

# International Notes

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*Edited by Ewan Maidment*

## **Fiji Museum**

*Correspondent: Christina Tuitubou*

Things are really moving along at the Fiji Museum. The Library and the administration offices have shifted to new premises in the Nawela Hostel building just behind the car park. The Museum has two more galleries and the Archive and Manuscript Collection now enjoys a spacious home with a brand new air-conditioning system. This and a microfilm reader/copier were part of a generous equipment donation from the Government of Japan to the Museum last year.

Work is well underway in preparing a *Guide to the Archive and Manuscripts Collection*. In the past access to this rich assortment of papers has been difficult and limited. We are working hard to rectify these problems. The Guide will include a short annotation, subject entry, names of people (even the less than famous) and places in the texts, useful details from Museum correspondence regarding the item and any access restrictions. The materials will be organised in the guide and it will probably be distributed, but we are still thinking about these details. When all of this work is completed the information will be transferred to the Museum database. Please note, however, that our pace is slow because we do intend to spend extra time enjoying the collection.

Access to some material in the Fiji Museum's Archive and Manuscript Collection is now restricted as we are also assessing the items for the conservator's attention.

Most, but not all, of the non current files from the Fiji Museum are being transferred to the National Archives of Fiji in mid March 1998. The files have been stored, shifted and then shifted again many, many times over the years. Consequently the listing accompanying the files is based on a reconstruction of the filing systems used in the past. The file contents have been briefly described to compensate for errors in this reconstruction and to provide extra access points. Included in this deposit are substantial files of papers relating to the Fiji Arts Council, the Fiji Society the national Trust and a large collection of papers relating to ornithological research undertaken by Fergus Clunie until the late 1980s.

Researchers should take note that some early (1930s-1950s in particular) Fiji Museum records are held in the Fiji Museum Archive and Manuscript Collection. All the files relating to items in our collections have been retained by the Registrar at the Museum.

Access to some of the Fiji Museum records deposited with the National Archives of Fiji will be restricted. The details are still under discussion.

## **Diocese of Polynesia archiving in Fiji**

*Correspondent: Christine Tuitubou*

There is a lot of good news on the Archives of the Anglican Church, Diocese of Polynesia. We are very busy and it is an exciting time.

Significant progress has been made in compiling an inventory of the Diocesan records held in Des Voeux Road, Suva, Fiji. This job is being done by cautious volunteers and it has been rather dirty and hot work. The records are mostly from the 1970s and 1980s and so far 700 files have been described. We plan to organise these records into series and refolder them in April 1998. We even have 500 acid-free folders, all bought with a generous donation from the Anglican Church Archives Committee in New Zealand. We are grateful for this help.

We do have a problem with thousands of rusty staples and don't feel that using plastic clips is appropriate. Perhaps someone can suggest an alternative?

We are also archiving and distributing copies of Diocesan publications. There are, for example, back issues of the Diocesan newsletter *Spotlight* to distribute. Details of this and other items are available from the Diocesan Secretary.

Our records are currently housed in many locations. We have archives deposited with the National Archives of Fiji, some are stored in the Diocesan Offices in Suva while others are with the Parishes. The Diocesan Secretary is preparing to call in all non-current Parish Records for safe keeping and copying. Discussions on the procedures for this important exercise are underway. The Diocese is also conducting feasibility studies on more permanent accommodation of Diocesan Archives. An architect has recently been employed to write a scoping report on renovating the Diocesan offices in Suva.

The Diocese of Polynesia restricts access to all its records. At the moment all records held in Des Voeux Road, Suva, are closed to access, but this may change as our work proceeds. Further details will be available from the Diocesan Secretary, PO Box 35, Suva, Fiji.

## **Oceania Marist Province Archives**

*Correspondent: Father Theo Koster SM*

A purpose built repository has recently been constructed in the renovated basement of the Provincial House. The archives and library have been shifted into the new repository which consists of two sections: a repository for confidential archives on one side; and, on the other, a repository holding publicly available archives and the library, together with the Archivist's office.

A high window provides natural light for the office, however partitioning protects the archives and the books from intense light. Air circulation is a prime consideration, as humidity in Suva is consistently high (above 80%RH) and air conditioning is not an option. The shelving in the repository is built clear of the

walls to help circulate the air and there is an air vent in the inside corner of the repository. Consideration is being given to installing an extractor fan in the vent and a de-humidifier.

In 1971 the decision was taken to transfer the Province's administrative headquarters from Villa Maria in Sydney to Suva. Considering that the Province as such only started in 1898, the following solution was adopted: all pre-1898 holdings were shipped to the Archivio Padri Maristi in Rome and the post-1898 archival material was sent to Suva.

The archives in Suva include a closed system of Oceania regional correspondence, produced by the Provincial and Procurator's offices, which Father Theo Cook had arranged, the main part of which has been microfilmed by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. More recent series now held in the Archives include the Bishop's correspondence from Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa, South Solomons, North Solomons, Tonga, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna Islands. Also held are reports from the Regions to the Council of the Province, 1976-1997, and papers of the Oceania Province Chapters, 1947-1997. The archives occupy about 35 shelf metres of a total of 125 shelf metres available in the repository. They are held in A4 boxes which are three inches wide.

Readers may be interested to note that Margaret Knox's, *Voyage of Faith: the Story of the Catholic Church in Fiji*, was published last year.

Inquiries regarding the Oceania Marist Province Archives should be directed to:

Father Theo Koster SM  
OMP Archivist  
"Raiatea"  
28 Nararo Street  
PO Box 1198  
Suva, Fiji

## **Archival and Records Management Training in Papua New Guinea and the Fiji Islands**

*Correspondent: Peter Orlovich*

As a measure of the progress of archival development in the Pacific Islands, in recent years, the establishment of archival institutions, the appointment of custodians of the archives, and the enactment of archival legislation in most island countries reflects an overall improvement in the provision of archival services in Oceania. Most island governments are aware of the role and significance of archives, and their crucial importance in the formulation, implementation and review of national development strategies and programmes, as well as in the management of the cultural heritage. Yet there is one aspect of the progress of archival development which, in many Oceanic countries, and especially those whose populations are geographically dispersed, acts as an impediment to the effective accomplishment of the objectives embodied in the archival legislation, and the mission of the archival institution.

This aspect is the training of registry officers and records personnel who are employed within the government agencies and instrumentalities, and upon whom the national, state and territorial archives depend for ensuring that the provisions of the legislation are effectively observed and systematically implemented. While it must, of course, be acknowledged that the role of the archival institution should embrace the extension and promotion of archival services and the accessibility of the archives to the wider population, the difficulties of facilitating the effective implementation of the legislative and administrative measures calculated to ensure the permanent retention of those records which possess archival value and the systematic disposition of records which are of no enduring value cannot be underestimated in countries where communication is frequently difficult, departmental storage accommodation is limited, resources are scarce, and transport costs are high. When the rigorous climatic conditions, and the comparative difficulties of providing infrastructure support for the maintenance of archival services in remote locations are taken into account, it becomes apparent that there are considerable obstacles to the effective management of the archives of national government agencies located in the more remote parts of the island countries, as well as of the archives of the district, provincial and local governments themselves.

In order to improve the technical expertise and skills required by registry officers and records clerks located in provincial and district agencies to understand the role and functions of the National Archives, and to instruct them in the proper methods of managing records and archives in accordance with procedures based upon the archival legislation, a number of training programmes and workshops have been conducted in Papua New Guinea and in the Fiji Islands in recent years, in collaboration with the National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea and the National Archives of Fiji respectively.

Over a six-week period from 4 November to 15 December 1991, known as the *Lahara* Session, with financial assistance from the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges Ltd., I undertook a visiting assignment to provide support to the Department of Library and Information Studies within the Faculty of Education, in planning, organising and conducting the first stage of a two-year programme of studies leading to the award of a *Certificate in Information Studies [Records Management]* by the University of Papua New Guinea.

Eighteen participants, mainly from government agencies, but including three from the Papua New Guinea University of Technology at Lae and one from a private company, attended the first stage of the programme, while another four participants, who were then enrolled as candidates for the degree leading to the award of a Bachelor of Library and Information Studies, upon satisfactory completion of both stages of the programme received credit towards their undergraduate degrees. Following the successful completion of this assignment, I was invited to undertake another visiting assignment from November 5 to December 20 1992, to provide further support in planning and conducting the second stage of the programme commenced during the *Lahara* Session 1991, leading to the award of a *Certificate in Information Studies (Records Management)*.

An important aim of the course was to provide participants with an overview of the role, functions and operation of record and archive management services in Papua New Guinea. While most of the participants had been employed as Records and Registry Officers for extensive periods, others had a relatively brief experience of work with records. With a few exceptions, the majority had no opportunity to acquire a knowledge of records and archives management through formal instruction other than through the occasional training workshop conducted

by Mr. Sam Kaima and his colleagues of the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Papua New Guinea. The first such Records and Archive Management Workshop was conducted by Mr. Kaima at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1989 and others have been conducted throughout Papua New Guinea on several occasions since in collaboration with the National Archives of Papua New Guinea. An account of the development of archives and records management workshops in Papua New Guinea is elaborated in the paper by Sam Kaima, 'Archives and Records Management Education in Papua New Guinea' in *Pacific Archives Journal*, Journal of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, [PARBICA], No.10, December 1990, pp.17-24. A further training session was planned for the *Lahara* Session in November and December 1993, but shortly before it was scheduled to be held, a serious economic crisis in Papua New Guinea resulted in the cancellation of the programme, which has only recently been resumed under the coordination of Ms Mary-Claire Hoheg of the University of Papua New Guinea's South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development.

The initiative for planning and conducting a series of training workshops for records registry personnel employed within the Fiji Public Service was taken by Ms. Margaret Patel, Government Archivist at the National Archives of Fiji, following the two-week Workshop on Records and Archives Management which I conducted at the National Archives of Fiji from Monday 26 June to Friday 7 July 1995, with funding provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs through its South Pacific Cultures Fund, and with the strong support of Mr. John Trotter and Mr. Greg Urwin, then successive Australian Ambassadors to Fiji. The majority of participants in that workshop were primarily responsible for the management of the correspondence files and other record series within their respective agencies and organisations, both public and private. The interest expressed in that training workshop from registry officers employed within the Fiji Public Service, together with a recognition of the necessity of encouraging an efficient and effective system for the systematic and regular disposition of inactive records and the transfer to the National Archives of records of enduring value, clearly demonstrated the existence of a need to provide training in the procedures for the control and management of records for officers responsible for the operation of record registries throughout the four administrative divisions of the Fiji Public Service.

Training programmes for registry personnel are practically non-existent in Fiji. With the exception of a short induction course in registry procedures for new recruits which has been conducted in recent years by the Public Service Commission at the Government Training Centre in Suva, the overwhelming majority of registry officers appear to have had no opportunity to acquire, through a regular training programme, the level of knowledge and understanding required to equip them with the techniques and skills necessary to collaborate effectively with the National Archives of Fiji in the control, management and disposition of the public records.

The four one-week training workshops which I conducted during May 1996 in Levuka, Labasa, Lautoka and Suva are understood to have been the first of their kind conducted in Fiji, and this is confirmed by reference to the analysis of the registration forms which required participants to indicate whether they had undertaken previous training in records management techniques. Most departmental registry officers have had no training in the management of records, and possess only the most rudimentary knowledge of the role, functions and procedures of the National Archives of Fiji in respect of the care, control, custody, management and use of the records of the nation. Training of registry officers in the principles and techniques of records and archives management is an essential prerequisite to the effective management of the National Archives of Fiji and of the preservation of the archival heritage of the country.

The principal underlying aim of the series of training workshops was to promote a wider understanding by registry officers of the role and objectives of the National Archives of Fiji and, in particular, to explain to departmental registry officers the nature of their responsibilities towards the public records and the measures required to be adopted to encourage the systematic and timely disposition of records, either by transfer to the National Archives in the case of records which possess enduring values, or destruction in accordance with authorised disposal agreements in the case of records of ephemeral value only, as prescribed in the *Public Records Act, 1970*.



## **Pacific Manuscripts Bureau**

*Correspondent: Ewan Maidment*

The last report on the PMB was submitted to 'International Notes' by Adrian Cunningham in 1995. In January 1995 Adrian completed his secondment as Executive Officer and returned to the National Library of Australia. Ms Kris Rogers acted as Executive Officer until my appointment to the position in March 1995. Ms Monica Wehner has been assisting with the administration of the PMB office part time since January 1997. Professor Brij Lal has continued as Chair of the Management Committee of the Bureau.

In 1995 the Library of the University of Auckland became the seventh member of the Bureau. The additional member, together with confirmations of continuing support from the ongoing member organisations, have made financial support for the Bureau as strong and stable as it has ever been. The first PMB Management Committee meeting ever to be held outside of Canberra was held in 1996 in association with the Pacific History Association conference at Hilo in July. The meeting provided an opportunity for representatives of all the overseas members of the PMB consortium to work closely together, as did a second meeting of overseas members held in association with the PARBICA Conference in August 1997.

The Bureau began an extensive program of field work in the Pacific Islands in 1995. Surveying and microfilming trips to Papeete, Suva and Nuku'alofa produced 84 reels of film consisting of archives and manuscripts of the Catholic Archdiocese of Papeete, theses written by students of the Pacific Theological College, archives of the Fiji Trades Unions Congress and records of the Tongan judiciary. A further 53 reels have been produced in Australia during the year, consisting of minutes of the Methodist Church of Australasia Overseas Mission, transcripts and other research papers of Rev Dr Lindsay Lockley, newsletters of the London Missionary Society published in Sydney and Auckland, and a thesis on the transfer of power from Australia to Papua New Guinea by Christine Goode.

In 1996 the Bureau continued its program of field work in the Pacific Islands producing 104 reels of microfilm from three expeditions, totalling ten weeks: to

Suva and Nuku'alofa in March; to Auckland, Papeete and Hilo in June/July; and to New Zealand in October. The Bureau's main achievements during the year were completion of the copying of the archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Papeete and commencement of a round of microfilming projects aimed at archives relating to the Solomon Islands. A great deal of material relating to the Solomons was filmed in New Zealand, including archives of the NZ Methodist Overseas Mission, good runs of a number of major Honiara newspapers and pre-war archives of the Tulagi Branch of W R Carpenter & Co Ltd.

The Bureau also pursued a number of peripheral projects in 1996, both in Australia and in the Pacific Islands. It completed microfilming the Tongan Supreme Court archives and theses produced by the Pacific Theological College in Suva. The microfilming project at the Fiji Trades Union Congress was continued and work was commenced on the fragile archives of the Methodist Church in Fiji. Copying projects in Australia included the archives of the Fiji Independent News Service, pre-War commercial records from the New Hebrides, two groups of personal papers from PNG and 19th century Tongan government letterbooks.

In 1997 the Bureau re-activated its preservation microfilming programmes in Melanesia undertaking field trips to PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia (the first PMB field trips to Melanesia since 1979). In PNG the Bureau microfilmed research papers of the National Fisheries Authority at Kanudi and archives of the PNG Trade Union Congress in Port Moresby. In the Solomon Islands the Bureau continued a project aimed at locating and microfilming various local newspapers and also filmed Catholic Church archives in Honiara. Archives of Levers Pacific Plantations Pty Ltd and its successors were filmed in Yandina in the Russell Islands. Various record groups held by the National Archives and National Library of Vanuatu were filmed in Port Vila, including French Residency reports leading up to independence. The papers of the artist, Nicolai Michoutouchkine, were also filmed in Port Vila. In Noumea the Bureau surveyed early newspapers held in the Territorial Archives of New Caledonia and negotiated a preservation microfilming project with the *Union Syndicale des Travailleurs Kanaks et des Exploités*.

During 1997 Lady Elizabeth Kiki lent the Bureau papers of Sir Albert Maori Kiki on the formation of the Port Moresby Workers' Association and the Pangu Pati. Mr Albert Speer, who was a foster father of Sir Albert, also provided the

PMB with correspondence, diaries and reports relating to his own work as Medical Assistant at Duna and Health Administrator in Port Moresby, 1948-1970. Other papers received last year for filming included: Ian Watkins' Papuan patrol reports, 1934-1936; Reverend William Gray's papers on the Queensland labour trade; Rev. Dr Sione Latukefu's papers on Tongan traditions; a batch of Sir John Bates Thurston's papers; various documents relating to Banaba Island; and some material on the Bougainville crisis.

The Bureau's high rate of production of preservation microfilms was maintained in 1997 (115 reels). The quality of the microfilming has improved with the purchase of a new camera and adoption of new techniques designed to produce microfilms of high enough standard to enable automated scanning of the images to digital form.

The Bureau has strengthened its communications with Pacific academic and archival communities by publishing new editions of its *Short Title Catalogues*, launching a homepage on the internet at <<http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/spin/RSRC/PMB/>> and by organising archives and resources sessions at the Tonga History Association Conference in January 1997 and at the ANU's Pacific Islands History Workshop in December, as well as by participating in the 7th PARBICA conference in Noumea in August.