

## RECREATIONAL BUSINESS ON MOEN

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### INTRODUCTION

During the last 5 years or so, the recreational business has boomed on the island of Moen. Pool halls, movie theaters, bingo halls, and bars have sprung up everywhere on the island. The "urban" areas are definitely more infested with those types of recreation than the rural areas.

In this paper we will survey different types of formal recreation - those types of recreation that are well-organized for public use, with fixed rules, times, places and merchandise. What these types of recreation have in common is that money is needed for a person to entertain himself. Also we will find out what effect these recreations have on the patrons.

In carrying out this study, we gathered information by dividing into two separate groups with assigned tasks. First, we went to the owners of various pool halls, movie theaters, bars, bingo parlors and questioned them on various aspects of their recreational business. Second, we went to recreational businesses to observe what kind of people usually occupy them. Third, we went to the patrons and inquired about their attitudes, opinions and comments on these recreations. Fourth, we distributed questionnaires to the owners whom we were unable to interview in person. We also distributed questionnaires to the patrons from selected localities on the island to get their ideas regarding formal types of recreation.

There are four main kinds of formal recreation on Moen Island - movie theaters, pool halls, bars and bingo parlors. For each type of recreation, information was gathered on what kind of people own them; how many of each type there are on the island; who makes use of them; and what, in our opinion, are the good and bad effects of each. Formal recreation, as we have defined it, was not very widespread in Moen before 1969. Until about 1965, all were situated in downtown Moen. There existed only 3 pool halls, 3 bars, and a single movie theater at that time.

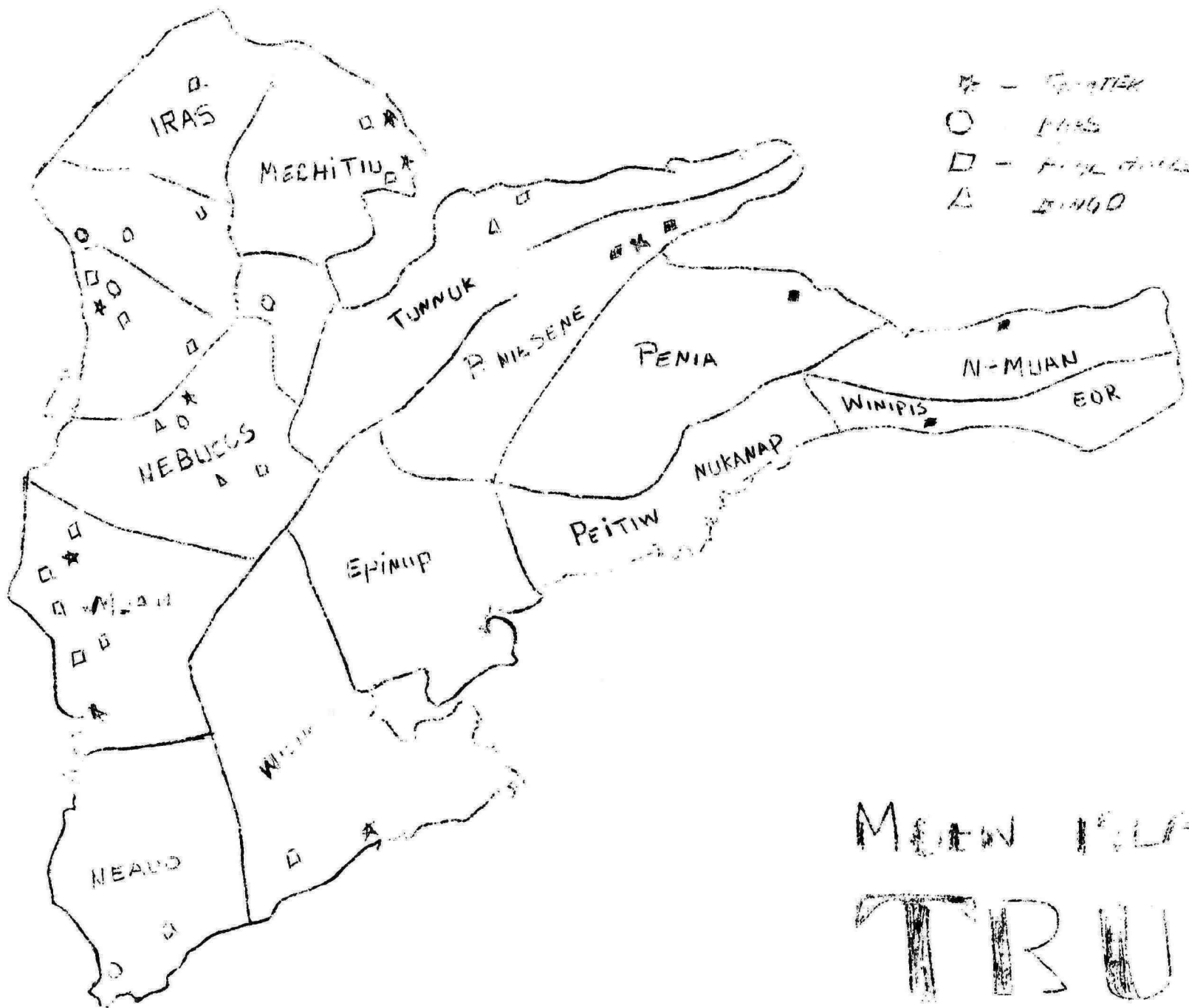
There was a substantial increase in the number of these facilities, beginning in 1970 and continuing until 1974. This was probably due to the increase of the Trust Territory annual budget in 1970. From 1967 until 1969 the Trust Territory yearly budget was \$25 - \$ 35 million, but in 1970 the budget was increased to \$50 million and in 1973 to \$60 million. This resulted in a big increase of money flowing through Truk as well as an increase in the number of government employees. Today, there are 22 pool halls, 6 bars, 9 movie theaters, and 3 bingo parlors. A map of the island showing their location can be found on the following page.

### POOL HALLS

Our research on pool halls indicates that most of these 22 pool halls on the island are owned by the people who are employed by the government. These owners (with the exception of three) have all completed high school. With their salary from the government jobs, they were able to establish their pool halls for business.

The cost of each pool table varies from 400 to 900 dollars. All of these pool tables, except one, are American type pool tables. These pool halls are usually operated during the day time, but some, especially in the downtown area, operated in the evening as well.

Here we found the great difference on the profit these pool halls can make in a day. This is, in our judgment, due to where they are located. Most of the pool halls in the downtown area make more money than those far away from the town. A pool hall in town can take in at least \$20 daily, while a pool hall far away from town will make an average of about \$15 per day. In some pool halls, there is a small snack bar for buying coffee, soft drinks, cigarettes, cookies, etc.. In this way, the pool hall owners make more money from their pool halls.



MEEN ISLAND  
TRUK

Patrons are almost exclusively men and are mostly between the ages of 15 and 35, they are a mixture of students, drop-outs, and workers. On the average, a man plays as many 5 games a day spending a total of fifty cents for these games. However, the money one can spend on these pool halls varies, because many of the young men bet on their games. We observed one person losing as much as 30 dollars during one day through betting. These persons, as may be expected, get their money from various sources. From our interviews, we learned that drop-outs or unemployed young men get their money from their parents, friends, or their neighbors. As for the elementary students, they play pool with the money they get from their parents for taxi-fare.

We were told by many, especially the pool owners, that these pool halls somehow help prevent teen-agers, dropouts, and other delinquents from causing trouble. This was said to be so because the pool halls occupy their time, and keep them from roaming around aimlessly and causing trouble in other communities in town. We were incredulous, however, because we found a few teachers and many students cutting classes to play pool. Further-more, in our interviews with older people, we were told that these pool halls are places where these youngsters gather and make plans as to what they will do at night. Some of these nightly activities, we suspect, are not very virtuous.

#### MOVIE THEATERS

There are currently 9 movie theaters on Moen. Local movie theaters first became popular in 1971 when two movie theaters started business in the downtown area. Within the next two years most of the nine now existing theaters were established. These movie theaters are scattered over the island with three main theaters in the downtown area. All of the theaters are owned either by present or former government employees.

Some of these theaters are big business while others are still small. The larger movie theaters are located in downtown Moen. The quality of movies has risen as more and patrons pay increasing prices to see movies. When first established, the theaters rented films costing between \$75 to \$300. Now the rental costs rise as high as \$600. Admission prices have increased from .25 cents in previous years to a

current price range of 75¢ in a village theater up to \$1.50 in the downtown theaters. Downtown theaters have the higher quality and more expensive films. The average spending of patrons is \$4 weekly.

Some of these movie theaters operate day and night, because in this way they can make more money. Some theaters even exchange films if the owners are related. These theaters make profits of between \$50 to \$500, while the one downtown even makes as much as \$800 on paydays.

Movie theaters, of course, attract all kinds of patrons. On a typical weekday afternoon we observed that around 35 patrons come to the downtown theaters. On weekday evening about 50 to 70 people, mostly males. In the village theaters 40 to 50 people is the usual evening crowd, a fourth of them children.

From our interviews with some patrons, we gathered that they like some movies better than others. The sexy movies and the Kung Fu movies are the favorites, with cowboy pictures next. "Late Show" downtown are usually X-rated and attract many people of all sexes. One patron remarked.

"I really like these "late shows" so much that I sometimes spend a third of my salary on them."

(we do not know how much he earns, however).

Through our interviews with the owners and some patrons we have concluded that movie theaters help ease the problems of juvenile delinquency as they occupy much of the trouble-makers' time. However, a few patrons thought differently. One old woman commented.

"These youngsters nowadays are acting so stupid. They are not like before when they meet old people on the road. Before they would greet him or smile as a means of showing respect. Now when we pass them (youngsters) they sort of jump up and act like these people in the movies; and they are just scarey."

## BINGO PARLORS

Bingo was first introduced to Truk as a means of raising funds for the church. In 1971, however, a change came about. Three bingo parlors were established for the purpose of making profit. The owners of these parlors are workers on the land who started their business with any kind of income they had. One owner started her business with a hundred dollars she won playing bingo.

Bingo is economically very successful. Owners reported that they bring in an average income of \$15 daily. They operate like any other business - opening at 8 o'clock in the morning and closing at 4:30 in the afternoon. One, however, operates on Sundays only.

Bingo is chiefly a women's type of recreation. Females are not the exclusive patrons of the business, but they participate more actively than men. Between 5 to 10 patrons, most of them are females in their 30's and 40's, can be found in a parlor on a typical day. Other patrons include males in their teens, old timers in their 50's and 60's. On paydays the number of patrons might reach 40 to 50.

In the bingo parlors we studied, the stakes can go as high as \$200 or it's equivalent in boxes of canned goods. This makes the patrons dream of becoming rich in a short time, and they spend much money playing; some even go broke. Their losses range from \$5 to \$150 in a single day. This, to the patrons, is an adventurous game. Here is a story we got during our study:

A woman came to the district center from her nearby home island to buy merchandise for her family's store. Being an adventurous woman, she decided to play bingo and win prizes for the store. However, she lost all the money she had and went home shamefacedly. Her husband beat her up afterwards.

From the story above we gathered that bingo has some bad effects on its patrons. First, the wife gets beaten up after she loses everything she has in the house (parlor). Second, the mothers stay away from their babies for some long spells. Third, the mother does not have time to cook food for the family. Of course there are some benefits as well. The wife gets over her frustration and has time to "kapas in Chuk" (chat) with other women. These effects might not apply to all the patrons, however.



## BARS

Bars undoubtedly are the most important branches under the category of the formal type of recreation. They are important for the single reason that they, of all the main formal type of recreation, bring in the most money and attract the most patrons. A bar is a place where one can go and ease the strains and tensions of life's hardship and forget a hard day's work.

Our group found out that there are presently 6 main bars on Moen. They are: D'Oasis Bar, Maramar Hotel Bar, Welcome Inn Bar, Christopher Inn Bar, Continental Hotel Bar and Truk Community Club. We also found out that 4 of these bars were started in the early 70's while the remaining 2 were quite old, 1959 and 1966, to be sure.

These 6 bars bring in a daily total intake of \$20.00 to a figure as high as \$300.00 or more on a weekend evening. But on a whole payday weekend, the six bars' intake will be twice as much, between \$50.00 and \$500.00. During a single week following a payday, the total income from all six bars would be from \$140.00 to a skyhigh figure of around \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00.

Bars serve other functions beside drinking; and one of these functions is gambling. At two of the bars, there are card games, usually poker and blackjack, on payday evenings. The stakes in one of these bars can range from \$300.00 to \$600.00. In fact, we saw one lucky fellow clear the table with around \$400.00 one evening. At closing time, on the same night, the total amount of money spent on drinks was only \$90.00. It seemed likely, therefore, that most of the money was spent on gambling.

There are different classes of bars that attract different types of patrons. We can label 3 of the 6 bars as "first class" because their regular customers, for the most part, are private or government employees. At these 3 bars, the trouble rate compared to others are very low. One of the other bars would be in the "second class" because its regular customers are divided in half, employees and non-working customers. The remaining two bars could be called "third class", since their regular customers are mostly non-employees and also their trouble rate are higher than the other bars.

Information was obtained from patrons of bars through interviews and questionnaires. Of the many patrons we interviewed, we have selected only 11 patrons whom we want to comment on in terms of the amount of money they spent daily and

weekly. All of the 11 patrons questioned were males between 20 and 45 years of age, except for one woman. The average number of times that these particular 11 customers go to bars is 5 times in a week. Each spent an average of \$12.00 nightly inside bars. In interviews with other customers, especially white-collar workers, they told us they spent an average of \$20.00 a night.

The number of male customers is far greater than the number of female customers. The small number of female customers in the bars is due to many factors. Bars are considered as places for men only, perhaps, something like men's meeting houses in traditional times. Compared to the other formal type of recreation, bars usually have notorious reputations due to fighting, economic problems, broken family ties, the shameful and uncontrollable behavior drunks, etc. Women customers are sometimes tagged as loose women or night women, an attitude that is usually groundless. Also, since there is a very strong, protective current of feeling on the part of other members of their family that prevents women from going to bars.

Before the introduction of drinking permits, trouble was constant in the bars, especially on payday weekends. But with the introduction of the drinking permits, trouble has decreased greatly. Maybe this is due to the fact that the police were selective in giving out the drinking permit. Those people with blemished backgrounds or with bad reputations were not given drinking permits. Below are some of the comments by patrons on the drinking permit.

"Drinking permits are good because they are limiting trouble since police are choosy in giving permits to people with blemished records than with clean citizens."

"Drinking permits are good because they are limiting trouble whereas the police were not effective before the introduction of permits."

"Don't like it because it limits a person's freedom."

"I like it because it keeps trouble down but on the other hand, it is keeping the profits down."

"There should be more inspection on drinking permits plus more bars with bouncers."

"There should be more stringent enforcement of drink-permits, stronger police enforcement on the streets and more bars with bouncers."



## CONCLUSION

During our study we found that there are four main types of business recreation: pool halls, movie theaters, bingo parlors and bars. These places as we can see from the map on page 3 are located mostly in the downtown area. They started in the late 60's all the way up to a few years ago. This, we concluded, was due to the increase of the Trust Territory Budget.

These recreational places are very successful businesses. They bring in an average profit of 125 dollars a day. The cost of the films, games and admission prices are going up also. The average spending of a patron is \$15 daily.

Men are the active patrons of most of these types of recreation. Women in few like bingo, but their place is at home listening to radios and cooking food.

These places are run like other businesses. Some bars even have gambling joints in them. When we interview the patrons, some said they are good and some said they are bad. They (recreational places) were found to have some effects on the juvenile delinquency and other problems. They also create other problems, like wife-beating, lack of child care and others.