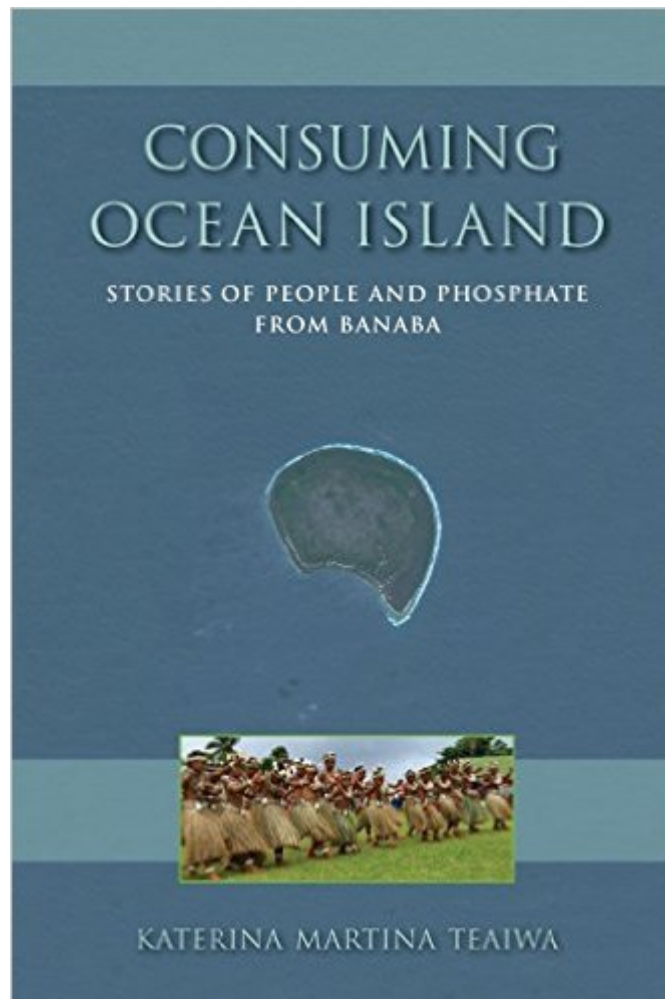


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Consuming Ocean Island: Stories Of People And Phosphate From Banaba (Tracking Globalization)



Synopsis

Consuming Ocean Island tells the story of the land and people of Banaba, a small Pacific island, which, from 1900 to 1980, was heavily mined for phosphate, an essential ingredient in fertilizer. As mining stripped away the island's surface, the land was rendered uninhabitable, and the indigenous Banabans were relocated to Rabi Island in Fiji. Katerina Martina Teaiwa tells the story of this human and ecological calamity by weaving together memories, records, and images from displaced islanders, colonial administrators, and employees of the mining company. Her compelling narrative reminds us of what is at stake whenever the interests of industrial agriculture and indigenous minorities come into conflict. The Banaban experience offers insight into the plight of other island peoples facing forced migration as a result of human impact on the environment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book because of my family's history on Banaba dating back to before the war. My father, Bryan Connell was posted to the island before the war and was one of the last to leave before it was occupied by the Japanese. He returned immediately after the cessation of hostilities along with my mother and sister. He was actively engaged in three separate 'recruits' in the forties and early fifties. He donated a stained glass window to the Catholic Church, which is presumably still intact. I was born in Melbourne and went to Banaba at the age of two months and my brother was born there on Banaba. I have read several texts relating to the phosphate industry, including

'The Phosphateers' which is used as a reference by the author, which my father had. I have also read Grimble's 'A pattern of Islands' and 'Return to the Islands', both of which my father, (who knew Grimble) claimed were basically romantic rubbish, thinly based on fact. My family stayed on Banaba until 1959 at which time we all moved to Nauru, the other island which also features in this book. I last visited Banaba in 1968, when it was still in full swing as a phosphate -producing island. I found the book to be interesting in parts, hard work in others due to the excessive use of vocabulary usually confined to academic papers, the excessive use towards the end of passages in Gilbertese, and somewhat lacking credibility in the part about white employees of the British Phosphate Commission (BPC) and their life in the fifties and sixties. For example, I remember quite well the day we had the phone installed in the mid fifties. My father as assistant accountant was one of those who was 'chosen' as one of the first to get a line.

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