

Know Our Islands, Know Our History

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Lessons From Mañahak

The lunar month of Makmamao is a favorite for many CHamoru/Chamorro people as it signifies the time of the annual mañahak run. Every year, thousands of mañahak (juvenile rabbit fish) travel from the deep ocean to the shore so they can feed safely away from predators. During this time, dozens of fishermen from around the island walk along the beaches in the early morning with their talāya (throw nets) hoping to catch schools of mañahak. The mañahak are very small, only measuring a few inches in length. Once caught and cleaned, dozens of mañahak are fried to a crisp at a time, making one of the best treats in the early summer months. Despite the abundance of mañahak, many peskadot (fishermen) practice the value of utas. This value promotes the taking of just what is needed. By doing this, fishermen ensure that others will also be able to catch for their families and that there will still be enough mañahak left to mature to adulthood, thus continuing this natural cycle for generations to come.

Fisherman with a Talaya • Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC)

While the catching of mañahak is one of our island's oldest traditions, it doesn't just end when the fish have been brought home. The bounty that a peskadot (fisherman) receives from the mañahak run is always shared. Rather than keep the entire catch for themselves, the peskadot will patte (share) bags of mañahak to their friends and extended family in the spirit of geftao (generosity). This strengthens the existing relationships within our island community and encourages even more sharing with one another. In every mañahak run during Makmamao, the message is always clear; just as the ocean provides for us, we too must share in our successes and provide to those around us as we strive towards building harmony with one another and our environment.

CHamoru/Chamorro Proverb

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Utas, Na'utas

"Don't be wasteful!"

Toni "Malia" Ramirez, Guam's Territorial Historian
By Guampedia, 2020

Revitalizing Micronesia's Seafaring Connection: Alingano Maisu Voyage

Pacific Islanders have been voyaging across Oceania since the pre-colonial period. Rather than allowing the vast ocean to isolate geographically separated communities, ancient navigators maintained inter-island relations for centuries. Contact between the Mariana and Caroline Islands, for example, allowed for trade amongst CHamorus/Chamorros and Carolinians long before the Spanish arrived.

The Spanish colonization of the Marianas eventually led to the demise of this inter-island connection. CHamorus/Chamorros were forced to abandon their traditional seafaring practices because the proas, or the voyaging canoes of the CHamorus/Chamorros, were regarded as a hindrance for conversion and control of the indigenous people. Carolinian navigators also stopped coming to Guam after hearing about the Spanish brutality from CHamoru/Chamorro refugees.



Fishing for the Village • J.A. Pellion 1824/Guam Public Library System Trading • Johann Ludwig Gottfried 1631/Guam Public Library System

Communication with the Caroline islands was nonexistent, up until 1788, when “Luito of Lamotrek,” a Carolinian seaman, sailed into Talofof Bay in Guam with two canoes. Luwito said he arrived in Guam using directions from an ancient chant that described the Mutau-uol, or the northern route to the Mariana Islands.

Annual trade between the islands was finally re-established in 1805 under Captain Luis de Torres, a CHamoru-Spanish official, up until the 20th century, when policies implemented by German and Japanese colonial governments prohibited inter-island movement.

Over the past few decades, Pacific Islanders have recognized the importance of preserving traditional seafaring knowledge. This Makmamao, the revitalization of seafaring continues with the sailing of the Alingano Maisu, a traditional sailing canoe gifted to Micronesia from Polynesian navigators, from Palau to Yap to Saipan. The Alingano Maisu was originally set to stop through Guam on their voyage but due to the damage of Super Typhoon Mawar, will be sailing straight to Saipan after their stops in Woleai and Satawal.

Voyages like these both honor the historical legacy of seafaring in Pasifika communities, as well as reveal the interconnectedness of Oceania. Seafaring allows for Pacific Islanders to formulate a regional identity that acknowledges the mobility of our ancestors and transcends the colonial imposition of stratified borders amongst our land.

Historical Highlights

Palau ends Trusteeship with United States

On May 25, 1994, Palau ended their status as a trusteeship with the United States, gaining independence for the first time since being made a part of the Spanish Empire in 1885. After the war, Palau, along with several other former Japanese territories in the Pacific, were placed in a trusteeship under the United States in order to support their vote of self-determination.

Battle of Saipan Begins

On June 13, 1944, United States Forces began the capture of Saipan from the Japanese. This battle was part of Operation Forager, an offensive that sought the recapture of the Mariana Islands and Palau. US Naval ships began their bombardment on June 13 with the first landfall beginning on June 15 at 7am.



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Meet our summer 2023 Interns!

Part of Guampedia's mission is to promote an educated citizenry for our island. We do this primarily through the Guampedia website and our outreach activities throughout the community. Sometimes, though, people reach out to us to help them with their learning goals and career aspirations.

Although we don't advertise for them, Guampedia has had several interns over the years that have gone on to successful careers, and is welcoming three new student interns to assist us with our Culture of Connecting project.

Our past interns include Dr. Jesi Lujan Bennet, an assistant professor and faculty in Pacific and Indigenous studies at the University of Waikato in Aotearoa, and Dr. Kristin Oberiano, an assistant professor of history at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Both Jesi and Kristin were undergraduates at the time but clearly had a passion for Guam history and CHamoru/Chamorro culture and were looking for an opportunity to work with Guampedia in some capacity. As a nonprofit, we had nothing to offer by way of monetary compensation, but we gave them a chance to see Guam in a different way, to research and write about our island, to learn about nonprofits and to network within our community.

In 2018, we took on board three interns, Shannon Ada, Artemia "Mia" Perez and Lazaro "Laz" Quinata. Shannon interned at Guampedia during her senior year at the University of Guam where she graduated with a BA in Communications and a minor in mathematics. Upon graduation, Shannon worked with Big Fish Creative, an advertising firm, and now works at Anderson Middle School (DoDEA). Mia graduated from the University of Guam with a BA in Anthropology with minors in Sociology and CHamoru Studies. She later went on to work as a researcher/writer for University of Guam Press. Laz started at Guampedia as an intern and has since become a valuable member of the Guampedia team as a researcher/writer/editor. He works on our newsletter features and lesson plans, is an outreach representative, and is assisting in developing our internship programs. Laz also worked as a Guam Studies teacher at Father Duenas Memorial School but is now heading to Samoa for a two-year stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

This summer's crop of interns are no less impressive. We are excited to work with them and wish them well!



Vinessa Duenas

Vinessa Dueñas is a first generation college graduate from California. She graduated with her Bachelors in Anthropology with a focus on Culture, Language and Society from California State University, Sacramento. She moved back to Guam to be able to build a stronger connection to her CHamoru/Chamorro roots and to pursue her Masters in Micronesian Studies at the University of Guam. She loves spending time with her family and friends. She is interested in traditional CHamoru/Chamorro healing practices, music, dancing and learning new things. She hopes to learn all she can about traditional CHamoru/Chamorro healing and to become fluent in the CHamoru/Chamorro language.



Lula Blas Fox

Lula Blas Fox is a Bachelor's candidate for Sociology and Cultural Anthropology at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. A CHamoru/Chamorro woman who was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, this summer marks Lula's first time in Guam. She hopes to reconnect with her roots while on the island over the next few months. Lula intends on taking a CHamoru/Chamorro language class at the University of Guam, alongside interning with Guampedia. At Northeastern University, Lula writes for multiple publications and is extremely passionate about using journalism as a medium to uplift marginalized voices. She hopes to tie in her experiences in Guam with her writing on environmentalism, economic policy, and cultural studies.



Ty Leon Guerrero

Ty is a senior at Troy High School in Fullerton, California. He is originally from Sinajana and moved to California with his family when he was 13. Interested in journalistic writing, Ty was a Vibe reporter for the Pacific Daily News, and provided a unique perspective as an off-island writer. Ty is a swimmer on his school's swim team and the Fullerton Aquatics Sports Team. He is also a music enthusiast and plays piano, keyboard and guitar.