

12. Gizo, Western Province

Each Province has at least one urban centre, which is usually also the administrative headquarters. All are small. Gizo, an island in the New Georgia Group, was the second urban centre in the Protectorate. The island was chosen in 1899 as it had been depopulated by head-hunting raids. One reason for settlement in this area was to stop raids from New Georgia to Choiseul, Isabel, Russell Islands, Savo and the western end of Guadalcanal. Another reason was to ensure that land was available to develop coconut plantations, which became the mainstay of the colonial economy. Gizo became a port of entry and the centre of a small European population engaged in trading and running plantations. In 1919, 100 European residents petitioned the government to establish a small hospital with a permanent doctor. The 1920s Planters' Association was also based at Gizo. In early 1942, Gizo was occupied by the Japanese forces, who built large garrisons in the New Georgia and Shortland Islands. In mid-1942, US Army Units overran Rendova and New Georgia, with the aim of taking control of the Japanese airfield at Munda, south New Georgia. Gizo was destroyed during this fighting. After the war, the surrounding plantations were re-established.

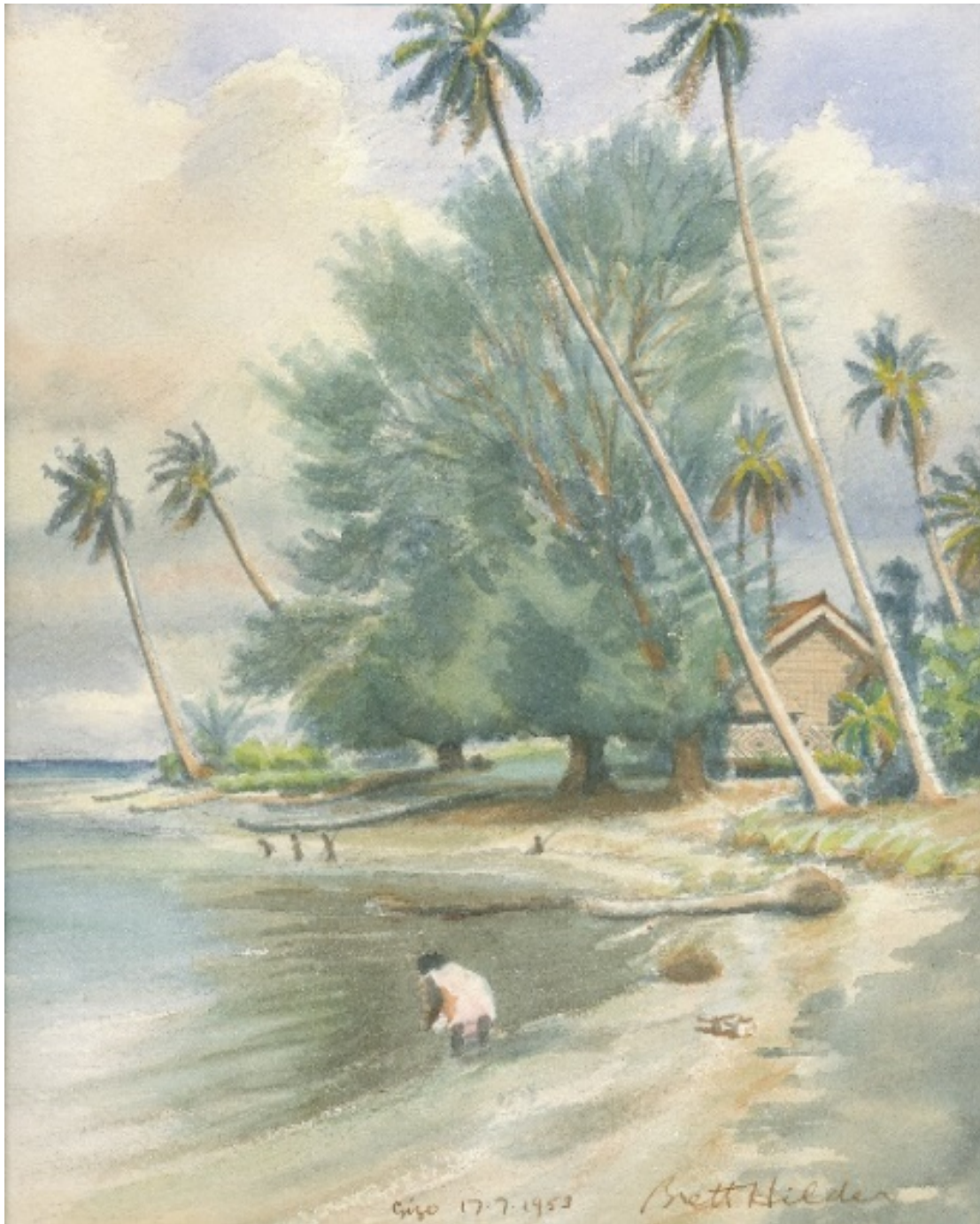
In the 1960s, Gizo developed similar but smaller amenities to Honiara: a reticulated water supply, new roads, electricity and a phone system. Chinese stores predominated. Today, Gizo is the capital of Western Province and the centre of flourishing fishing, logging and tourist industries. The population of the urban area is about 7,000 to 8,000, making Gizo the second biggest urban centre.



12.1. Gizo in the 1930s. (Hocken Collections, University of Otago, S17-005a Gizo, c.1930. Album 422, P1997-201-001b)



12. 2-4. Gizo in the late 1900s. The first image is of Gizo government station. The second is of new coconut plantations on Gizo. The third is of the Armed Constabulary at the time Thomas Edge-Partington was Resident Magistrate. They are in a confiscated Tomoko canoe. (British Museum, Thomas Edge-Partington Collection)



12.5. Gizo scene, painted by Brett Hilder, 1953. (The original water colour painting is in the Clive Moore Collection)



12.6. Gizo police station, 1952. (Alan Lindley Collection, in Clive Moore Collection)



12.7. The police officer's house, Gizo, 1952. (Alan Lindley Collection, in Clive Moore Collection)



12.8. MV *Mary*, the government ship based in Western District, at Gizo, 1953. (Alan Lindley Collection, in Clive Moore Collection)



12.9. Gizo market on the harbour, 2007. (Clive Moore Collection)



12.10. Selling fish at Gizo market, 2004. (Mike McCoy Collection)



12.11. Canoes from nearby villages arrive at Gizo market, 2004. (Mike McCoy Collection)



12.12. Gizo waterfront, 2007. (Clive Moore Collection)