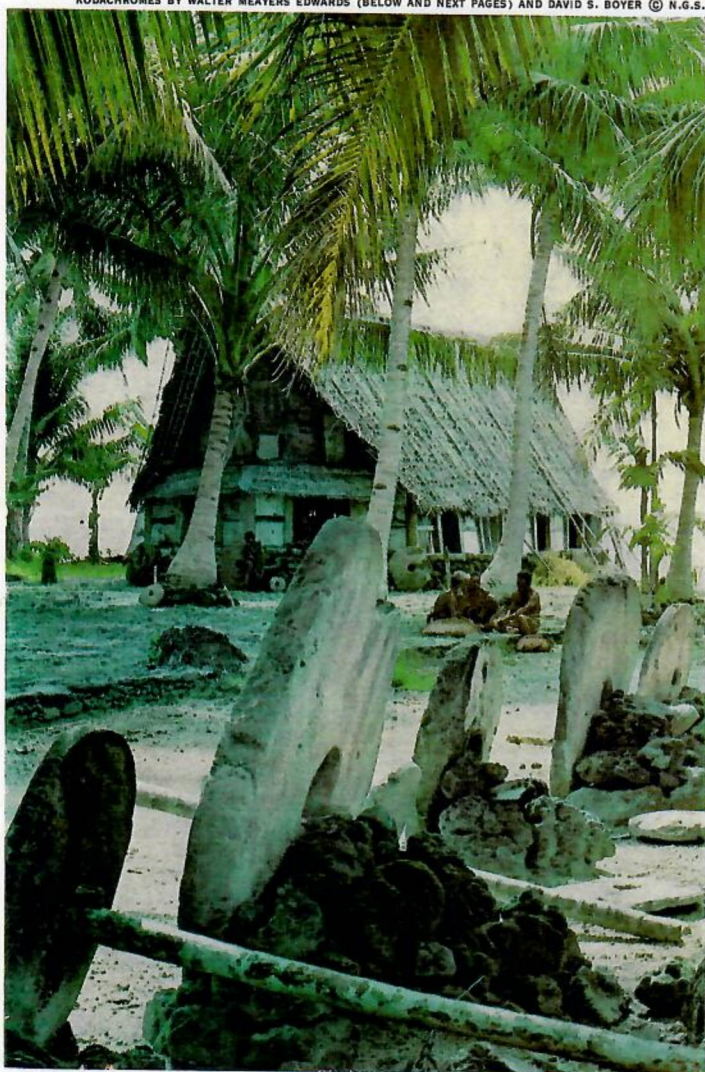
No other American has lived so long among the Re Mathau. For 18 years Father Walter has toured these atolls. He logs 2,500 rolling, queasy miles a month aboard *Yap Islander* (page 714), a Trust Territory ship operated by a Yapese cooperative group, which carries food and supplies, doctors, officials, and ordinary travelers. Father Walter calls on some 2,400 Roman Catholic parishioners, most of whom he baptized himself. I had come with him on his rigorous monthly circuit.

His congregations are scattered on 21 islands; reaching them all requires three weeks of steaming. Visits ashore, by small boat or outrigger canoe, average only a few hours, scarcely long enough for burials, marriages, baptisms, confessions, and Mass.

A sailor only by necessity and devotion, this thin,

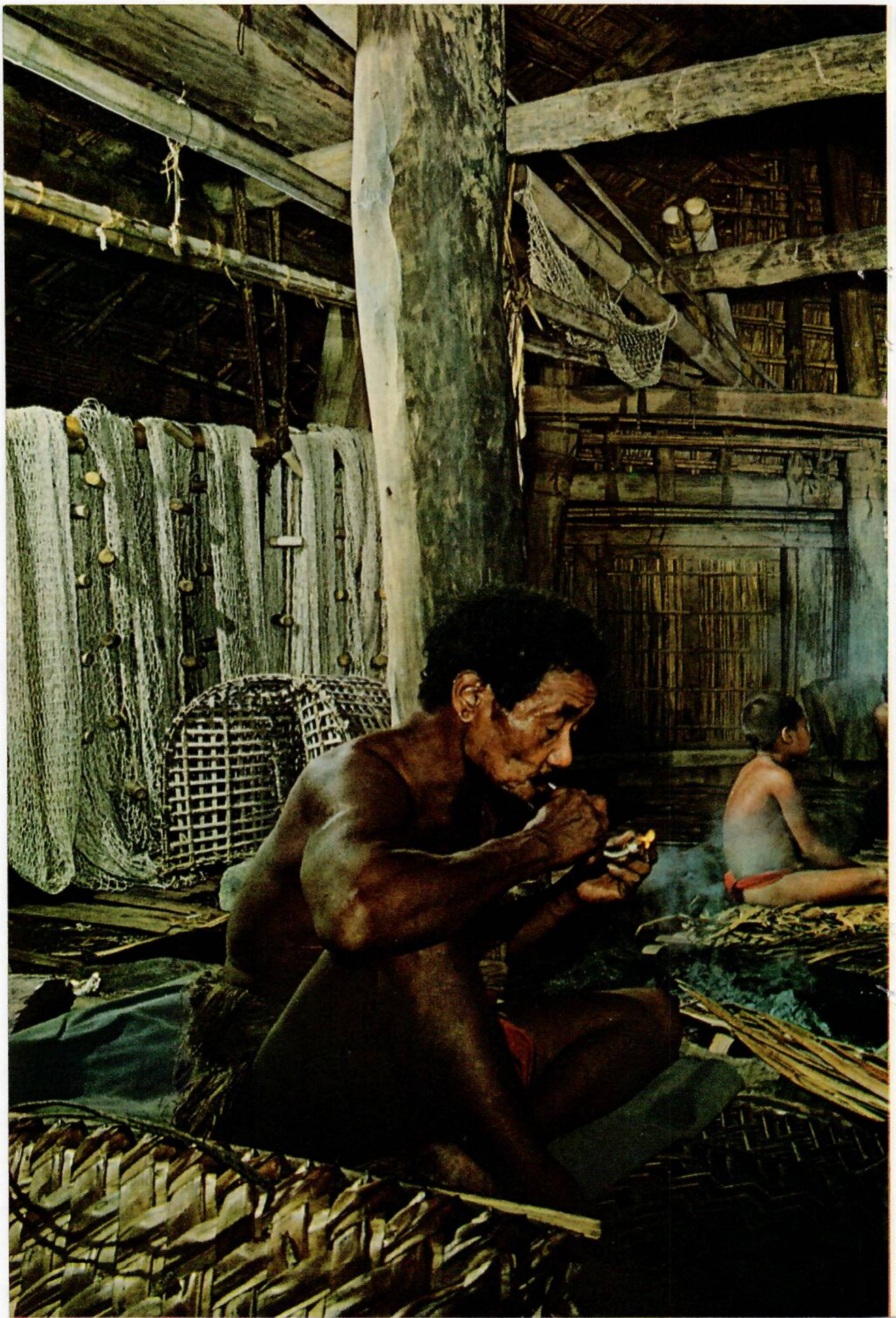


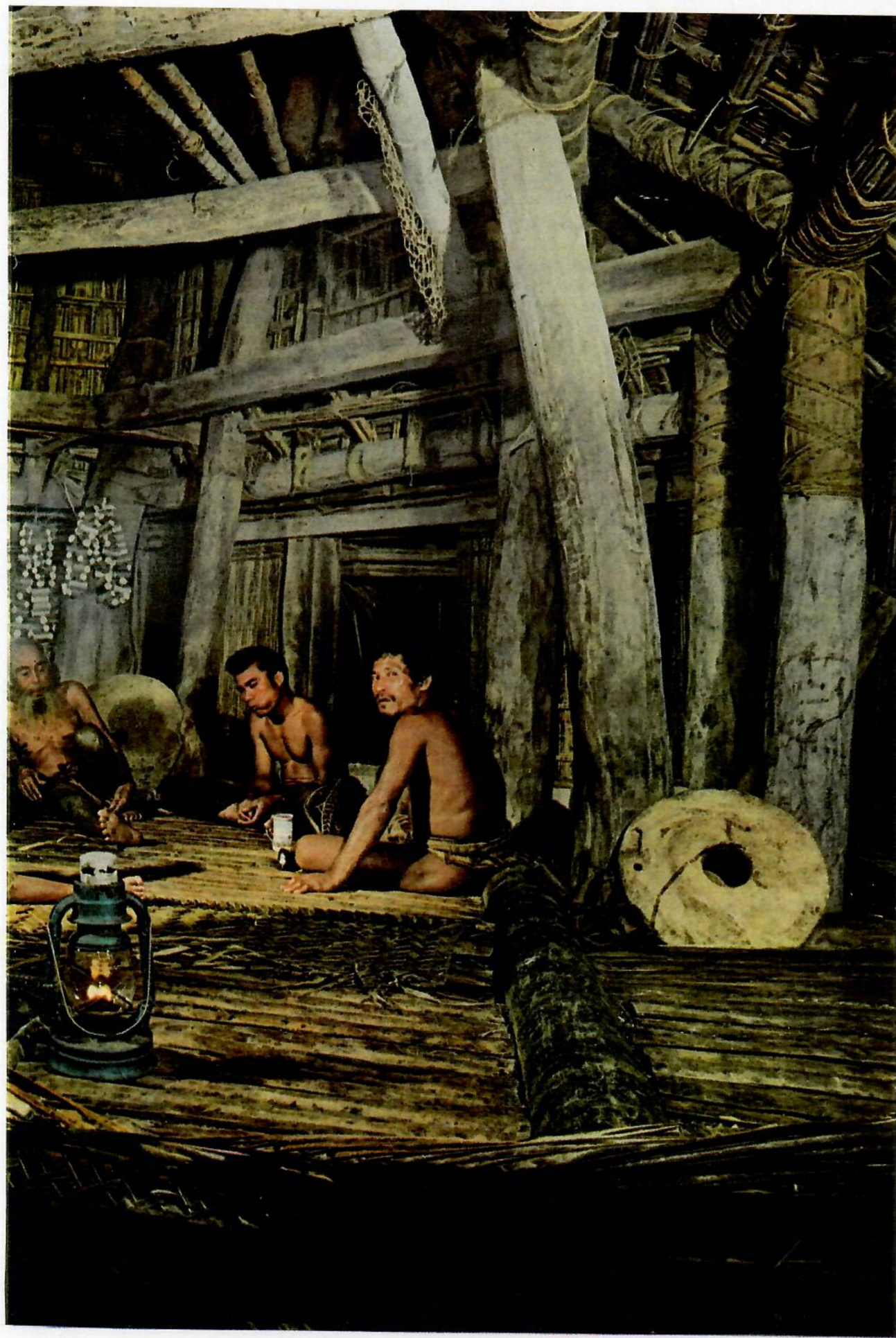
Priest to a far-flung flock, Father William J. Walter visits his chapel on Ifalik Atoll, one of a score of stops on his 2,500-mile monthly round. Some 125 Catholic and Protestant missionaries serve Micronesia—most as teachers in mission schools.



Street lined with "money" proclaims village prestige. About 10,000 highly prized stone disks dot the islands of Yap. In times past, men sailed to the Palaus to quarry the calcite cart wheels. The more perilous the expedition, the greater the value attached to the treasure. Yapese bestow the heavy stones to honor individuals or villages, but seldom take the trouble to move them to new locations.

Day's work done, males of Atelu, Yap, relax in the village "all-men" house. Once a place of residence and instruction for bachelors, it now serves largely as a clubhouse and storage place. The village chief lights a cigarette with a glowing ember. Bearded elder with tattoo-blackened legs spins yarns for his friends, who affectionately call him "Moses." A betel-nut quid fills the cheek of a listener to his left. When the kerosene lantern is turned down, men curl up on the corrugated floor and gossip quietly into the night.





grizzled American priest rides *Yap Islander's* rail, shunning the close, claustrophobic confines below decks. The little island supply ship is not much bigger than its own cockroaches and too small, almost, to be let out to sea alone. Unable to abide the odors of the galley, Father Walter eats meagerly from cans of cold corned beef or tuna.

Ashore, smiling Micronesians welcome him to their palm-thatched huts and regale him with finer fare—roasted breadfruit, boiled taro root, fried reef fish—all washed down with water from green coconuts slashed open

by machete. His Stone Age islanders shyly adorn him and themselves with *maramars*, coronets of fresh wildflowers. The maramar is Micronesia's trademark, a symbol that stands half for happiness, half for love.

Father Walter, their best-loved visitor, carries their letters and serves as go-between with mainland mail-order firms. To a few uncommonly thrifty parishioners he sometimes delivers transistor radios, but generally his suitcases are loaded with metal pots and knives as replacements for the sea-shell tools his communicants now consider non-American. On this trip, he was also filling orders for colored cotton yarn for the making of lava-lavas.

"Yarn is much easier to work than hibiscus bark," the women had told him, "and it's not so scratchy to sit on."

"No Money for Soap"

Father Walter also brings his people religious comfort. But he urges them to hold fast to their ancient ways and does not try to change them.

"These calm, patient islanders have more to teach us, I sometimes believe, than we have to teach them," Father Walter said as we watched the closing of the grave.

"You really can't try to halt change, though," he went on. "The globe today is too small for even its most inaccessible corners to escape civilization. But I'll fight the wrong kind of change, like the bringing in of beer and liquor. These people simply can't drink. Liquor is legal already on many islands, and it has ruined a lot of people.

"I'll hate the day, too, when they start wearing clothes. You've seen them, on Yap and other islands, like tramps in dirty, giveaway clothes. It'll happen out here, too.

"In a couple of years we'll have outer-island boys going off to college in the States," Father Walter continued. "They'll come home wearing trousers, and they'll want blouses and brassieres on their girls. Trouble is, they still won't have soap to wash the clothes. No money for soap. All they have in this world is a few coconuts to sell. In a year, they earn only about \$12 per



KODACHROME BY JACK FIELDS © N.G.S.

Itinerant medic, armed with a first-aid kit, examines a boy's inflamed throat. Dedicated health aides of the outer islands make their rounds by outrigger, bicycle, and on foot. They also maintain makeshift dispensaries. Now paid and given refresher training by the territorial government, the aides once worked without regular salaries.

person! Happily, they don't need much cash."

We watched the bronzed gravediggers as they neatly covered over their work with coral gravel, and Father Walter sighed again.

"They'll lose their beauty and dignity, in clothes. And have outbreaks of skin infections as well.

"But it's inevitable," he said, practically. "We've got to get them enough money to buy soap, and education to use it, on bodies *and* clothes. And to build toilets and wear shoes. They *must* do that. What with bare feet and poor sanitation, they're nearly all plagued by internal parasites."

The mourners pounded a hand-carved wooden cross into the sand and made the sign of the cross. In the throng dispersing homeward along the jungle paths, I became separated from Father Walter, but I thought about him. Conservative. Enchanted by idyllic characteristics in his Micronesians' way of life. Anxious not to destroy their calm, their happy contentment. Yet himself a commitment to change.

Many Americans and Micronesians are committed to change on a much more rapid scale. Disembarking from *Yap Islander* at Ulithi Atoll, I stared across an empty lagoon, once a roadstead for hundreds of U. S. warships. Now a lone American walked down the silent beach to greet me—James D. Boykin of Riverside, California. Virtually singlehanded, Jim had created Outer Islands High School (pages 716-17), housing it in quonset huts abandoned by a U. S. Coast Guard loran station. He arranged for the youth of the Re Mathau to come by boat to Ulithi. In the old barracks, they sleep and work, study English and science, read assiduously about the American way of life, and eat free cafeteria meals made from U. S. surplus powdered milk, grain, and meat.

The school's 42 coeds, bare-breasted under the palm trees, daily knead the milk and flour into dough, then bake it outdoors in the heat of flaming coconut husks. The boys, wearing their flowing loincloths even for skin diving, spear fish to supplement the menu. Boys and girls attend classes side by side, dignified

and handsome in their simple costumes.

Under a pandanus tree during lunch hour, a high-school sophomore and her boy friend leaned dreamily together. Propped between their respective ears, I noted as I walked by, was a tiny transistor radio whispering rock 'n' roll. An American-style disc jockey, 100 miles away on Yap, was responsible.

"We like American music," the coed told me later, "because it has a lot to do with love."

My next question embarrassed her.

"These purple marks on our arms? Our old island chiefs have all those magnificent

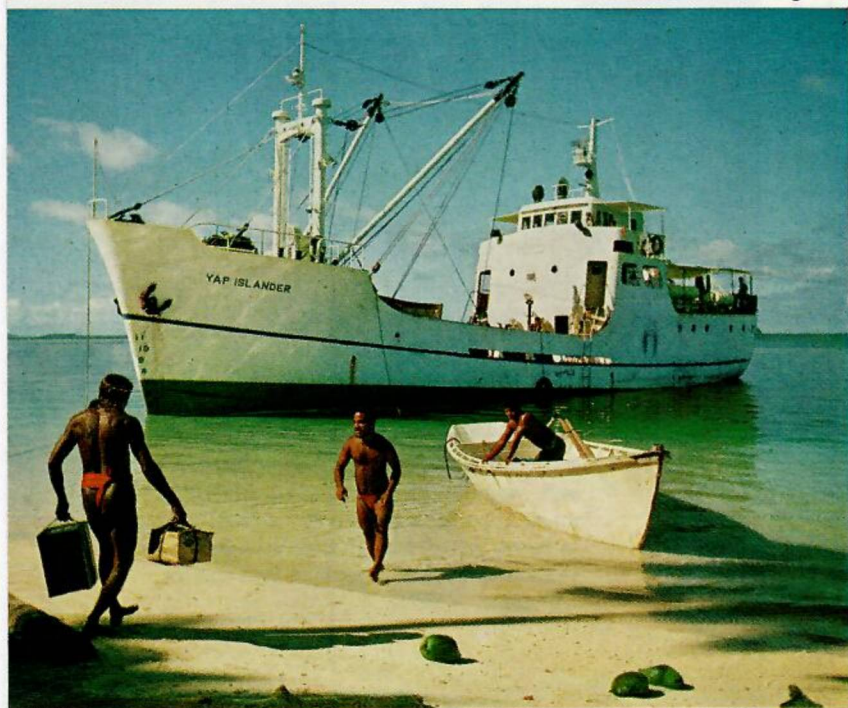
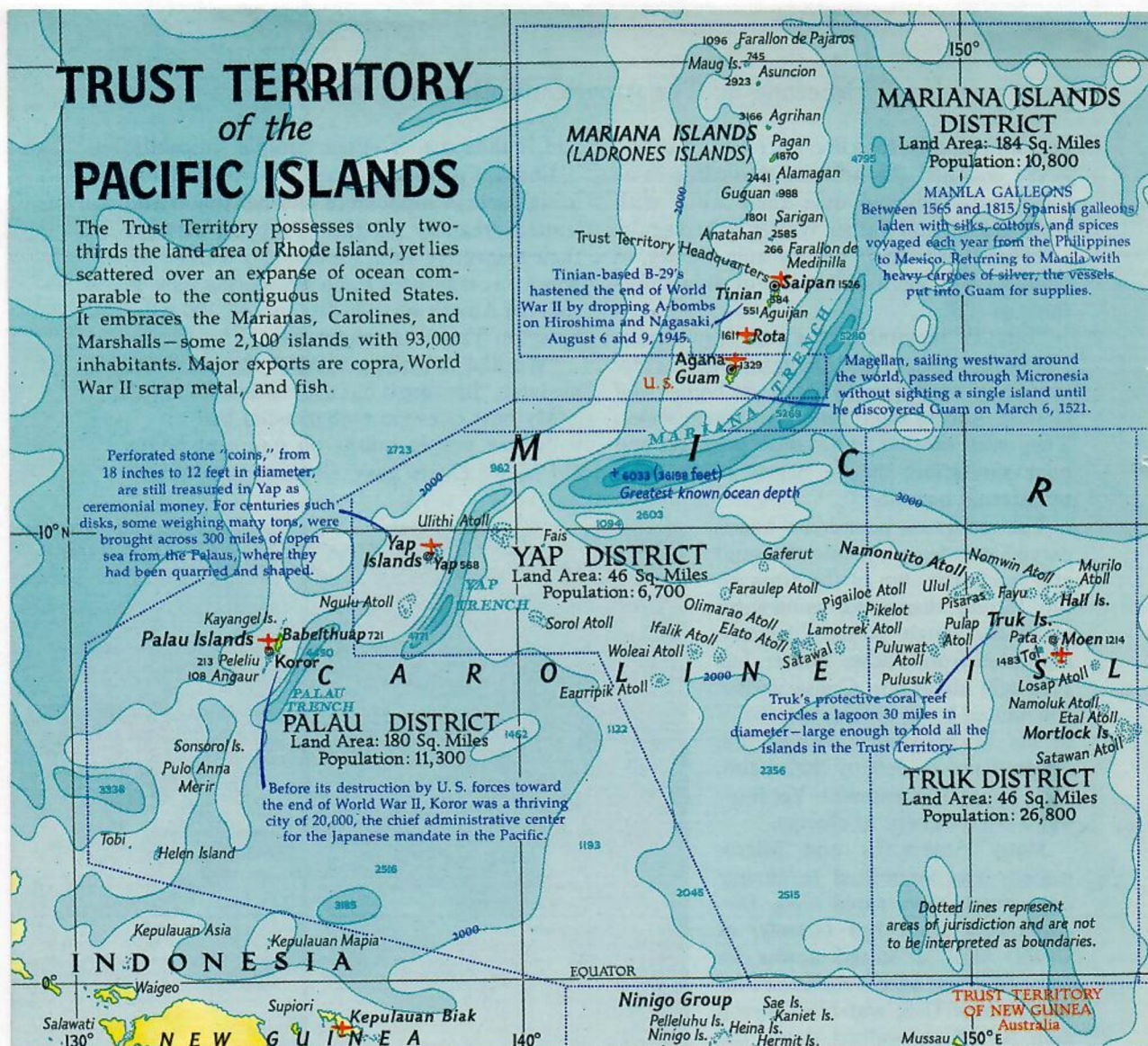


EKTACHROME BY DAVID S. BOYER © N.G.S.

Skilled Palauan medical team removes a gall bladder at Koror's hospital. Yuji Mesubed, left, administers the anesthetic, as Minoru Ueki, Ulai T. Otobed—Micronesia's only woman physician—and Masao Kumagai operate. All received medical training in Suva, British Fiji. In time, islanders hope to earn degrees at American universities.

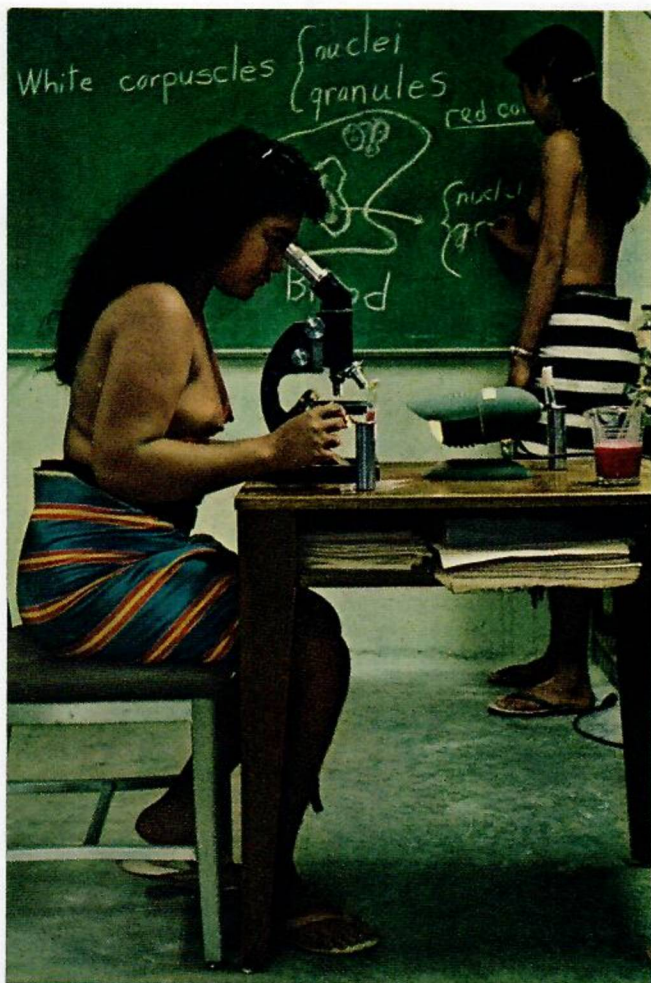
TRUST TERRITORY of the PACIFIC ISLANDS

The Trust Territory possesses only two-thirds the land area of Rhode Island, yet lies scattered over an expanse of ocean comparable to the contiguous United States. It embraces the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls—some 2,100 islands with 93,000 inhabitants. Major exports are copra, World War II scrap metal, and fish.



Floating trading post, Yap Islander delivers manufactured goods and takes on copra and handicrafts at Elato Atoll. Once a month the 100-foot ship calls at every inhabited island group of the Yap District. Such "field-trip" vessels serve each of Micronesia's administrative areas, bringing doctors, magistrates, and school officials as well as wares.

Shaving dangerously on board Yap Islander, passenger Carlos Momo (opposite) uses a bare razor blade as his grandfather might have used a sharpened shell.



In Eden's simple garb, teen-agers tackle the complexities of science at Outer Islands High School on Falalop, Ulithi Atoll. Sophomore coeds study biology (left), while junior boys perform a chemistry experiment in a class instructed by James D. Boykin. With Trust Territory support, Mr. Boykin founded this public school in 1965 at an abandoned U. S. Coast Guard station. He and one other American taught every subject offered while they trained Micronesian teachers.

Three hundred students from 21 scattered islands live in former barracks during the school year—for most new students, their first venture beyond isolated home isles. They prepare their own cafeteria meals from American surplus food plus fish the boys spear in the nearby lagoon.

Until four years ago, one public high school, at Ponape, served all Micronesia. Now the Trust Territory operates eight and plans several more.

Living masterpiece of a dying art, an ornately tattooed chieftain watches the departure of his link to the outside world. Only men of great rank among Micronesia's elders merit such elaborate decoration. He and two village lads rest on a drum of fuel oil delivered to Ulithi by Yap Islander.

tattoos. Ours we make with U. S. felt-tip pens. Maybe we're still savages in some ways!"

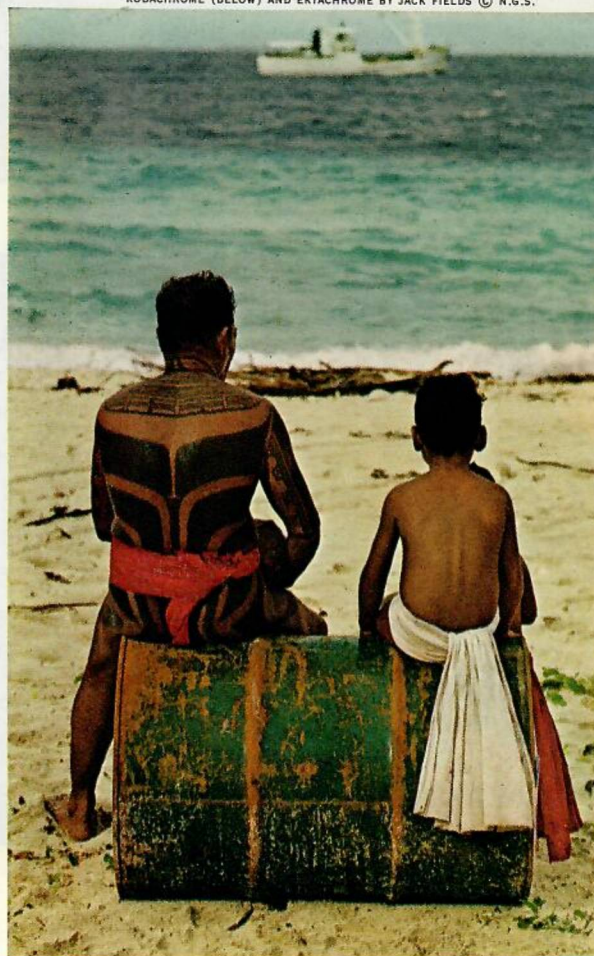
For five years, Jim Boykin has taught his "savage" students every academic subject he knows. In his new school's chemistry lab he proudly presented 11 caramel-colored young Adonises, his first graduating class. Girls will graduate beginning in 1968.

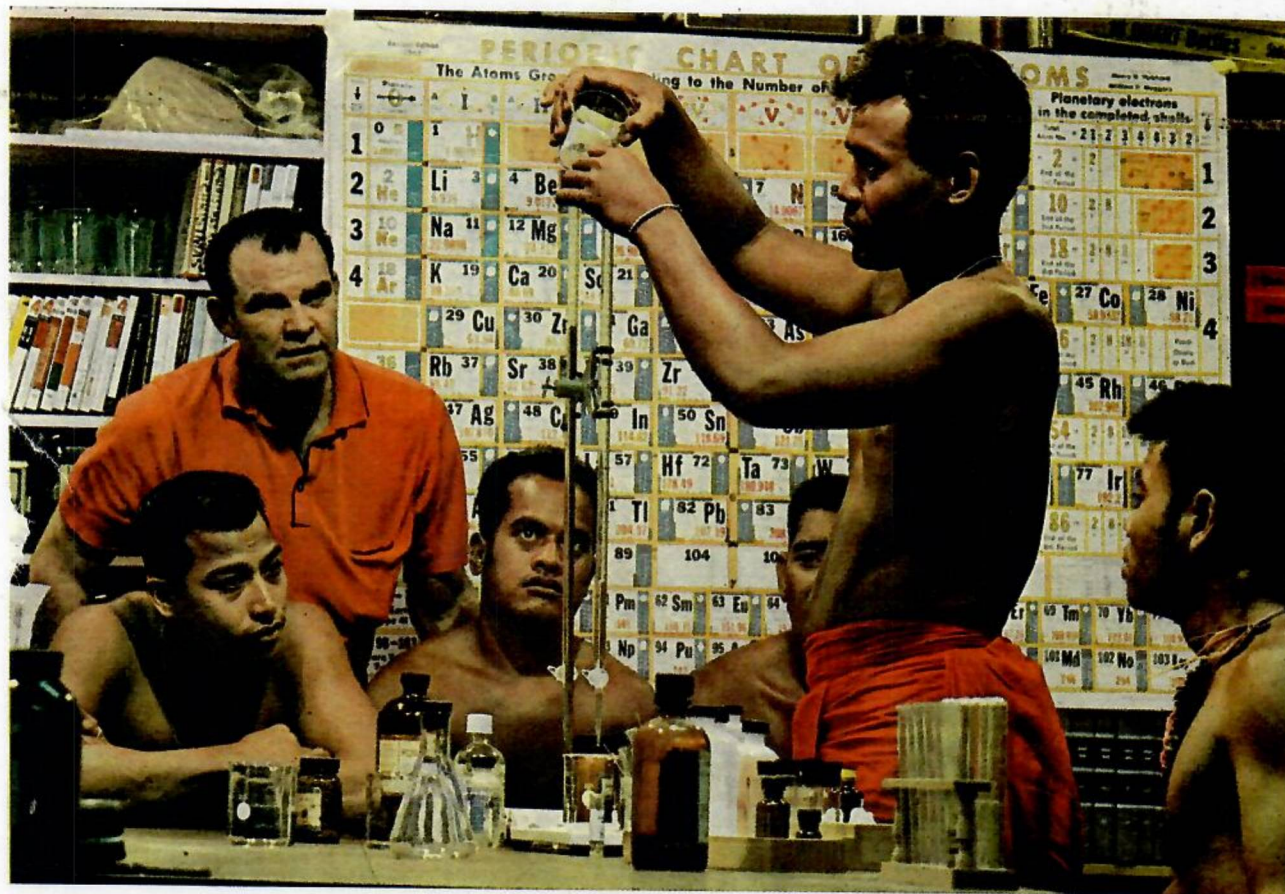
New Era Dawns for Island Wards

"The trouble is," Jim said, "we're wrenching their primitive culture away from them. Substituting science for magic. Medicine for witch doctors. Breaking down their whole society. But we haven't replaced their old system with any solid future yet.

"Micronesia has never had, until now, an economic or political plan. The Japanese, the Germans, and the Spaniards, when they ran the islands, didn't worry much about the inhabitants. We ourselves have had a leave-them-alone, go-slow policy for the past 20 years, but that's partly because Americans have disagreed among themselves about bringing Western civilization to these people. Thank heavens we're committed at last!"

KODACHROME (BELOW) AND EKTACHROME BY JACK FIELDS © N.G.S.





EKTACHROME BY DAVID S. BOYER © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Jim was referring to a flood of new developments emanating from Washington, D. C., and Trust Territory headquarters on Saipan. They seemed to him to signal a long-overdue new era in United States policy.

"Through most of Micronesia's colonial history," Jim told me, "lack of education and of economic enterprise have left the islands in a state of suspended animation. And under the United States, until recently, we've had little more than a showing of the flag—a few administrators and experts, a handful of teachers, a scattering of doctors."

I would hear the same cry and see more reasons for it elsewhere. On Babelthup, the Territory's largest island, a gangling young American named Dan Cheatham squinted sadly at me from under the brim of a forest ranger's hat and said:

"You are right now looking at the entire U. S. expeditionary force for forestry and conservation for 2,100 Pacific islands."

On Ponape, plant pathologist Jim Zaiger told me that a disease is killing breadfruit trees on many islands: "Breadfruit means the good life to lots of Micronesians. If the cause

of the malady isn't found soon, the crop will be doomed. Our appeals have brought some pathologists, but large-scale research is urgently needed to solve the problem."

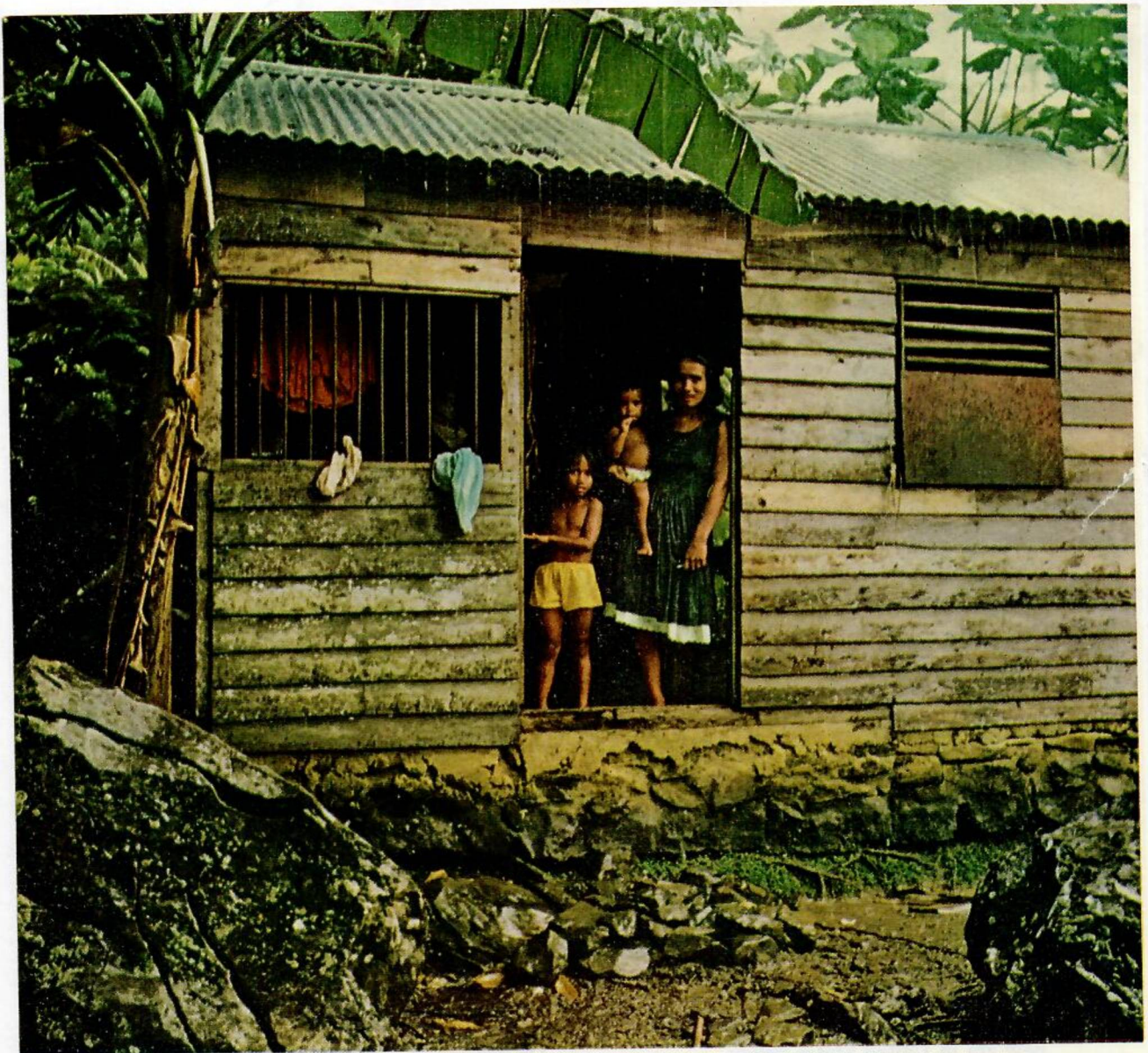
On Majuro, a crescent-shaped sliver of an island where 4,500 Micronesians live in tin shacks, an agricultural agent named David Ivra grimaced at the sight of a sick dog and told its owner and me:

"We've been trying to get a veterinarian for Micronesia for years. One is finally coming. But not in time for this dog."

Betel Nut Yields to Chewing Gum

Outer-islanders forsake the clean, uncluttered beauty of their islands for the crowds and squalor of Majuro and five other district centers. They hover like moths around the attractions of the settlements—government jobs, schools, hospitals, movies, high-priced canned food, and higher-priced beer.

If some of the older generation would rather fight than give up chewing betel nut, the youth have switched to chewing gum. In the movies, you can hardly hear the sound track over the gum popping.

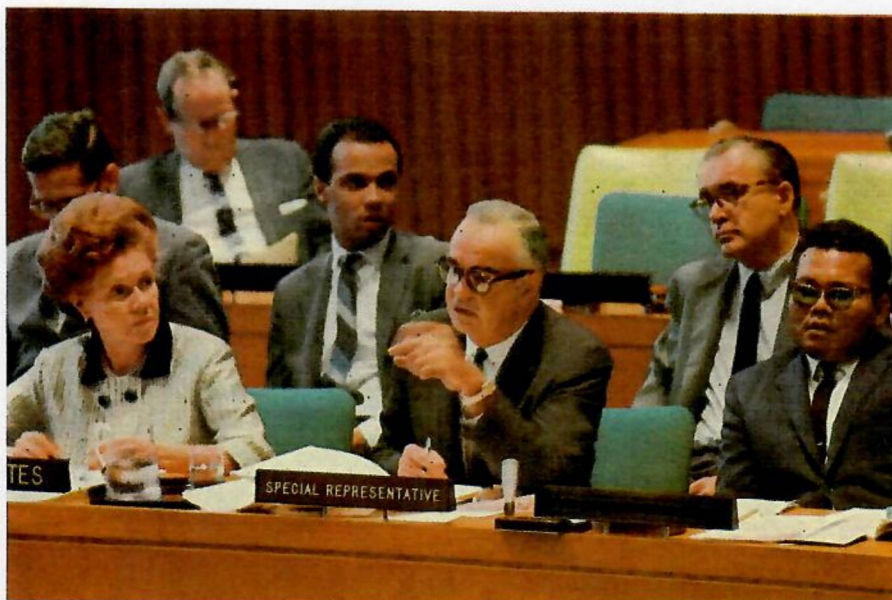




Adrift between two ways of life, a family peers from its one-room shack as a tropical downpour drums on the metal roof. Yearning for jobs, schools, movie theaters, and American food and clothing, Micronesians move into such homes to be near district centers and military bases.

Accelerated construction program adds a neat row of classrooms at Melekeiok, Palau. Before 1963, villages boasting elementary schools provided their own buildings—sometimes only thatched houses.

Stabbing home a point, Trust Territory High Commissioner William R. Norwood reports to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations on efforts to bring better housing, education, and economic and political development to the islands. Flanking him are Ambassador Eugenie Anderson, U. S. Representative on the Trusteeship Council, and Senator Francis Nuuan of the Congress of Micronesia—appearing in behalf of the Territory's people.



EKTACHROME (ABOVE) AND KODACHROME (LEFT, LOWER) BY DAVID S. BOYER; KODACHROME BY CLAYTON J. PRICE © N.G.S.



In recent years, problems have multiplied, but awareness of them has brought action. Together with the stirring of Government concern, there is a breezy new sense of expectation among the islanders themselves. Winds of change, in fact, are blowing so strong that I heard, repeated over and over, this sanguine prediction:

"The islands of Micronesia will one day become a state, or part of a state, of the U. S. A.!"

Where have they been all this time, these eastward-tending islands of the western Pacific?

Their recorded history is scant enough: Between 1885 and 1914 they passed from colonial Spain to imperial Germany and on to Japan. International concern over these transfers

abated after World War I, though they proved bewildering and difficult for the islanders.

Then, in one fateful moment, the islands reappeared on the international stage, to play a major role in a drama that shook the world. They provided secret bases for Japan's 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor and Guam and Wake; they became bastions of Japanese military power and bloodstained battlegrounds of World War II.* They saw the launching of the atom bombs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and then trembled to the testing of the hydrogen bomb as a defense against a threatening, uncertain future.

*See, in *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC*: "Hidden Key to the Pacific," June, 1942, and "Mysterious Micronesia," April, 1936, both by Willard Price.



Kwajalein ... Eniwetok ... Bikini ... Pel-
elieu ... Angaur ... Saipan ... Tinian ... Truk
... Ulithi ... The islands' names echo, in
heads old enough to remember, like the toll-
ing of terrible bells.

Then, abruptly, it was ended. No longer did
their names make news. The islands seemed
curiously to have slipped back into the depths
that gave them birth.

Goals Set by United Nations

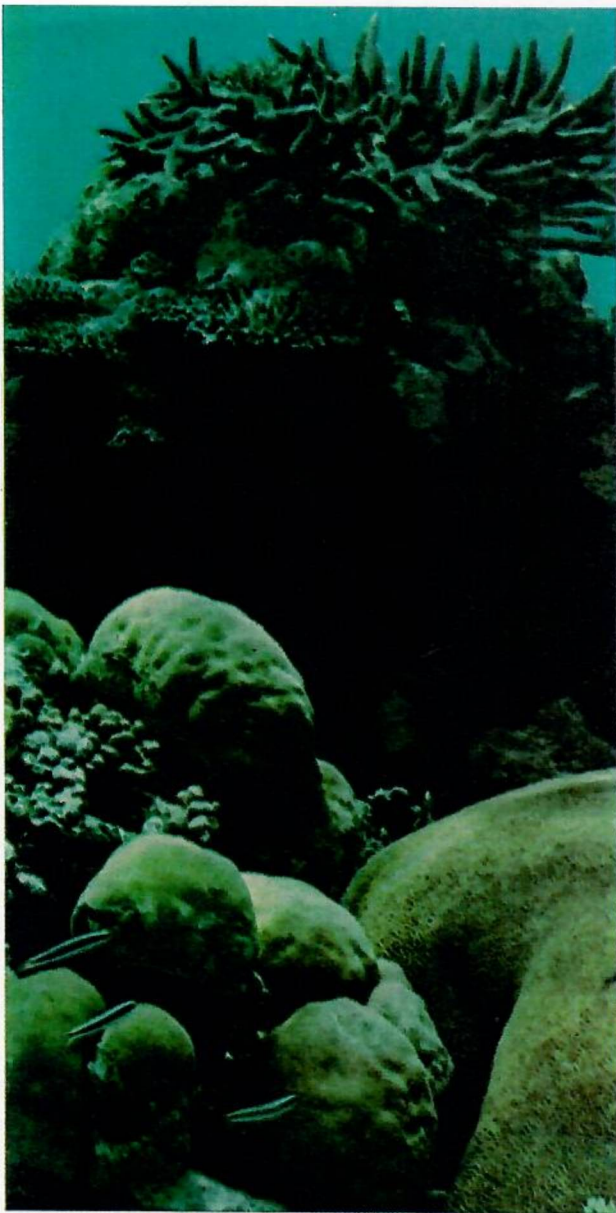
Captured at tremendous cost, they had ac-
quired tremendous value in a Pacific Ocean
suddenly vital to U. S. security. The military
resolved to hold these strategic prizes as a
restricted reservation.

Japanese troops and colonists, many from
islands bypassed in the fighting, were shipped

home. Micronesians were repatriated to is-
lands they had been forced to leave in the up-
heaval of war. They were brought food and
medicine and doctors, and specially trained
American naval officers became their guides
and administrators.

Movements of foreigners were rigidly con-
trolled in the new U. S. area. Even American
nationals required security clearance; tourists,
reporters, businessmen—all were discouraged
from even trying to come. A reason often cited
was Micronesia's lack of modern accommoda-
tions. The islands were, in effect, under wraps.

Much has changed since that beginning.
First of all, a second guardian entered the
lives of these orphans of World War II; in
1947, the Trusteeship Council of the United
Nations became involved. The islands,



EKTACHROME (ABOVE) BY DAVID S. BOYER; KODACHROME BY WALTER MEYERS EDWARDS © N.G.S.

entrusted to Japan after World War I as a League of Nations mandate, now came under the United Nations Trusteeship Council as the U. S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

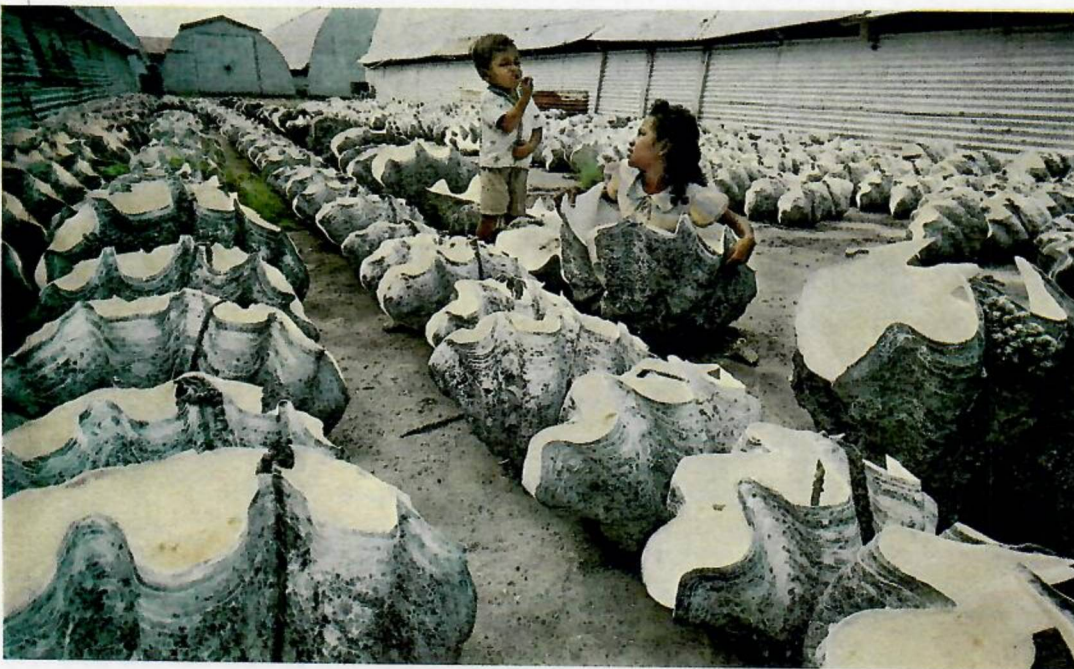
Our Navy continued to administer them, however. The negotiated "strategic" trusteeship arrangement between the United States and the United Nations was unique. It provided for the United States to use the islands for military purposes and authorized it to deny entry to outsiders.

In return for these privileges, the United States subscribed to United Nations goals—to further modern education, sanitation, and economic advancement, and to "promote the development of the inhabitants... toward self-government or independence..."

To bring all this to Micronesia would have cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Money aside, not everyone subscribed to the idealistic U. N. goals. The ruling philosophy of the postwar era was: The Micronesians live in paradise. Please don't disturb.

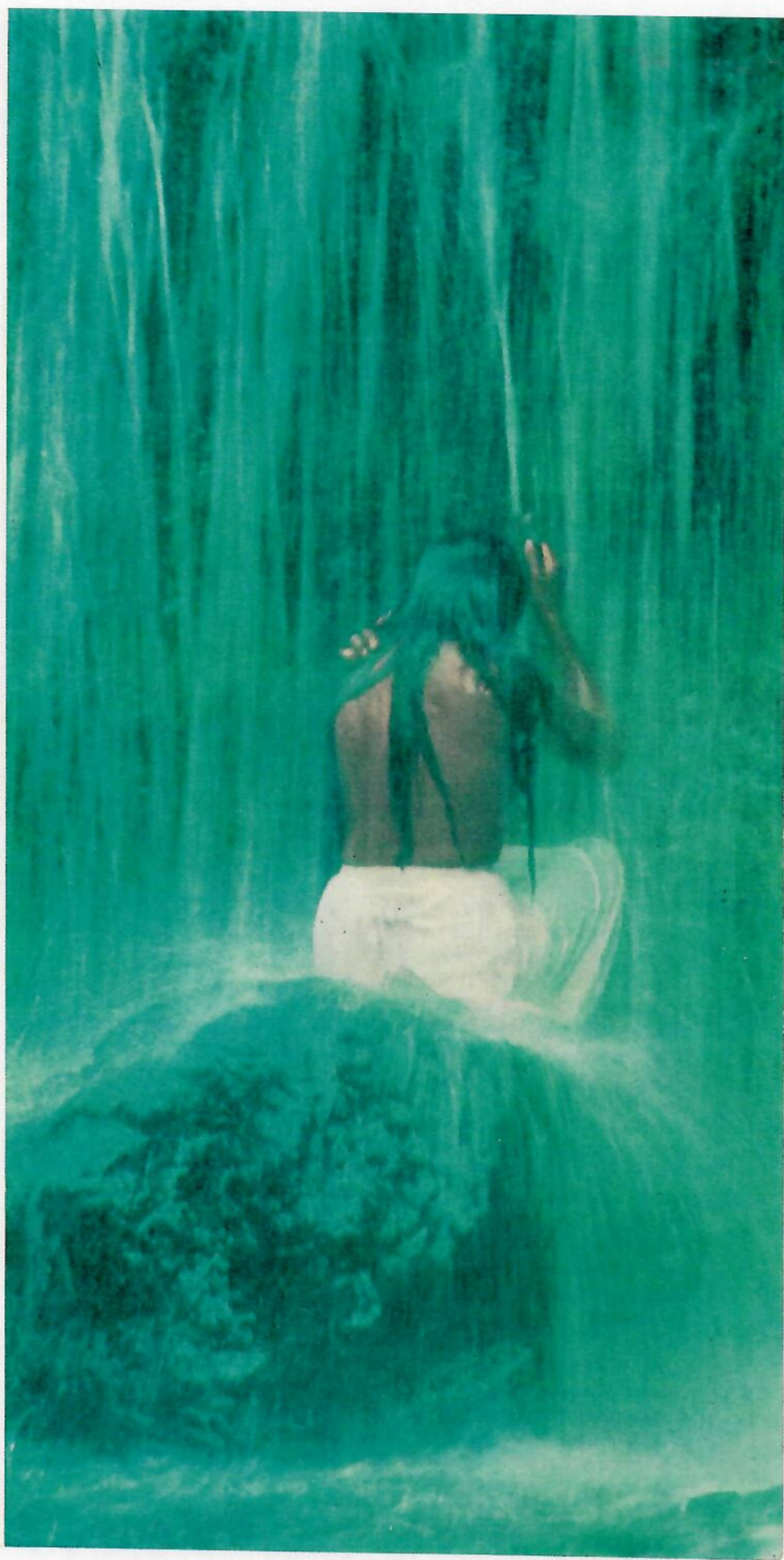
With snorkel, mask, and flippers, a diver invades the magical realm of a Palauan coral reef. His prize: a parrotfish, speared with a sharpened concrete-reinforcing rod. Accomplished spearfishermen, islanders normally use homemade goggles and swim barefooted. Wrasses hover at lower right.

Fleet of giant clamshells at their command, youngsters battle in a Koror storage yard. The Western Carolines Trading Company exports the armor of *Tridacna gigas* for sale to shell and curio collectors.





RUBY NECKLACE ON A SAPPHIRE SEA: *Green foliage of Pakin Atoll appears red on infrared film used for aerial reconnaissance. Murmuring waterfall on a volcanic slope (opposite) turns a Palauan maiden's morning bath into a living idyll.*



That philosophy, far from dead, has powerful adherents today. Besides many in the military, there are missionaries and civilian administrators—and Micronesians too—who are not sure that these people should be educated, given jobs, provided with gadgetized houses, and otherwise snatched into the materialistic modern world.

In 1951, the islands—except for military bases and nuclear-bomb test sites—were transferred from the Navy to the Department of the Interior. Though the Navy retained security control and authority to restrict entry, the principle of civil government had triumphed.

Even so, it was not until three or four years ago, under the Interior Department's High Commissioner M. Wilfred Goding, that a new concept began to gain the upper hand. Today, interest in advancement is keen. The military has removed most of its restrictions. Travelers get in. News gets out. The Trust Territory budget—millions of United States tax dollars—has doubled, will probably redouble. Congress is considering substantial new appropriations for roads, airports and harbors, hospitals and schools, water systems and electricity, agriculture and industry.

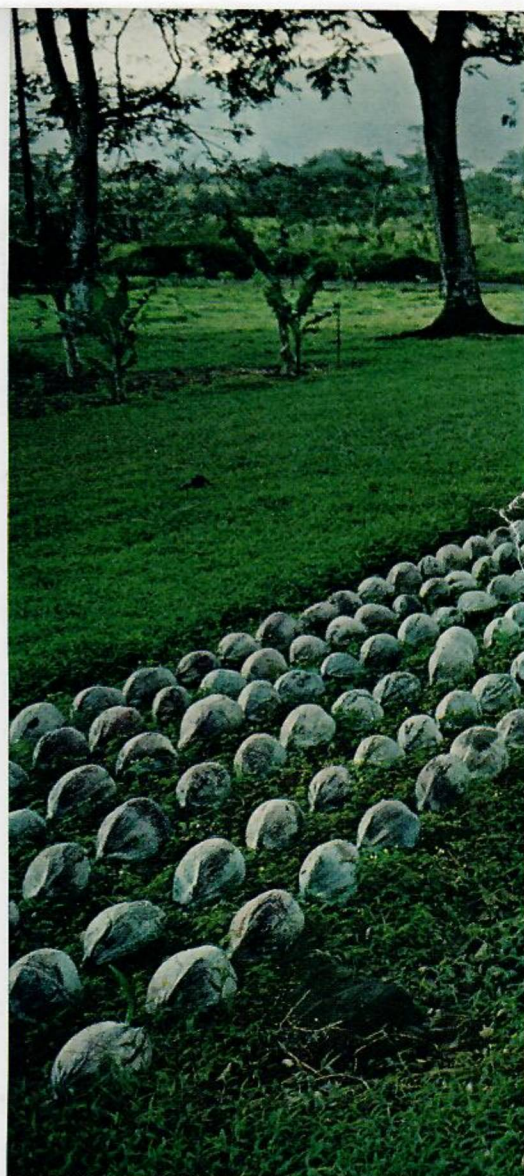
Peace Corps Enters the Battle

A dynamic new high commissioner has taken office. William R. Norwood of Hawaii (page 719), an islander himself and a man of ardent ideas for the Trust Territory, has a natural warmth toward the Micronesians.

Even before Norwood, a major goal had been to provide a liberal education, in English, for people who speak nine distinct island languages. After Norwood came, 350 Peace Corpsmen joined the battle. Some 700 will be there by the end of this year. Many teach in thatched-hut schools on isolated outer islands. Others join the Trust Territory's own contract teachers in new typhoon-proof, concrete-block schools on 36 islands (page 718). Still others carry on health and construction projects.

Economic development, almost ignored before, has been accepted as vital. Six elected legislative bodies are learning to govern district affairs. Most significant of all, a Territory-wide Congress of Micronesia, with a senate and house, has begun to function. Its paramount concern: self-determination. A plebiscite is on the horizon. Within a few years, Micronesian voters will face the question of whether to become an independent country or to become part of the United States.

Before then, the American Congress must determine what status it could offer Micro-



nesia, should the islanders vote for permanent union with the United States.

Complicating the whole Micronesian problem is the islands' future relationship with Japan. On Saipan I talked with Dr. Elbert V. Bowden, economic analyst of Robert R. Nathan Associates of Washington, D. C. He was heading a team, hired by the Trust Territory government, to design and support plans to spur Micronesia's economy.

"The Japanese might be able to re-establish some of the industries they started during the years when they occupied these islands," Dr. Bowden said. "Micronesia will never have a viable economy without heavy injections of capital, management, and labor. Healthy Japanese participation could speed this development."

His belief has much to support it.

Under the rule of Japan, colonists came by