



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

September 2018

The Marshall Islands – Small Islands with a Big History



www.thewebfooters.com

Northwest Collectibles Presents

The Greater Portland Antique Paper Faire

Postcards, Stamps, Photos & Collectible Paper

September 29-30, 2018

Hours:

Saturday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Free Admission – Free Parking

PORTLAND MEADOWS TURF CLUB
1001 N Schmeer Road – Third Floor
Portland, Oregon

Easy access from I-5, exits 306 and 306B (from the south) and free parking!

Old Postcards, Photographs, Stereo View Cards, Books, Stamps
Valentine Cards, Matchbooks, Magazines, Prints, Maps, Trade Cards
Movie Posters and much much more!

APPRAISERS AND BUYERS STANDING BY
Terry Weis -- 503-679-4755

Facebook.com/papercollectiblesshow

www.portlandpapershows.com

The Marshall Islands – Small Islands with a Big History

By David Anderson

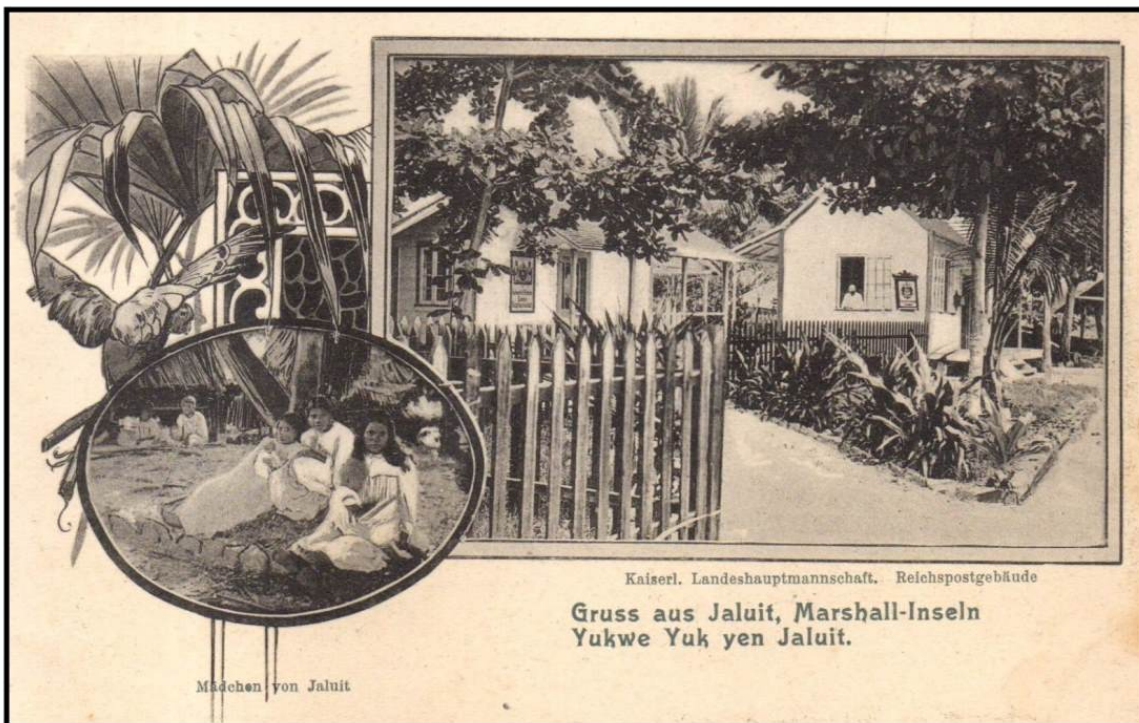
Located far out in the Pacific Ocean, nearly 5,000 miles from the West Coast of the U.S. lie the Marshall Islands. They are a place of great beauty and also extreme poverty. It is a nation that will disappear in the not too distant future as sea levels continue to rise since the average elevation of the 29 coral atolls and a few single islands is only about 9 feet above sea level. The original settlers of these small islands arrived, maybe from Taiwan, about 4,000 years ago. They mastered sailing, and perfected the making of, outrigger canoes which they were able to sail long distances in the open ocean by using the ocean swells and stars to navigate by.



This style of outrigger is now used only in a few locations for sailing around in a lagoon, fishing or for transport. Outriggers that would be used in the open ocean would be much larger. They are not dugout canoes in a traditional sense, but are generally made from two or more pieces which are sewn together using twine made from coconut fibers.

The first Europeans to visit the Marshall Islands were the Spanish, who did not take much of an interest in them because of the resource poor islands. During their period of trade between the Philippines and Mexico, the galleons avoided the Marshalls since they were a navigation hazard. The islands were however, claimed by Spain in 1592 until 1885 when they were sold to Germany and became a German colony.

The islands were run from Jaluit Atoll in the southern Marshalls by the Jaluit Gesellschaft Company which turned most of the atolls and islands in to copra plantations.



Gruss aus Jaluit, Marshall Inseln cards are highly collectible items and provide important historic glimpses of life in the Marshalls prior to World War I, after which Germany lost control. After World War I, control of the Marshall Islands was turned over to Japan by the League of Nations in 1920. Even though the islands were not to be militarized, they were.



Japan

continued to administer the Marshalls from Jaluit. They were efficient, but extremely authoritarian, administrators. Capital punishment (beheadings) was not uncommon.



Copra (dried coconut meat) is a labor intensive product. The dried coconut is collected, generally husked (at least what I saw happen in the mid-1970s), meat then extracted, either sun dried (on drier atolls), or dried in a small outdoor oven type affair (especially on wetter atolls). It is then bagged and sold. In the 1970s a land owner would be able to make 4 or 5 bags from a typical plot of land every few months; each weighing about 100 lbs. The copra would be bought for about 5 to 5 ½ cents per pound. With that money they could buy rice, flour, sugar, coffee and minimal other food items.

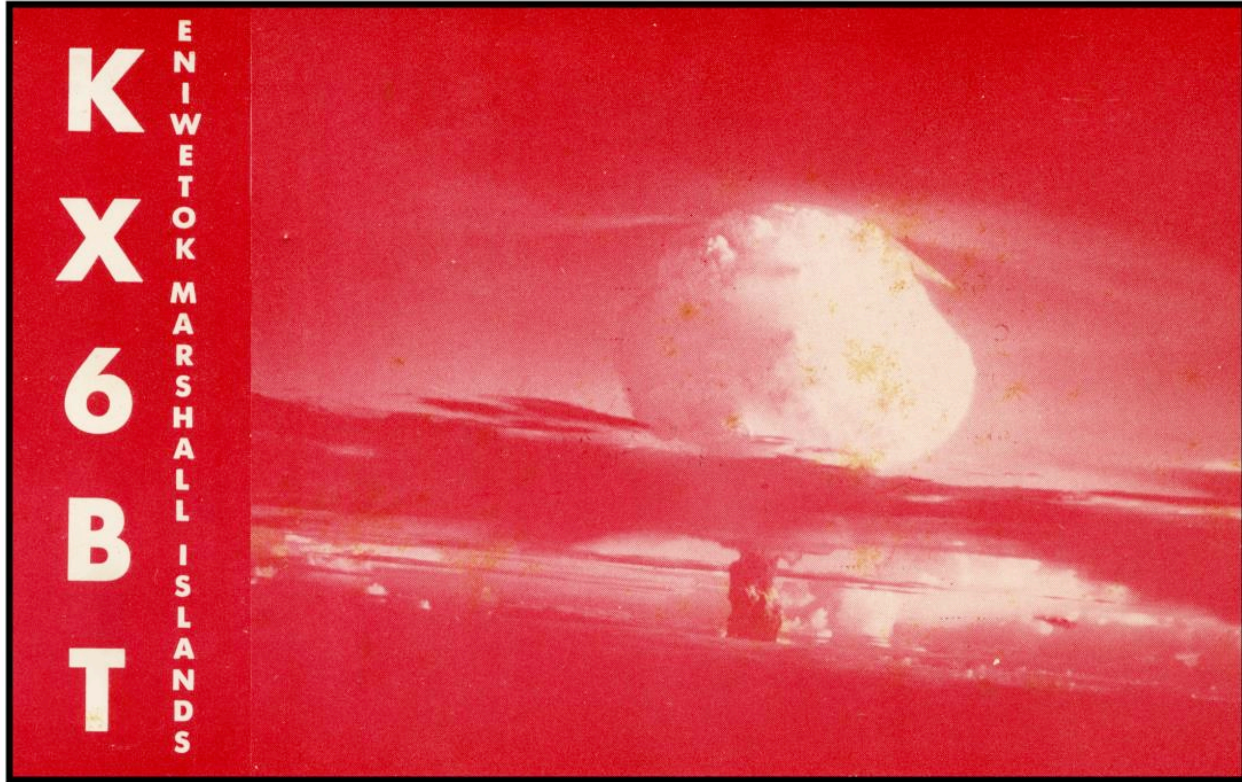


The Marshall Islands are built up of fossilized coral reef material that grew on basaltic volcanic islands that slowly sank below sea level. They are indescribably beautiful when seen from the air, or while snorkeling in the warm tropical Pacific waters. They are extremely fragile environments that may not survive sea level raise now happening due to global climate change.



Several of the atolls in the Marshall Islands were the scenes of fierce fighting between the Japanese and American super powers – leaving the Marshallese, caught in the middle, to find shelter where they could.

After World War II, Japan lost control of their former island mandates, and the era of United States administration began. Soon after taking control, the United States discouraged travel in the Marshalls by outsiders in part because we began the saddest part of Marshallese history. That was the period of open air testing of nuclear and thermonuclear devices. There were 67 devices that were open air tested in the Marshall Islands, including the first and the largest thermonuclear devices ever tested. The equivalent yield of these devices is the equivalent of setting off 1.6 Hiroshima sized devices every day for twelve years – something that would not be tolerated today.



Several of the atolls that were (purposely) subject to tests and fallout continue to be uninhabitable today – including Bikini Atoll where the fourth and fifth devices were tested. Video, now unclassified, of many of these tests can be seen on YouTube, and soldiers who were part of those tests are now able to freely talk about their experiences. (Google the National Association of Atomic Veterans). QSL cards from Americans stationed in the Marshall Islands post WWII are highly collectible and very interesting historical items.

In the late 1970s, the Marshall Islands entered in to a new relationship with the United States, a Compact of Free Association where they are free to determine their foreign relations and vote how they feel in the United Nations, while the U.S. is responsible for their defense.



To this day, the Marshall Islands remain strategically important to U.S. interests. Kwajalein has had an important role as part of the Ronald Reagan Missile Defense Site. It is otherwise generally off limits to most outsiders.



The author spent two years in the Marshall Islands as a Peace Corps Volunteer on Ujelang Atoll, working with the people moved off of Enewetak Atoll so the U.S. could test devices on Enewetak. Here he is on board a field trip ship travelling to Ujelang.

UPCOMING SHOW IN PORTLAND

A vintage, sepia-toned photograph of three people standing in a field with trees in the background. On the left, a woman in a light-colored dress stands next to a motorcycle. In the center, a man in a dark suit stands with his hand on the handlebar of a motorcycle. On the right, a woman in a light-colored dress and hat sits on a motorcycle. The motorcycles are vintage, likely from the 1930s or 40s.

Greater Portland Antique Paper Faire

**Sept 30
thru
Oct 1
2017**

**Free
Appraisals**

**Free Admission
Free Parking**

**New
Location:**

Portland Meadows Turf Club
1001 N Schmeer Rd

www.portlandpapershows.com