



# Men from Under the Sky: The Arrival of Westerners in Fiji

*Stanley Brown*

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The cannibal kings of Fiji are gone, but their spirit lives on. Cannibalism in Fiji and the gruesome "earth ovens" are gone; the *kai vavalagi*, "the men from over the horizon," changed that, bringing their own brands of justice tempered by the musket, disease, and dissoluteness.

There were giants in those days, Fijians and Westerners alike. This gripping and unique history of Fiji by Stanley Brown, a well-known Fiji "old-timer" and historian, is woven around the lives of eleven Western "giants," Europeans and Americans who had the greatest impact on each epoch. Not all these Westerners lived to tell the tale.

This stirring narrative is replete with hair-raising accounts of battles and brutality. One incident of supreme savagery was reported by Lockerby, a famous trader, who reported that more than three hundred fifty old men, women and children were butchered after a battle: "As the canoes sallied back to the mainland coast in the evening, the reddening sky silhouetted the bodies of children hanging from the mastheads." The earth-ovens were well-fueled that evening.

But time and the tides of civilization tame the savage beast, and today Fiji is busy developing its economy, but the old accounts and stories still ring true.

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