

# PEACE COUNCIL TO SETTLE TITLE TO GERMAN ISLANDS

**FUTURE OWNERSHIP OF MICRONESIA**  
Groups in Western Pacific Is Subject of Speculation.

## ALL RICH IN RESOURCES

American Missionaries in 1852 Carry First Education to Islands, but Hampered by Huns.

The fortunes of war again have raised the question of title to three groups of islands in the western Pacific—the Ladrone, Carolines and Marshalls, constituting the native portion of Micronesia. These islands were until recently possessions of the German empire. Early in the war they were taken over by British and Japanese forces and are now claimed by the Japanese as a portion of recompense for her share in the great conflict. Recent advices from Washington state that the Japanese government will lay their claims before the peace conference.

The three groups lie between 23 degrees north latitude and 110 to 145 degrees west from Washington. The Marshall Islands are approximately 2400 miles southwest of Hawaii and the farthest east of the Carolines are about 300 miles from the Philippines. The Ladrone extend northward to within 1200 miles of Japan.

Though widely scattered and possessing a total land area of less than 3000 square miles, the strategical value of these islands and their commercial importance as well make them a prize of war which the Japanese may well covet. They are for the most part rich in soil and yield liberally all the fruits of the tropics. Copra and phosphates are the principal exports and there is an increasing trade in coral, sea shells and fruits.

### MUCH TRADE ENJOYED

Though the great majority of the islanders are natives of their own country, there are a considerable number which are mountainous and attain altitudes of several hundred feet. There are many excellent harbors scattered throughout the archipelago which will prove advantageous as coaling stations and stopping places for the future trade of the Pacific.

In the year 1912 a total of 340 vessels entered the ports of the Marshall Islands alone. Exports from this group during that year were valued at 7,046,000 marks and imports at 3,225,000 marks. The larger portion of this trade was with Germany.

The Marshall group consists of two parallel rows of atolls lying from 100 to 300 miles apart. The eastern row, known as Ratak, consists of 15 island groups, while the Ralik, or western, varying in circumference from two to 50 miles. Jajut island is the most important and is the center of commerce of the group. All the Marshall Islands are low lying and of coral formation. Many of these atolls are broken into sections varying from one to 20 miles in length and from one quarter mile to a mile in width.

### RICH IN RESOURCES

Breadfruit, jackfruit, coconut palm and other tropical fruits abound. On some of the larger islands the breadfruit trees attain a diameter of 12 feet and a height of 80 feet, a single tree bearing quantities of food equal to many acres of wheat. Fresh water pools are found in the interior of many of the islands and on their margins grow taro, arrowroot, bananas and caladium. The native population of the Marshalls prior to the German occupation was estimated at 15,000.

The Carolines, lying westward of the Marshalls, are all of coral formation ex-

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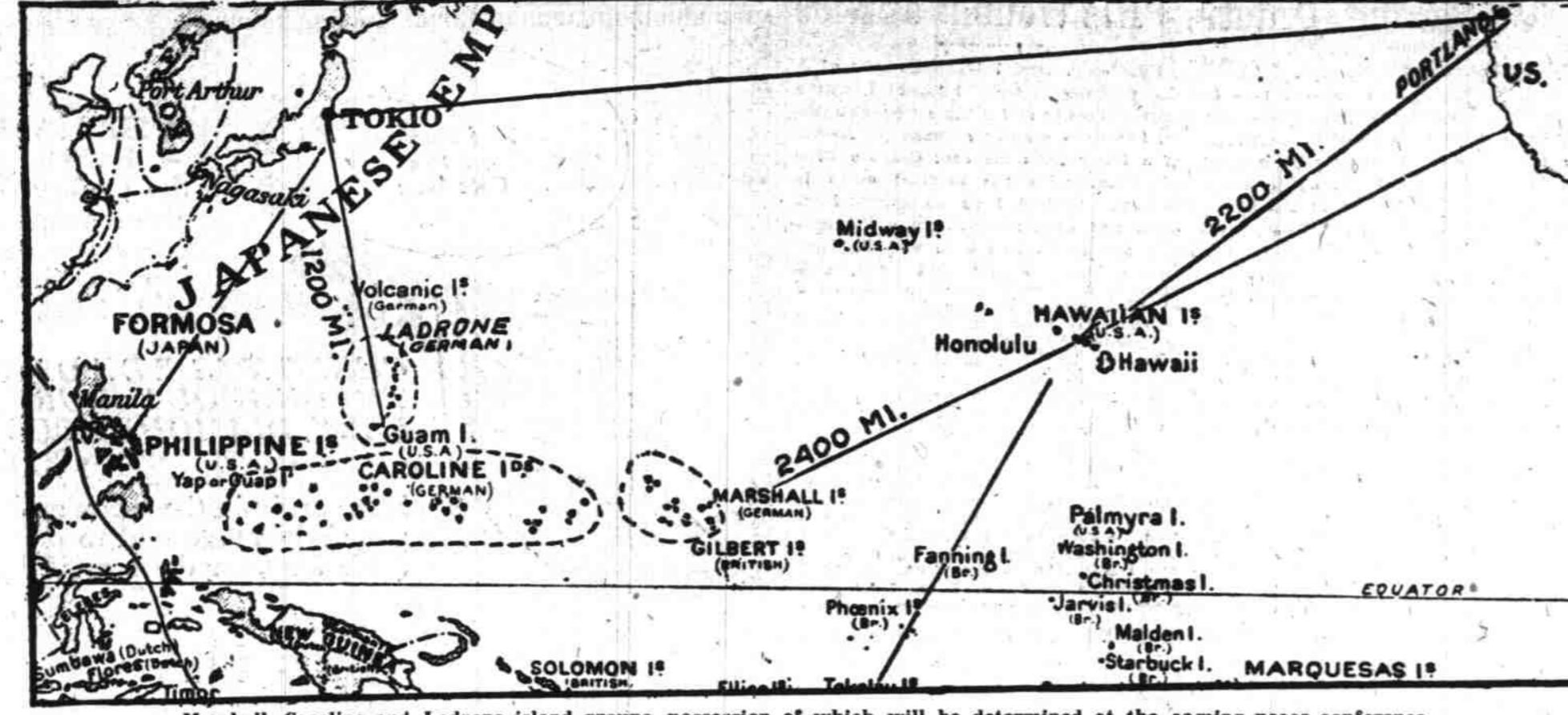
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## FORMER GERMAN ISLAND POSSESSIONS IN THE PACIFIC



Marshall, Caroline and Ladrone island groups, possession of which will be determined at the coming peace conference

cept Kusale and Ponape, which are mountainous and rugged. Kusale is of volcanic origin and rises to a height of 2200 feet above the sea level. There is heavy rainfall here and the island is covered with a heavy growth of giant forest trees, as well as palms of various species and fruits in great abundance. Ponape is the most important of the Carolines. The mainland is 60 miles in circumference and entirely surrounding it are barrier reefs 80 miles in circumference. The island, like Kusale, is of volcanic formation, rising to a height of 1500 feet. The water between the mainland and the surrounding reef is from two to eight miles in width and, is of such depth that the largest vessels may sail entirely around the island.

### Ponape Is Capital

There are three good harbors on the mainland of Ponape and the island was the seat of government for the Eastern Carolines under German rule. The barrier reef is broken into 15 islands and barrier reefs and the mainland being 13 small islands.

The flora of Ponape is as rich and varied as that of Kusale. Ivory palms, bearing a fruit much prized in Micronesia, flourish in great abundance, the trees attaining a height of 70 to 80 feet and many of them being 12 feet in diameter. Other native fruits are plentiful and a considerable portion of the island is under cultivation.

An American missionary writes of Ponape: "A visit to this island is like wandering in fairy-land. The verdure is excessive. We cannot get through the bush except along paths. The people carry knives to cut their way. Breadfruit, oranges, taro, bananas, pineapples, papayas, arrowroot and sage palms abound, also cherimolas, guavas, mangos and other tropical fruits."

Three hundred miles southwest of Ponape are the Mortlocks, consisting of three atolls and more than 100 islands famed for the fertility of their soil. Two hundred miles northwest of the Mortlocks is Ruk, which has a lagoon 40x100 miles in dimensions, surrounded by 10 large islands, some of them 300 feet high and abounding in fruits and vegetables. Still farther northwest are other atolls and two high islands.

### OTHER IMPORTANT GROUPS

The Pelews are another important group of the Carolines, lying farthest west and nearest the Philippines. North of the Carolines are the Marianne or Ladrone islands, of which the southernmost, Guam, belongs to the United States.

The climate of Micronesia is the mildest in the world, the temperature varying from 75 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. From October to May the northeast trades blow over the archipelago and during the rest of the year west winds prevail, bringing much rain to the high islands, little to the low lying coral atolls.

The population of Micronesia is estimated at 80,000. The natives are a hybrid race drawn largely from Polynesian, Mongolian and Pacific sources.

The greater Micronesia group is well proportioned but rather slight build figure, small regular features with high forehead and rather prominent cheek bones and chin, straight dark hair and brown skin. They are divided into three classes: an upper class of chiefs from among whom the heads of tribes are chosen; a middle class, and the common people, the latter having no property rights. Included in these general classes are numerous clans and sects ruled by rigid social customs.

### HABITANTS ARE INTELLIGENT

The upper class show the greatest intelligence; they are the boat builders, leaders of expeditions, and to them belongs the art of tattooing. Both sexes are tattooed with tattooing, the amount depending upon the social standing of the wearer.

The natives of Micronesia are skilled navigators, especially the Marshall islanders, who make voyages of hundreds of miles in their great canoes, depending upon the rain for drinking water and guided by charts made of sticks tied together. They know the names of the islands and the direction of currents and prevailing winds. Their tools and implements are made of stone and sea shells.

Remains of an ancient civilization are found on many of the islands of Micronesia. These consist of massive walls of houses, sea walls, artificial harbors and causeways, built of rock and without mortar. Many of the stones used in this construction are of immense size and the average weight of those used in building walls is from three to four tons. Who the builders were no one knows, but that they were far advanced in the arts of civilization is unquestioned.

### GERMANY BUYS MARSHALS

Spanish explorers visited Micronesia in the sixteenth century and claimed these island groups as part of their realm. They were much neglected by Spain, except for a war of extermination on the natives of the Ladrone Islands in the seventeenth century, until the Germans attempted to establish coaling stations in the Carolines in 1885. A dispute between the German and Spanish governments over the possession of the islands was settled 1886 by Pope Leo, who allotted Ladrone and Carolines to Spain and gave the Marshall Islands to Germany. In 1899, following the purchase of the Philippines by the United States, Spain ceded the Carolines and Ladrone to Germany for a sum of \$25,000.

A glance at the map may show the great strategical value of these groups of islands in relation to the Philippines, and their commercial importance as a gateway to the Far East. The chief interest of the people of the United States in Micronesia, however, is a sentimental one, based upon the labor and sacrifice of American missionaries who for nearly half a century labored the only

together with their wives and two Hawaiian ministers, Rev. Messrs. Oannu and Kauai. They sailed from Honolulu and landed at Kusale on August 21, 1852.

Laboring under many difficulties they gradually extended their operations throughout the Carolines, Marshalls and Ladrones, building churches, hospitals and schools. The success of the efforts of the missionaries to the Micronesian Islands is one of the most glowing chapters in the history of the American foreign mission work.

### GERMANY RESTRICTS WORKERS

With the occupation of the islands by Spain and Germany in 1886 began a decline in the influence of the missionaries over the native tribes. The German government exercised a most rigorous control over the islanders, taxing them heavily and requiring dues of them. American religion teachers were hedged about by many restrictions and their vessels carrying literature and supplies were required to pay excessive license for carrying on their work.

The future of Micronesia will be decided at the peace conference about to convene in France. Whether they be given over to a Japanese protectorate, allowed to remain in possession of Germany, or become the possession of the United States through purchase is subject to speculation. Thousands of Americans of middle age will still remember contributions from American churches and Sunday schools for the support of mission stations and the good ship "Morning Star" in the work of civilization among the natives of the Ladrones, Carolines and Marshalls. Their names go out for the liberation of these islands.

**Bonds and W. S. S. Stolen**  
New York, Dec. 7.—(U. P.)—Burglars tipped open the safe in the office of the James C. Kuhn manufacturing plant here early today and escaped with \$5000 worth of Liberty bonds and War Savings Stamps.

## Speakers at Labor Council in Accord With the President

William Short, president of the Washington State Federation of Labor; Charles Perry Taylor, secretary of the same organization, and Clive Covert, president of the Timberworkers' union of the Pacific coast, were guests at the Central Labor council Thursday night. Secretary Taylor said President Wilson was the best friend of the working classes in the United States that they ever had in the White House and he was sure that the presence of the president in Europe would benefit the working and producing masses the world over. All the speakers warmly endorsed the going of President Wilson to the peace table.

## 10,000 Workers Ordered to Strike

London, Dec. 7.—(U. P.)—One hundred thousand cotton spinners in the Lancashire district have been ordered to go on strike. Their employers have refused a 40 cent wage increase.

## 8-Hour Day Demand Conceded by Britain

London, Dec. 7.—(U. P.)—The government Friday conceded the demands of the railway workers for an eight hour day, which goes into effect February 2.

## Chair on Politics of World Founded

London, Dec. 7.—(U. P.)—Major David Davies, member of parliament, and his sisters have donated 20,000 pounds (\$100,000) to Wales university to found a professorship of international politics. They announced they hope the chair will be "associated with the illustrious name of Woodrow Wilson."

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