

Recent Books from/on Papua New Guinea – Sept 2021

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History

Voices of the Villages : Madang and Motu People in Papua New Guinea / Mary R. Mennis

Glienicke, Germany: Galda Verlag, 2021

2v.

97839620931442

New Guinea Communication Series, Vol.1. (2 Vol. Set)

\$ 190.00(Set) / PB

1055gm.

PART 1:

Mary Mennis taped the voices of village elders along the Madang coast in the 1970s. Topics included: origins of the tribes; traditional village life before outside contact; spiritual beliefs; weather magic; men's houses and initiations; and the customs of trading in triple-deck canoes along the coast using earthenware pots as collateral. It also covers the origins of their cargo cults which differ from the theory proposed by Peter Lawrence.

Mary Mennis and her husband, Brian lived in Papua New Guinea for 20 years between 1962 and 1982. Brian, a surveyor, was posted to Madang for eight years beginning in 1971 when the centenary of Miklouho Maclay was being celebrated in Madang. After reading his accounts of the large trading canoes he saw in 1871, Mary became fascinated in the local culture. She discovered the people had stopped building these canoes

during the war in the 1940s. She then encouraged five old men who still had the knowledge to build another canoe in 1978 and she documented its construction, the magic of the weather men; the pots they traded and the whole trading system. This knowledge was on the verge of being lost. Launching one of Mary's earlier books, *Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare*, first Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea thanked her for her work and said the book *The Flagged History of Madang* would play a great role in educating the young people.

Mary Mennis has a Masters Degree in History from UPNG and a Masters Degree in Social Science from James Cook University. She was an Honorary Research Assistant at Queensland University for many years. Her research in Madang is also found in the book: *A Potted History of Madang: Traditional Culture and Change on the North coast of Papua New Guinea* published in 2007. During their time in Madang, Mary developed a deep appreciation of the culture of the village people and her family attended many gatherings and feasts.

PART 2:

What were the villagers' reactions to the outsiders who came to Madang? These are found in taped interviews in the 1970s from memories handed down from earlier generations. First was Miklouho Maclay who arrived in 1871. The people thought he was from the moon. In 1884 when Madang became a German Province, the villagers were forced to work on plantations and on clearing land. They wanted to return to their old ways of trading and having feasts. They revolted in 1904 and were harshly punished. During World War Two the Japanese occupied Madang and again their way of life was affected. After the war the Australian Government was in charge until 1975 when Papua New Guinea became Independent. In these pages we discover what the people thought about all these changes. Basically they saw the Germans as the first bosses then they left and the Australians took over, then during the war the Japanese arrived and they were the new bosses. You had to do what they said or you would be in trouble.

The final part of Volume two contains the memories of the Motu traders, the hiri trade and the large lagatoi canoes which carried pots to the Gulf in exchange for the much needed sago. These interviews were made in 1995, 50 years after the end of World War 2. These two volumes Voices of the Villagers have preserved much knowledge of the history and culture of the Bel people of Madang and to a lesser extent that of the Motu people of Port Moresby.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=777328>

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Literature

Myths and Magic of Melanesia : Based on Stories and Myths of Papua New Guinea / Mary R. Mennis & Colin De'Ath
Glienicke, Germany: Galda Verlag, 2021
216p.

Includes Bibliography

9783962031589

New Guinea Communication Series, Vol. 2

\$ 95.00 / PB

376gm.

Professor Colin De'Ath and Mary R. Mennis were both doing research in the Madang area in the 1970s. While Professor Colin was working on the Gogol area researching the effects of the Trans-Gogol Timber Project on the local villagers, Mary Mennis was doing research into the culture of the coastal Madang people and changes that had occurred over the years. At that time, they collaborated and published »Merging Men and Nature: Myths of Melanesia«. The original version was published in Oral History in 1981, and recently it was decided to republish these myths to make them available to a wider readership. In this latest edition, a few modifications have been made to make the stories clearer. Also some myths and oral traditions have been added.

The myths presented in this book are from Madang, Manus Island, the Sepik area, the Highlands, New Britain and the Port Moresby area of Papua New Guinea as well as two from Irian Jaya. They are grouped under categories like Origin of Pottery, Two Brother Myths; Myths about mountains and Origin Myths for ease of comparison.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=777332>

Dance of the Mask : The First Flowering of Literature and the Contemporary Arts in Papua New Guinea / Greg Murphy
Glienicke, Germany: Galda Verlag, 2021

208p.

9783962031718

New Guinea Communication Series, Vol. 3

\$ 95.00 / PB

468gm.

Dance of the Mask sets the history of the first flowering of Papua New Guinea contemporary literature and arts firmly in place so that it cannot be forgotten or brushed over or denied; the plant was always there in Papua New Guinea of course and still is. As a history, it describes the people involved and the quality of the cultural efflorescence – Ulli and Georgina Beier, John Kasaipwalova, Greg Murphy and the Raun Raun Theatre artists and their remarkable contributions to this historical conjuncture – the Papua Pocket Poets series with their visual art covers, the epic poem Sail the Midnight Sun by John Kasaipwalova and the resulting trilogy of folk operas by Raun Raun Theatre performed nationally and internationally and in Europe to great acclaim at the Edinburgh Festival in 2007. The book philosophises that culture is always changing and that literature and the arts should be influencing that process of change.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=777333>

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