



Historical Dictionary of Namibia

John J. Grotpeter

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Namibia is not one of the largest or most important African states, but it has attracted more attention than most. The reason is obvious. It was a crucial test case in decolonization of southern Africa and the struggle continued for years. Now that Namibia is independent, it can only be hoped that the interest will be sustained in one of Africa's younger and, in some ways, more promising ventures.

While some may feel that we already know a lot about Namibia, given the massive literature that exists, this knowledge is rather limited and skewed. We have been amply informed about the struggle for independence, the debates in the United Nations, and South Africa's role. But many other things have been largely overlooked. There was an earlier struggle for freedom, one which may influenced the more recent phase. Looking further back, it is necessary to consider how the land was peopled and developed prior to colonization. These aspects are included in this extraordinary study of Namibia and make it broader and deeper than most.

It was not easy to write this particular dictionary. While some of the information was readily available, namely the portion relating to the struggle for independence, not all of it was reliable and it took much digging and sifting to understand what actually did happen. For earlier periods or lesser events, the effort had to be greater yet. Nonetheless, the task was handled admirably by an unflagging author who not only read and studied but visited and observed Namibia to complete this book.

This is the author's first book on Africa, and his third in the Historical Dictionary series (also Swaziland and Zambia). At the time of his death, **John J. Grotpeter** held an endowed chair as the William and Edith Bucke Professor of Liberal Arts at St. Louis College of Pharmacy, where he had been affiliated for 31 years.

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