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Tangweera: Life And Adventures Among Gentle Savages

TANGWEERA

Life and Adventures among Gentle Savages

C. Napier Bell

Introduction by Philip A. Dennis
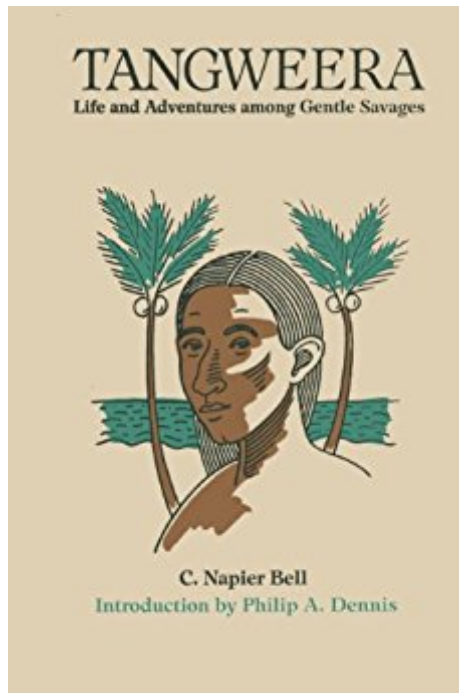
Synopsis

In the 1980s, conflicts between the Miskito people of Nicaragua's eastern coast and the Sandinistas drew international attention. Indeed, the Miskitos' struggle to defend their cultural autonomy and land rights points out a curious historical anomaly. This native group has long had closer ties to British and American culture than to Hispanic Nicaraguan culture. C. Napier Bell, son of a British trader, grew up on the Miskito Coast in the nineteenth century and spoke the Miskito language fluently.Tangweera, first published in 1899, is Bell's autobiographical account of his boyhood experiences. Rich in ethnographic detail, the book records an idyllic life of hunting, fishing, and trading. Bell describes the social customs and beliefs of the various Indian peoples he knew, as well as the relations among the coastal Miskito, the black creole population, and the tribes of the interiorÃ¢ ¬â •the latter a subject of continuing importance. Although Bell shared common nineteenth-century ideas about the inferiority of "savage" races, his affection for the Miskito people and his love of their land fill Tangweera. Anthropologists, historians, naturalists, and travelers in the region will find this fascinating reading.The introduction by Philip A. Dennis, Professor of Anthropology at Texas Tech University, provides a modern observer's view of Miskito culture anddiscusses important changes and continuities since Bell's time.

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