

THE PACIFIC MANUSCRIPTS BUREAU

A Unique Project in Library Co-operation on an International Scale

by ROBERT LANGDON

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A unique project to promote the preservation of unpublished documents of value relating to the Pacific Islands was inaugurated at the Australian National University, Canberra, in July last year with the establishment of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. The project is unique in that it is the first joint attempt by libraries, on an international scale, to seek out documents concerning a specific geographical area of the world and to make copies of them readily available to scholars. It is unique, also, in that the project has been started within a university on behalf of the sponsoring libraries.

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau has been set up as part of the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University. It is sponsored by the university itself, and by four world libraries specialising in Pacific research. The four libraries are: the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the National Library of Australia, Canberra; the National Library of New Zealand, Wellington; and the Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu.

The primary aim of the Bureau is to locate unpublished documents of value on the Pacific Islands and to obtain copies of them on microfilm for deposit in its member libraries. The Pacific Islands in this context means all the islands of Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, including Hawaii and New Guinea, but excluding New Zealand.

In the first seven months of the Bureau's existence more than 40 separate collections of documents of historical, scientific and literary value were located in private hands and were copied on microfilm. Many of these collections would undoubtedly have been lost to posterity if the Bureau, or some other body with Pacific interests, had not taken positive action to seek them out. Among the papers that the Bureau has so far brought to light are: the private correspondence of Sir Hubert Murray, a former Lieutenant-Governor of Papua; the private papers of two other Pacific administrators: the unpublished autobiography of an old-time South Seas whaler; two vivid diaries of an Australian planter in the New Hebrides at the turn of the century; notes by several missionaries on the manners, customs and legends of the Islanders in a number of South Seas territories; two lively, unpublished novels by Harry J. Moors, a friend and confidant of Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa; a dictionary of the Mekeo language of Papua; the logbook of the Rev. John Williams for his voyage of discovery to Rarotonga; and a diary, in Tahitian, kept by a workman at the guano deposits on Flint Island, Eastern Pacific, about eighty years ago. Probably the most outstanding cache of documents so far discovered by the Bureau is a collection of diaries, letters, notebooks and articles of James Lyle Young, a remarkably literate planter, trading schooner skipper, trader, and company director, who lived and travelled all over the Pacific for nearly sixty years, until his death in 1929. The Young papers throw a

great deal of vivid new light on much that was previously obscure in Pacific history, and are undoubtedly as fine a collection of untapped source material as one is now likely to discover for the places and periods they cover.

The Bureau's long-term aim — which is probably more of an ideal than something entirely practicable — is to reach the situation where a research worker could go into any one of its member libraries and there find a complete collection of every unpublished document of value on the Pacific Islands that has been brought to light. In working towards this end, the Bureau is observing a scale of priorities. Its most urgent task — because of the ravages of silverfish, white ants and other paper-destroying pests in the tropics — is to locate and copy unpublished material in the Pacific Islands themselves. Of almost equal priority is the location and copying of documents in private hands outside the Islands. Next comes the cataloguing and copying of documents in repositories most distant from the Bureau's member libraries, followed by the same plan for the closer ones. Finally, there is a plan to interchange copies of documents held by the member libraries among themselves.

With the exception of the last-named plan, work is done on all aspects of the Bureau's five-point programme as opportunity offers. Plan 5 is considered very much of last priority and probably not much will be done in that line for several years.

In seeking to locate material in the Pacific Islands and in private hands elsewhere, the Bureau's technique is similar to that of a detective. Any promising clue gleaned from reading or from discussions with Pacific scholars or Islands residents is followed up by correspondence, by telephone or by personal contact. If a clue proves fruitful and leads to the discovery of a collection of documents, the executive officer seeks permission to borrow the documents for microfilming by a professional photocopying organisation. Most private owners of such documents readily consent to lending their collections to the Bureau for copying. Sometimes they actually present them to the Bureau, in which case the Bureau deposits them in the most appropriate of its member libraries after the documents have been copied on microfilm for all the members.

Documents located in the Islands are commonly more difficult to deal with as these are often the archives of a mission body, trading company, etc., and cannot be borrowed for microfilming in Australia. This being so, the Bureau has acquired a microfilming camera, and from time to time the executive officer visits the Islands to photocopy such material personally and to search for other documents. The practice being followed in seeking to locate material in the Islands is to first make extensive inquiries by correspondence in a particular region (e.g. the New Hebrides and New Caledonia; Papua: the Solomons and New Guinea Islands, etc.). The Executive officer later makes a field trip to that region when sufficient documents have been uncovered to justify such an excursion.

To foster interest in its activities, the Bureau produces a monthly newsletter, *Pambu*, in which stories about the documents it discovers are published. The stories are designed, as far as possible, to be newsworthy, entertaining and informative so that they will serve three purposes. These are (a) to be suitable for republication in Islands newspapers and periodicals where they will publicise the Bureau's work and aims, (b) to enable

scholars and librarians to get an idea of the contents of each collection of documents without having to consult them personally,* and (c) to demonstrate to owners of unpublished documents that their papers — e.g. grandfather's diary, which has reposed for years in the attic — may, after all, be of value to the historically minded. *Pambu*, so far, appears to have fulfilled its three-point aim as a number of its stories have been republished in such journals as the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, *Cook Islands News* and *Norfolk Island News*, while scholars, libraries and universities in many parts have written to the Bureau seeking to be added to the *Pambu* mailing list, and quite a number of owners of manuscripts have been encouraged to co-operate in the Bureau's work.

Although the location of documents in the hands of private individuals obviously cannot be tackled systematically, it is possible to be reasonably systematic in combing the Islands, particularly the smaller ones, for the archives of missions, trading companies, plantations, museums and such-like. Thus, within perhaps five years, the Bureau hopes to have completed a fairly exhaustive search for documents all the way from New Guinea to French Polynesia and to have had everything worthwhile to be found there copied for its members. The Bureau will then be free to concentrate its full attentions on the problem of cataloguing and copying documents on the Islands in repositories in other parts of the world.

A country-by-country outline of the material that the Bureau may expect to find in these repositories is given in a paper entitled *The Documentary Basis for Pacific Studies*, by H. E. Maude, Professorial Fellow in Pacific History at the Australian National University. This paper and Maude's earlier talks with Pacific librarians on the need for a clearing centre for Pacific manuscripts were the two chief factors leading to the establishment of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau.

In his paper, Maude lists the main sources of Pacific material outside the Pacific Islands as: the United Kingdom, France, Western Germany, Eastern Germany, Spain, Russia, Italy, Canada, the United States, Peru, Chile, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The following is a revised and up-dated summary of Maude's comments on the manuscripts holdings in each country:

1. *The United Kingdom*. A preliminary survey made in 1962 shows that manuscripts concerning the Pacific Islands are located in at least 55 separate depositories in the United Kingdom and Eire. The major concentrations are in: the Public Record Office (official documentation), British Museum, Admiralty Library† (including the Hydrographic Department), National Maritime Museum, library of the Congregational Council

*More detailed and precise information on manuscript discoveries, accessions and collections relating to the Pacific Islands is published in each issue of the annual *Journal of Pacific History*, produced by the Department of Pacific History, Australian National University.

†The name of the Admiralty Library was recently changed to Library of the Naval Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence.

**Formerly London Missionary Society.

tor World Mission,** library of the Methodist Missionary Society, and Rhodes House, Oxford.

Probably over half, on a footage basis, of the manuscript material in the United Kingdom has been copied on microfilm by the Australian Joint Copying Project, an inter-library venture, and positives are already on file in the four member libraries of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. Through this venture and others, scholars using the libraries mentioned may now consult the whole of the Foreign Office and Colonial Office correspondence, the earlier Board of Trade records, the despatches of the British Consulate, Honolulu, some Admiralty letters and logs, and the correspondence and other papers of the London Missionary Society, Methodist Missionary Society and Church Missionary Society.

The recent change-over in the Public Record Office to the Library of Congress system by which all records will be systematically microfilmed, the negative kept by the P.R.O., and positives made available at a reasonable price, should enable the libraries to obtain all remaining P.R.O. items as they become available.

In addition to the copying work that has been done in the United Kingdom, Miss P. Mander-Jones, a former Mitchell Librarian, is carrying out a detailed survey of all manuscripts in the United Kingdom relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and is preparing for publication a definitive catalogue. This project is being sponsored by a joint grant from the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia.

2. *France.* Owing to its long-standing political, mission, trading and scientific associations with the Pacific, France possesses (after Great Britain) the largest collection of manuscripts relating to Oceania in Europe. Yet little has been done to list, and still less to copy, this important treasury of source material.

The main collections appear to be:

- (a) Documents on French discovery and exploration (some of which have been copied for the Mitchell Library).
- (b) The archives of the *Ministere de la France d'Outre-Mer*, now transferred to the National Archives. (A good listing of the series relating to the Central and Eastern Pacific, compiled by E. Taillemite, appears in the *Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes*, Vol. XV, pp. 267-320, Paris, 1959.)
- (c) The archives of the *Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres*, both the *Memoires et Documents: Correspondence Commerciale Series*, the latter particularly for Honolulu (from 1837) and Sydney (from 1842). Diplomatic correspondence to 1896 for all Pacific Islands other than French territories is contained in seven volumes under the heading 'Memoires et Documents: Oceanie'.
- (d) The *Archives de la Marine*, in its three main divisions relating to the Naval, Hydrographic and Merchant Marine services, for the most part now believed to be lodged in the National Archives.

An examination of French works on Oceania will show that a large and important volume of manuscript material on the Pacific Islands exists, as in England, outside the official archives. Some of this is in large

collections such as the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, notably the Papiers Magry; or the Musee d'Histoire Naturelle; and at the headquarters of the various (mainly Catholic) missionary societies, such as the Archiconfrerie de Notre-Dame du Sacre-Coeur at Issoudun. Smaller holdings are scattered around the country. It is to be hoped that the correspondence of the major trading companies, and particularly the important Societe Francaise de l'Oceanie, is still extant.

Unfortunately, too little is known about all this wealth, partly because there appear to have been no fixed rules governing the copying of series in the National Archives and similar official collections. Nevertheless, those who have the necessary entree can now consult and even copy without undue restriction.

3. *Western Germany.* The official archival material relating to the former German territories in the Pacific (New Guinea and its islands, the Carolines, Marianas and Marshalls, Nauru and Western Samoa) was split into two sections at the end of World War II, one part being lodged at Potsdam in Eastern Germany. All of the West German section now seems to have been copied by United States and British instrumentalities and the University of California.

German mission records relating to New Guinea that are known to exist in West Germany include those of the Lutherans at Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, and of the Gossner Mission in Berlin. It is not known whether the records of the German Capuchins of Rhine and Westphalia have survived. The German Capuchins worked in Micronesia before World War I.

It is believed that the archives of the Godeffroy Company were destroyed during the last war, but those of its successor in the Eastern Pacific, the Societe Commerciale de l'Oceanie, have been copied on microfilm and may now be consulted in several Pacific libraries. The archives of the lesser-known but still important German firms, such as the Jaluit Company and Messrs. Hershheim, should be filmed if extant.

4. *Eastern Germany.* So far as is known the main manuscripts concerning Oceania in East Germany are the Foreign Office and Colonial Office files in the Zentralarchiv at Potsdam. The Potsdam archives on Nauru were microfilmed several years ago for an Australian scholar and copies have since been deposited in the member libraries of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. The copying of other Pacific records in Potsdam has been arranged by Miss Marjorie Jacobs, of the University of Sydney, under a grant partly financed by the Mitchell Library.

5. *Spain.* The manuscript material in Spain falls into three distinct categories: (1) documents relating to the Spanish voyages of discovery to the South Seas; (2) the official archival series concerning the colonial territories of Spain (Guam, the Carolines and the Marianas); and (3) the Catholic mission records relating to the same islands. Most of the material on the discoveries has been examined, and much of it already catalogued and filmed, in particular by Father Celsus Kelly, who has published a valuable *Calendar of Documents* (Madrid, 1965) of all the voyages from 1567 to 1794 and the Franciscan missionary plans for the Pacific Islanders.

6. *Russia.* Manuscripts on the Pacific Islands in the U.S.S.R. are mainly confined to: (1) the work of the Russian exploring expeditions and vessels

connected with the Russian-American Company; (2) the relations of the Company with Hawaii; and (3) reports and correspondence of a few explorers. There are several scholars in both Moscow and Leningrad engaged on Pacific studies who have been co-operative in procuring microfilms of anything required.

7. *Italy.* There is a rich cache of manuscript material relating to Pacific studies in the Vatican Library at Rome and the libraries and archives of the Catholic religious bodies concerned with the conversion of Oceania. After the French official archives, this is the most important collection to be copied if permission can be obtained to do so. Some documents, the Marist fathers' letters from Fiji, the Solomons and Rotuma, 1840-1915, have already been copied.

8. *Canada.* The Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario, houses a collection of British Admiralty records relating to the Pacific Islands that were only recently discovered by Pacific scholars. These are the records of the Admiralty Pacific Station for 1858-1903. The records were deposited in the Archives from Esquimalt, Vancouver Island, in 1923 — Esquimalt having been the British naval base for the Pacific from 1865 to 1905, and a frequent calling place for British naval ships for several years before that.

9. *The United States.* More manuscripts relating to Oceania appear to exist in the United States than in any other country. Apart from the close relationship between the mainland United States and Hawaii and the more recent political jurisdiction over American Samoa and most of Micronesia, the long history of American sealing, whaling and other commercial activity in Oceania produced a mass of correspondence and papers of which a higher percentage has been preserved than in other countries. The principal categories are:

- (a) The consular records in the National Archives, of which the despatches are available on microfilm. The equally important post records have yet to be filmed.
- (b) The records of the Department of the Navy, now all available on microfilm.
- (c) The guano records in the National Archives, most being contained in five volumes marked "Guano Island". Others are still scattered in the State Department Series and the papers of the Navy Department.
- (d) The extensive records relating to the Wilkes Exploring Expedition, available on microfilm.
- (e) The whaling logbooks, journals and other records in depositories at Salem, Providence, New Bedford, Nantucket, Mystic and other New England ports, which still remain almost entirely uncopied.
- (f) The logbooks, journals, account books and correspondence relating to the New England sealing, sandalwood, beche-de-mer and other commerce with the South Sea Islands.
- (g) The correspondence of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions covering Hawaii, Micronesia and the Marquesas, now on microfilm.

(h) The records concerned with the extensive trade in miscellaneous cargoes between San Francisco and other west coast ports and the Pacific Islands, which have not yet been examined.

In addition to the above, there are the collections of papers known, or suspected, to exist in a number of libraries throughout the country: the New York Public Library, the University of Delaware (George Handy Bates Samoan Papers), the Huntingdon Library, the Library of Congress, the Baker Library at Harvard University (business papers), and the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to name only a few. There are probably many others.

10. *Peru and Chile*. Apart from a few scattered manuscripts elsewhere, the only concentrations of importance in the Americas outside Canada and the United States are in Peru and Chile. These concern the early trade between the western ports of South America and Eastern Polynesia, the so-called Peruvian labour trade of 1860-1864, and the political and other relations between Chile and Easter Island.

11. *Japan*. It is understood that all discoverable Foreign Office, Admiralty and similar records were microfilmed after World War II and are readily available. In 1954, the Library of Congress published a *Checklist of Archives in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan, 1868-1945, microfilmed for the Library of Congress, 1949-1951*. The list was compiled by Cecil H. Uyehara. A similar list, compiled by John Young, was published by the Georgetown University Press, Washington, in 1959. This was entitled *Checklist of microfilm reproductions of selected archives of the Japanese Army, Navy and other Government Agencies, 1868-1945*.

As far as is known, the records of the Japanese South Seas Government (Manyo Cho) responsible from 1922 for the administration of the Carolines, Marshalls and Marianas have not yet been filmed.

12. *Australia*. Here, as in the United States, there are a great number of manuscripts concerned with the Islands, for the most part political, commercial or missionary. The most extensive official archives are those relating to Australia's administration of Papua and New Guinea, Nauru and Norfolk Island since the establishment of the Commonwealth Government in 1901. These are preserved in the Commonwealth Archives in Canberra. Other important official records, for the pre-1901 period, will be found in the State Archives of New South Wales and of Queensland.

Many commercial and mission records have been deposited in the Mitchell and National Libraries; but others are known to be in the possession of companies and mission bodies.

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau has begun compiling a catalogue of the Islands material in manuscript in the Mitchell and National Libraries. It is proposed to publish this.

13. *New Zealand*. The position here is similar to that in Australia. Official records concerning New Zealand's administration of Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelau Islands are housed in the National Archives in Wellington. Numerous non-official documents have been deposited in libraries, particularly the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington and the Hocken Library in Dunedin.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau has a formidable task ahead of it if it is to reach the vicinity of the goal described in the fifth paragraph of this article. But the task, although formidable, is not a daunting one, particularly as a number of additional libraries and institutions have already expressed interest in joining the list of libraries sponsoring the Bureau, while others, with regional or sectional interests in the Pacific, have become subscribers for selected microfilms produced by the Bureau.

Sponsoring libraries of the Bureau pay an annual membership fee of \$2000 Australian. Half of this amount goes into a salaries fund, while the other half is used to cover microfilming costs and travelling expenses, etc., incurred in the location of manuscripts. Non-member libraries may purchase any of the Bureau's microfilms at the cost prices of those films to the member-libraries, after salaries and other overhead expenses have been taken into account.

It goes without saying that every additional membership fee and purchase order for microfilms will enable the Bureau to quicken the pace and extend the scope of its activities, and will bring nearer the day when the Bureau will approach its goal.

Inquiries about the Bureau's work should be directed to: The Executive Officer, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, P.O. Box 4, Canberra, A.C.T., 2600, Australia.

“A GROUP OF ARCHIVES RESCUED FROM WAR-DAMAGED PORT MORESBY”

by KEVIN GREEN

Papua and New Guinea Archives

In his article “An Analysis of Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration* in the light of Australian Experience”, Ian Maclean describes how he and K. A. Lodewycks, when beginning their archival careers, “met together over a group of Archives rescued from war-damaged Port Moresby”¹. The return of this “group of Archives” and others of the Papuan Administration to Port Moresby is perhaps an appropriate occasion to examine the circumstances of the rescue of the records from Port Moresby and to discuss some of the consequences of this action.

The circumstances of the transfer of Papuan records in early 1942 are not fully documented and this account is largely a matter of conjecture. Contrary to what is commonly assumed it would appear that there was no definite attempt to evacuate all the records when the Civil Administration was withdrawn²—this is scarcely surprising in view of the situation created by the Japanese invasion of New Guinea.

The difficulties under which officers of the Papuan Government attempted to carry out normal administration are detailed in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry conducted by J. V. Barry which, in 1944, investigated the circumstances of the suspension of Civil Administration³, but perhaps the following exchange of correspondence (between the Resident Magistrate at Kerema and the Government Secretary) typifies the situation⁴.