

(a) It is hardly feasible to measure acculturation on a monthly basis in a society essentially so stable. Although at times this resistance to change may tend to try the patience of an administration with progressive propensities, it is well to remember that helter-skelter abandonment of old, tried customs and institutions in favor of untried new can be infinitely more dangerous to a developing socio-political structure.

In dealing with the Yap people on an administrative plane, one can sense the feeling of cultural, almost racial, homogeneity which has persisted consciously despite years of foreign domination. It is this same phenomenon of unity which ties all of the Carolines from Ngulu east to Satawal to the Yap orbit. And it is our greatest administrative asset.

(b) USNMGU Yap is taking concrete steps toward the preservation of local culture. In addition to verbally encouraging the reconstruction of "All Men's Houses", and the traditional flagstone dancing places, at semi-monthly chief's meetings, it is the policy of this unit to foster the indigenous modes of artistic expression at school dedications and festive occasions. Positive policy has been stated which marks these occasions as purely Yap cultural gatherings rather than presentations of games and athletics displays of interest mainly to the American spectators. Traditional songs and dances, deeprooted in native interest, are now substituted.

(c) No comments.

(a) There were no drastic changes during the month in the degree and character of acculturation achieved. It is still difficult for the people of Yap to assimilate the fact that we are not here to exploit them and that we are really in earnest when we want them to assume the prerogatives of self-government.

(b) The policy continues for encouraging retention and reviving of indigenous customs insofar as they are not in conflict with Military Government regulations. Probably one of the most characteristic phases of Yap culture is the love for dancing. Many of their dances are deep rooted from generations past and no one can give definite information as to their origin. Others have been borrowed from Ponape, the Palaus and the Marshalls. Still others have been devised in comparatively recent years, and by gestures and song depict the recent World War or other events of this generation. To the casual spectator there is a marked similarity in the basic steps and gestures but they have specific interpretation to the people participating and every dance tells its own story. Another characteristic of Yap culture is the use of the All-Men's House. During the Japanese time all but one of three were destroyed. Encouragement for reconstruction of these and even gifts of some material is the present policy.

(c) Yap people in the main are polite, cooperative and friendly. Relations between them and the Americans continues to be excellent. Most of the chiefs are reluctant to assume the initiative in adopting any new plans or ideas but follow explicitly any American order. Efforts toward promoting self government show some progress but it is very slow. For so many years Yap inhabitants have been given orders by outside rulers that they expect to be told exactly what to do and what not to do.



(a) Yap culture is a curious intermingling and adaptation of a number of other cultures and it is difficult to determine just what customs are indigenous. There are slight traces of the Spanish, more evidence of the Germanic and Japanese influence, and now there is beginning to be some emulation of Americans. Some traditions are hidden in the unwritten past of history. There still exists the customs of shaving girls' heads until puberty but now it is optional, with roughly half of the families following the old practice. In spite of the fact that the custom is carried on by half of the people, no one seems to know its' origin nor its purpose. A logical explanation would seem to be an attempt to keep the maidens unattractive until such time as they may be ready to acquire a husband but this is belied by the fact that they are permitted to adorn themselves in regal fashion for a dance or fiesta. Use of the "All-Men" house is being revived as a center of social activities. Military Government has taken a positive policy in encouraging the preservation of local culture.

(b) At the present time there is no organized program for local culture except in the way of offering encouragement. Navy personnel attend some of the native dances and feasts, and one occasion put on their own version of a Yap dance to one of the most popular native songs. The people have been encouraged to rebuild their "All-Men Houses" and flagstone dancing grounds.

(c) The Yap people continue friendly and cooperative. Relations between them and the Americans are excellent, in fact it becomes necessary occasionally to warn against too close fraternization.

- (a) Yap culture is deeply steeped in tradition although it has shown a marked ability for assimilation of new features and factors. Having had no written language of their own the Yap people have passed their customs and history down from generation to generation by word of mouth and through their song-dances. It is difficult to determine any pure acculturation that is completely indigenous to Yap. Nearly every custom shows an influence of Polynesian, German, Spanish, Marshallese, Japanese or other characteristic. Frequently the origin is lost in a mist of elapsed time and the people forget why they do something in a particular way, but do it simply because it is "the right thing" to do. Possibly one of the richest cultural heritages of Yap people is their churuk (native dance). Even these are a curious blend of the influences of other islands. Some of them are borrowed in toto, but mostly they are a local adaptation of the original. Among those introduced entirely from other islands there is often only a vague idea as to the meaning of words and gestures. When asked for an interpretation, the dance master, himself, cannot make a translation. This is not true, however, of the dances, which have received the stamp of Yap influence. In these, every gesture and every word has a specific meaning, and the dance may tell the story of famous ancestors, incidents of the war or details of a particularly amorous romance. At a recent school dedication, featured by a variety of dances, eight boys and eight girls paired up (which was an unheard of thing six months ago). When they swung into the wild gyrations of an American jitterbug dance they "brought down the



house". Natives and American guests were not only surprised but applauded vigorously. As far as is known the dance master had received no pointers or instruction in technique, but had picked up the details simply by observation at the movies. Other features of local culture also show alien influence but have maintained a basic Yappese interpretation.

- (b) Military Government has established a positive policy of encouragement toward revival and continuance of local culture. The people have been encouraged to rebuild their all-men houses, dancing platforms and to maintain their basic traditions. Efforts are also being made to establish a written record of customs and songs.
- (c) Relations between Americans and the native inhabitants continue friendly and cooperative. Yap people have been dominated so long by aliens that they expect to be told what to do. Even when they do not understand the reason for a regulation they are accustomed to complying without complaint. Thus their reactions to new regulations are more prompt than are their acceptance of new ideas.
- (d) There is a noticeable, even though slight, advance in the standing of women in the community. A year ago women did not walk or dance with the men, were not used for teachers (except under the Japanese some were used for teaching handicraft) and had very little voice in

community affairs. Observation of Americans and our customs has encouraged a first step in the direction of social equality. Mixed dances have been staged in recent months, one Carolinian woman is in training to become a teacher and occasionally you will see man and wife walking together (rather than the wife keeping a respectful six paces to the rear).



## 4. (Native Culture)

(a) Acculturation:

No noticeable change has occurred in the acceptance of western concepts; this society continues in its conservative character. Native workers at the Naval establishment frequently wear European clothing while in proximity of the base, but such clothing is discarded in favor of native dress upon return to the home communities. However, it was reported recently on reliable female authority that a few Yap women have begun to wear western style underwear under their grass skirts.

(b) Efforts to preserve local culture:

(No change in this item)

(c) Relations with Americans:

Relations with Americans continue to be friendly. A high degree of cooperation in putting the school system on a self supporting basis, after relatively short notice, was exhibited by the native chiefs. They want our help and guidance in understanding the more intricate problems involved in becoming economically self sufficient when we insist on introducing western ideas.

Information recently came to light concerning the activities of an early American trader in the Western Carolines named Captain Holcomb, which it was felt was important enough to record for historical purposes. Mr. George W. Bragdon of the Hartford Time, Hartford, Connecticut, wrote to the CAU Yap requesting information about Captain Holdomb in behalf of relatives of this trader who now reside in Granby, Connecticut. The information obtained is recorded as Enclosure (F).

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"CAPTAIN HOLCOMB"  
"AN EARLY AMERICAN TRADER ON YAP"

Unfortunately, all of the native crew members who accompanied Captain Holcomb on the fatal voyage are now dead. However, one man, YALOTH NIGA, of Lamer Village, Rul District, Yap, who served as boatswain on the schooner, related in detail the story of the Captain's death to DEFAN, also of Lamer Village. YALOTH died approximately ten years ago, the last of the native crew who witnessed the tragedy. DEFAN, a close relative of YALOTH (either cousin or nephew) is now an old man, in form, but mentally active. This is the story as he told it:

Captain Holcomb normally conducted his trading operations in the Western Caroline Islands, basing at Yap, with occasional trips to Hong Kong where he purchased trade goods for use in bartering with the natives. His schooner the "BARTOLA" was named after his wife Bartola Beck, a Mariaon woman. Christian was correct in the matter of Holcomb's wife. No children were born to the couple however.

At any rate, when the Bartola left here on her fateful voyage, the ship's company included Captain Holcomb, his white mate (name unknown now), YALOTH, and 60 Yap natives (or rather 59, plus one native from the Palau Islands). Holcomb headed southwest to Palau, at which place he left a group of Yap men for the purpose of cutting stones, later to be picked up and returned to Yap as "stone money", for which this island is well noted. The schooner then continued on toward New Guinea (DEFAN thinks that this was Holcomb's first trip to New Guinea).



Holcomb reached either New Guinea or an island off its coast, and the BARTOLA entered a deep sand-bottomed bay or lagoon. YALOTH reported seeing a great many pearl shells upon looking down at the bottom. These shells were highly prized on Yap as another form of "money" and represented Holcomb's objective in voyaging to New Guinea.

The captain ordered the crew not to fish for shells until he had spoken with the local native chiefs and obtained permission to do so. It was his purpose to avoid any friction which might lead to fighting. Subsequently a small boat containing Holcomb, Yaloth, two Yap natives, and a Palau native, left for the shore. It turned and headed for the beach stern first, as a precaution against the necessity of a fast departure should the reception prove unwelcome. DEFAN reported YALOTH as having stated that he remarked about the wild appearance of the local natives to Captain Holcomb.

The boat reached the beach, and Holcomb started to give small presents of tobacco and cloth to the New Guinea men. Spear throwing began quite suddenly and Holcomb, hit by one of the spears fell over the gunwale and into the shallow water. YALOTH, attempting to pull Holcomb into the boat, received two short spears in one arm and two more in his back (Henry Hofschneider has seen the scars).

The boat crew during the confusion lost its oars, only one man not having received spear hits. All jumped into the water and started swimming. YALOTH swam under the boat and helped move it farther from shore by grasping the keel as he swam. When out of spear range all got

into the boat (except Holcomb, whose body was hauled into the beach by New Guineans). The men broke out floor boards for use as paddles. Holcomb's rifle, which he had not been able to use, was taken from the tilges and discharged at the beach.

Rifle fire was directed against the crowd on the shore by the mate and crew aboard ship --a canoe was now being carried to the waters edge.

When the small boat reached the schooner's side, all except YALOTH climbed aboard and the ship set sail, towing the small boat. Because of his injuries, YALOTH was not moved at that time, but some time later the small boat was taken aboard.

The mate, who knew little about navigation, wanted to sail to Hong Kong. YALOTH advised Yap as the proper destination and this was agreed upon. DEFAN states that when the schooner was sighted at Yap, watchers stated that "something was wrong"--perhaps a distress flag was flying, he thinks. (At the time DEFAN was about ten years of age).

No Spanish government existed at Yap when the above events transpired. It was still the period of individual trading enterprise.

Another crew member, FALANGIMAR, who lived at Nimar Village, Okau District, Yap, and who died before YALOTH, told DEFAN that an American warship later came to Yap. Officers asked him if he knew where Holcomb had been killed. He indicated the bay on a chart which the Americans provided. But when invited to accompany the ship to New Guinea, FALANGIMAR declined.



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The BARTOLA lay at anchor in Yap harbor for a long time before finally sailing away. DEFAN does not know of its final disposition.

The information provided by the Captain's sister finds no substantiation on Yap. Holcomb constructed no roads or houses on Yap, except a shack for his own use. He did not purchase the island of Yap (which is still in plots of private land held by native owners) but did purchase BLELATSCH Island, a small island (less than 200 yards in diameter) located in Yap harbor. The German administration leased the island from Holcomb's wife, Bartola Beck, and acquired full ownership upon her death. The rumor that Holcomb was worth \$5,000,000 at the time of his death is considered fantastic by the Yap people today.

The Spanish-German rivalry as the basis for "dirty work" and the "mutiny" of Captain Holcomb's crew are rumors which have no foundation in any of the information available today.

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(d) Additional Facts:

(See Enclosures H & J)

(Enclosure H--See under A (Civil Ad. Functions)  
4 (Operations)-13

(Enclosure J--See under IA (Health)  
4 (Preventive and Therapeutic Field Work)



(a) Acculturation in the Yap Islands is of superficial degree. The indigenous social, political, and economic patterns remain integrated to the point of constituting a whole culture founded on native adaptation to the native environment. Western influences are evident chiefly in the uniform use of a few trade items, notably the metal adze and colored cloth.

(b) Efforts to preserve local culture:

Despite the seventy or more years of varying contact with western traders and administrators, the preservation of Yap culture has been amazingly effective. The retention of culture values may be attributed in largest part to a conscious effort of the entire Yap people to preserve indigenous systems from the inroads of enforced change instituted by foreigners. The Yap man is essentially satisfied with his mode of life, and does not wish to exchange it for a non-subsistence, urban type of existence.

The contribution of CAU Yap, and one which is gradually winning native support of American liberalism, has been the adoption of a sympathetic attitude toward native culture values.

(c) Relations with Americans continue be most cordial.

(d) Additional facts - No comment.