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## Editorial

# Knowing Who You Were

One of the most comprehensive and far reaching bills ever to go before the Guam Legislature will be considered later this month. Hearings have already been held on the bill, which would identify and define historical objects and historical sites, and detail their preservation.

Guam has a remarkable, unique history, first with some distant, unrecorded "old people," then with the Chamorros and their civilization, then with Spanish, and the Galleons and missionaries, then the war and the Japanese, and finally, throughout the American era. The island has seen pirates, enormous typhoons, and dive bombers. It has been visited by whalers and presidents.

It is absolutely vital, not only for the edification of island visitors, but for the people who live here, and who should be aware of their culture, that all the artifacts and historic sites remain preserved, and if necessary, restored.

Tied in with this bill is the announcement from Joe Diego, Director of the Department of Commerce, who reports that the Parks and Recreation will be hiring a full-time archeologist, Dr. Fred Reinman, of UCLA, called the "foremost authority" on Guam's ancient cultural artifacts. Some years ago Dr. Reinman, in a series of digs, found literally hundreds of latte stone sites around the island.

The new law, Bill. No. 595 is by the Committee on Resources, Development and Agriculture. It repeals the existing laws on the subject, concerning the management and protection of historical objects and sites.

Legislators said that the historic, archeological, architectural and cultural heritage of Guam is among her most important environmental assets, and warn that the rapid social and economic development of contemporary society threatens to obliterate these remaining vestiges.

The bill proposes to do the following:

1. Make plans to acquire, restore, and preserve historic areas, buildings and sites significant to Guam's past.
2. Establish and maintain the Guam Register of Historic Places.
3. Establish regulations on the uses of such areas;
4. Develop a territorywide survey of historic areas, buildings and sites, with a preservation and restoration development plan and accompanying budget and land use recommendations.
5. Provide for matching grants-in-aid to private agencies for projects which will fulfill the purposes of this chapter;
6. Seek assistance for the territorial historic preservation and restoration program by applying for technical assistance and funds from the federal government and private agencies.
7. Employ sufficient professional and technical staff for the purposes of this chapter.
8. Advise and cooperate with other public and private agencies engaged in similar work.
9. Submit an annual report and budget to the Governor and Legislature, with recommendations for programs of historic preservation and restoration.

The proposed law, published in Wednesday's Daily News in full, goes into detail as to the acquisition of such sites, the operations of such properties, the use of the Guam Museum, even setting forth requirements for archeological digs on the island.

The act even creates a nonprofit corporation, a Guam Institute of Spanish-Chamorro Culture, to receive sites and historic objects. It is also designed to assist in coordinating plans, and programs concerned with the preservation of the Spanish-Chamorro culture.

There is no question but a bill of this sort is absolutely vital to Guam. The bill, introduced by Sen. P.J. Bordallo, goes into much detail on the protection of artifacts, and historic sites. It is especially pertinent now, as the average Guamanian seems to be awakening to the pride of his Chamorro heritage. A few years ago, as one writer pointed out, you couldn't catch a local boy dead wearing a coconut hat, or weaving a basket. People laughed at the old farmer still driving a Carabao cart. But, these things change. Now, even the younger generation realizes that the past is what truly makes the present, and instead of denying that past, he should be making every effort to encourage its preservation.

There are a couple of minute points in the bill that we don't agree with. For one thing it ties the historic objects and sites in with the Department of Commerce. While that Department handles parks and recreation, we suppose that it makes sense. The point is, though, that it seems an appropriate time to establish a completely new department on Guam, a Department of Parks and Recreation—completely divorced from the Department of Commerce, which should be concerned with business and industry.

Another thing is that the main thrust of the bill concerns only Spanish-Chamorro culture. While most of modern times on Guam has been Spanish and Chamorro in nature, we shouldn't forget about the distant past, a time when some other culture lived on Guam, or the more recent past, since the American administration began. For example, the German ship of World War I, the Commorant lies beneath the water of Apra Harbor, having been looted of all its valuables over the year. Yet, the first American shot fired in World War I was directed at men of that ship, right here on Guam. The preservation of battle sites of World War II should be given a premier role in any historic site selection for Guam. That "tank battle" not far from Windward Hills, for instance, should be preserved.

Finally, we take issue with one of the clauses of the bill, which suggests the employment of a director "to serve on a full-time basis who shall be a native-born resident" and who shall received \$25,000 a year. This sort of restriction is probably illegal, and tends to take out several good possible applicants for the job. A historian-archeologist just shouldn't have to be "native-born" to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to do the job.

The bill correctly bans removal of any prehistoric or historic remains, and spells out the use of the Guam Museum as a depository for certain specimens and objects. We're very much in favor of the bill's intent—to try to retain some of the past, as we move into the future. It's important that people know who they were, so that they can know who they are. JCMi.