



## A HISTORY OF YAP

**1500 B.C.** Yap is populated by migrants from Eastern Indonesia or the Philippines. The arrival of settlers may have occurred as far back as 2,000 to 3,000 B.C.

**1525:** Portuguese explorer Dioga Da Rocha arrives in the islands and stays for four months. Over the next two centuries, more than twenty explorers and traders of Spanish, British, Dutch and American origin pass through the Yap Islands.

**1731:** First Catholic Mission is started by Spaniards, Father Jan Cantova and Father Visitor Walter, on the island of Mogmog, Ulithi. After several months, Father Walter returns by ship to Guam. Soon after, Cantova and his party are massacred, perhaps by local priests opposed to the new religion.

**1800-1860:** Intermittent trading takes place with Europeans for bech-de-mer (sea cucumbers.)

**1869:** Germans establish the first permanent trading station. By 1874, holdings include 3,000 acres of land, a cotton plantation and a ship repair operation.

**1871:** David Dean O'Keefe, an American sailor on a pearl diving expedition, is shipwrecked on Yap and rescued by the Yapese people. He is later taken to Hong Kong on a German trading ship.

**1872:** O'Keefe returns as skipper of the Catherine, a Chinese junk named after his American wife, and begins trading stone money for copra (dried coconut flesh, an important source of lamp oil) and sea, cucumbers, an Asian delicacy.

**1874:** Spain claims sovereignty over Yap.

**1876:** Germany sends a warship to Yap to map the island and protect German interests.

**1880's:** Yap is established as the commercial center of the Caroline Islands, serving as the regional source of copra, home to four trading companies, and a coaling station for Spanish steamers.

**1885:** The Spanish-German feud reaches its climax. On August 21, two Spanish ships arrive with a governor, two priests, soldiers, convict laborers, horses, water buffalo, cattle and stones for a governor's house and a mission. Four days later, the German gunboat Litis drops anchor and a small party races ashore to raise a German flag and claim the island just prior to the formal colonization ceremony being planned by the Spanish.

**1886:** Pope Leo XII settles the feud between Germany's Bismarck and Spain's King Alfonso, awarding Yap and the other Caroline Islands to Spain, but granting Germany and other nation's commercial rights. Spain sets up a small garrison and begins building the first of six Catholic churches.

**1899:** Spain sells Yap and the remainder of Spanish Micronesia to Germany for \$4.5 million. The first German delegation includes a governor secretary, doctor, police chief and 11 Malay police.

**1900-1906:** Disease ravages Yap. Influenza and leprosy are especially potent killers.

**1901:** O'Keefe disappears at sea. The Germans open Tagreng Canal.

**1902:** Germans select one boy from each municipality for training as medical officer, and establish municipal medical stations.

**1903:** Germans open first hospital near Tarang Island.

**1905:** German communications station finished linking Yap with Guam and Shanghai.

**1908:** Last Spaniards leave.

**1914:** World War I begins. British shelling destroys German communications center, and Japanese Expeditionary Squadron occupies the island on October 7 in a bloodless takeover.

**1919:** Secret treaty agreement between Japan and Britain guaranteeing Japanese control over all Pacific islands north of the Equator announced to the world in the Treaty of Versailles.

**1920:** Japan begins formal administration under a League of Nations mandate. Extensive settlement results in a Japanese population of over 100,000 throughout Micronesia. The indigenous population is about 40,000. Sugar cane, mining, fishing and tropical agriculture become the major industries.

**1920-1940:** Japanese population on Yap jumps from 97 to 1,933.

**1935:** Japan leaves the League of Nations and begins fortification of Yap.

**1938-1939:** Military preparations begin. Yapese are forced to work in labor gangs. Nickel mine opens in Gagil. Strip mining for bauxite and phosphate begins on Yap and Fais.

**1944:** Allies begin bombing the town of Colonia, the Japanese airfield at the southern end of the island, and the airfield under construction in Tomil. The U.S. Army 323rd Infantry, 81st Division seizes Ulithi unopposed and the island is rapidly turned into a massive staging area. At one point, over 1,000 ships are anchored in the Ulithi Lagoon.

**1945:** Americans occupy Yap after Japan's surrender. By the end of the war, most infrastructure has been laid waste by bombing and the islands and people have been exploited by the Japanese Military to the point of impoverishment.

**1947:** United Nations creates the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) and the United States accepts the role of Trustee to "promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants."

**1951:** Authority passed from the civil administration of the U.S. Navy Department to the Department of the Interior.

**1964.** Bridge built across Tagreng Canal linking north and south islands for the first time since WWII.

**1966.** Peace Corps arrives in Yap.

**1969:** Congress of Micronesia and U.S. begin first round of negotiations on future political status of Trust Territory Districts.

**July 12, 1978:** Following a Constitutional Convention, a Federation is voted on and formed under the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Yap's approval margin of 95% is the highest in Micronesia.

**May 10, 1979:** New Constitution is implemented. Former Districts become States of the Federation and adopt their own State constitutions. Nationwide democratic elections held to elect officials of the National and four State governments. Judicial system is established.

**October 1, 1982:** Compact of Free Association negotiated between FSM and the United States; approved by FSM voters in 1983.

**November 3, 1986:** U.S. Congress approves the Compact establishing security and economic agreements between the U.S. and FSM through the end of the 20th Century.

**September 17, 1990:** FSM formally admitted to the United Nations General Assembly. Jesse Margelaw of Yap appointed first FSM U.N. Ambassador, on an interim basis.

**1992:** Martin Yinug of Yap appointed as the first Micronesian to serve on the FSM Supreme Court.

**2003:** Compact renewed for another 20 years.