

PACIFIC MANUSCRIPTS BUREAU

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Trip Report

PMB fieldwork at the Archives of the Presbyterian Research Centre,

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Dunedin

8 – 19 February 2016



The entrance to the Presbyterian Research Centre Archive of New Zealand in Opho, Dunedin.

Summary

The main purpose of this trip was to:

- Copy photographs from the New Hebrides mission at the Presbyterian Research Centre, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Dunedin

Whilst working at the Presbyterian Research Centre Archive twenty photographic titles (over 630 images)

and one manuscript title were digitised:

PMB Photo 79	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission photograph album, 1892-1922
PMB Photo 80	Milne, W.V. New Hebrides Mission photograph album, 1906-1913
PMB Photo 81	Milne, W.V. New Hebrides Mission photograph album, 1903-1935
PMB Photo 82	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission photograph album, 1889-1909
PMB Photo 83	Small, T (Rev) & H, New Hebrides Mission photograph album. 1898-1912
PMB Photo 84	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission photograph album, 1898-1935
PMB Photo 85	Small, T (Rev), New Hebrides photograph album, 1898-1911
PMB Photo 86	Selection of New Hebrides Mission photographs on boards, 1869-1956
PMB Photo 87	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission Portraits, 1885-1950
PMB Photo 88	New Hebrides Mission photographs, 1897-1950
PMB Photo 89	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission photographs, 1890-1978
PMB Photo 90	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission magic lantern slides, 1880-1945
PMB Photo 91	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission magic lantern slides, 1834-1945
PMB Photo 92	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission magic lantern slides, 1880-1945
PMB Photo 93	Foreign Missions Committee, New Hebrides Mission portraits, 1890-1964
PMB Photo 94	New Hebrides Mission photographs, 1890-1963
PMB Photo 95	Department of Communications, New Hebrides photographs, c.1950-c.1960
PMB Photo 96	Department of Communications, New Hebrides photographs, c.1950-c.1960
PMB Photo 97	Department of Communications, New Hebrides photographs, 1950-1959
PMB Photo 98	Department of Communications, New Hebrides photographs, 1950-1959
PMB Photo 99	Department of Communications, New Hebrides photographs, c.1950-c.1970

PMB MS 1419 - New Hebrides Mission manuscripts from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives, 1870-1947. PDF. Available for reference.

In 2014, I was invited by Anne Jackman, the then Director of the Presbyterian Research Centre in Dunedin to visit the Archive and discuss the possibility of the Bureau assisting with the digitisation and digital repatriation of the New Hebrides photographic collections back to Vanuatu. Ewan Maidment had discussed the possibility of this project taking place several years earlier with the former Director, Yvonne Wilkie.



A sample of the New Hebrides image collections that Presbyterian Research Centre in Dunedin holds. Note the variety of different formats including glass plate negatives and different sized prints.

I departed Australia on Monday 8 February (Waitangi Day) and flew via Sydney and Christchurch to Dunedin. Eve Haddow, a PhD student from the Australian National University, met me in Dunedin and assisted with this fieldwork as part of her Pacific Manuscripts Bureau internship coursework subject.

Sharon Dell, the Hocken Librarian, was most generous and allowed both Eve and I to stay at her home and make use of her car whilst we worked at the Presbyterian Research Centre for eight days.

On Tuesday 9 February Eve and I began work at the Archives of the Presbyterian Research Centre. It was helpful having two people undertake this work because one of us worked to prepare the archives and listings whilst the other digitised the albums. Once the images were digitised Eve and I began post-processing the RAW images into TIFFs and derivative images for the Bureau's online web catalogue. Eve and I frequently swapped tasks to break up the work. We were conscientious in updating a control document noting which albums had been copied and what steps of the post-processing work we had achieved as the work progressed. This control document has been invaluable – especially on our return to the Bureau's office – in reminding us as to where we were up to in the digitisation process. Myke Tymons, the photographic curator, helped us to find the albums and photographs that were to be copied. Yvonne Wilkie and Andrew Smith from the Presbyterian Research Centre were also very helpful with our work. The new Director of the Centre, Jane Thomsen supported the project and formally signed the Bureau's permission to copy documents.

Background information on the New Zealand Presbyterian Church to the New Hebrides

The photographs digitised by the Bureau were created by missionaries from the New Zealand Presbyterian Church to the New Hebrides. The New Zealand Presbyterian Church began sending missionaries to the New Hebrides (today known as Vanuatu) in the mid-19th Century. The first missionary was Rev. John Geddie of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia who arrived on the island of Aneityum in 1848. Subsequent missionaries came from the Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand, Canada, Scotland and Australia (Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales).

In New Zealand an interest in supporting a Christian mission to the New Hebrides was fostered when Rev. John Inglis of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland toured the country in 1852 following a three month tour of the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands. In that same year, Inglis and his wife joined Geddie on Aneityum. Rev. John Inglis continued to send regular reports of his work to New Zealand, leading to increasing interest from the Church there in sending their own missionaries to the islands.

The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was at that time divided up into the “Northern Church” and the “Southern Church” (consisting of the Provinces of Otago and Southland). The Southern Church was based on the ideals of the Free Church of Scotland and these principles influenced its mission work for many years. For over 40 years the two Churches worked separately, with mission activities during this time operating independently of each other.

Over several decades the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand sent a number of missionaries to the New Hebrides including the following people. The information below includes the missionaries' date of arrival in the New Hebrides, the name of the missionary and the name of the main island on which they worked.

Date of arrival in the New Hebrides	Name of Missionary	Main island on which they worked
1866	Rev. William Watt	Tanna
1870	Rev. Peter Milne	Nguna
1879	Rev. Oscar Michelsen	Tongoa
1885	Rev. Charles Murray	Ambrym
1889	Rev. Thomas Smaill	Epi
1892	Rev. Dr. Lamb	Ambrym
1899	Dr. John Bowie	Ambrym
1903	Rev. Thomas Riddle	Epi
1905	Rev. William V. Milne	Nguna (born on Nguna in 1877)
1932	Rev. Basil Nottage	Tongoa
1938	Rev. Ken Crump	Nguna
1941	Rev. J.G. Miller	Tongoa
1944	Rev. Ian Muir	Emae and Epi

1948	Rev. A.G. Horwell	Epi
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PMB Photo 84-006

PMB Photo 84_006. Dr. Annand's study, Tangoa, c.1899.



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PMB Photo 85-039

PMB Photo 85_039. Rev. T. Smail, Paama mission house builders, c.1902.

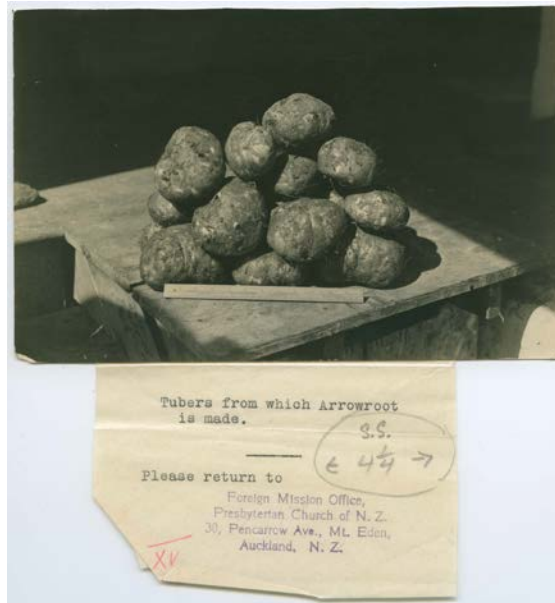
In the early years there was no organised or reliable shipping service to the individual islands of the New Hebrides so it was important for the Church to have their own vessel to bring regular supplies from Australia and New Zealand. A boat was also necessary for transport to other mission stations. Although the New Hebrides missionaries were responsible for their home churches and allotted areas and islands, they worked closely together on common issues and met annually for a mission Synod meeting. New Zealand Presbyterian Church worked in conjunction with the Australian Presbyterian Church to raise money and purchased a mission supply vessel, the "Dayspring I". This 115 ton brigantine was launched in Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1863. It was lost in a hurricane ten years later and replaced by a second hand schooner, the "Dayspring II" in 1876. The Dayspring II was sold

prior to 1890 as she was too small and slow and uncomfortable to sail in. The Australian missionary Dr. John G. Paton raised £6000 during a visit to Britain in 1884-1885 and later increased the donations to £7000. The “Dayspring III” was built on the Clyde in Scotland to the order of the Victorian Presbyterian Church Foreign Missions Committee. She was 157 feet long and arrived in Australia in 1895. On only her fourth voyage to the islands, she sank on the 16th October 1896 after striking an uncharted coral reef near New Caledonia. The decision was made not to replace the vessel.



PMB Photo 82_023. Local style hut at Fanting (near Dip Point on Ambrym).

The New Hebrides missionaries shared a practical concern for the everyday needs of island people. In addition to converting local people to Christianity, the missionaries worked to improve education through the introduction of schools where the training of local mission teachers was initiated. The Tangoa Teachers’ Training Institute opened at Tangoa, South Santo, in 1895. The purpose of the Institute was to train local teachers and it was supported by all the Protestant missions working throughout the New Hebrides. Missionaries also worked to improve health education and services and encouraged the production of arrowroot and island trading as a means to generate revenue. Arrowroot powder was shipped to New Zealand and other countries, where it was initially distributed by womens’ missionary groups and later by commercial organisations. The funds from the sale of arrowroot were used to build additional churches in the islands and, in some cases, as a donation towards New Zealand mission funds to be used elsewhere. From 1880 to 1918 on Nguna alone, over 26 tons of arrowroot was produced.



PMB Photo 88_124. Tubers From Which Arrowroot Is Made, c.1905.



PMB Photo 86_009. Malekula canoes, c.1900.

By 1910, the work of the New Hebrides Mission was declining. This was partly due to a rapidly decreasing population on the islands and a feeling that little room existed for further expansion of mission work, as by then most areas were adequately covered. The reduction in population was primarily caused by introduced European illnesses and epidemics which decimated the local population. The Queensland labour trade had also had an impact on the local population, with many locals having decided to remain in Queensland.

In 1947 there was a general consensus held among the Island missionaries that the local church was ready to assume control of its own affairs. A constitution was drawn up, and after amendments submitted by the New Zealand and Australian Mission Committees and the New Hebrides Mission Synod, it was adopted. At a Centennial Synod meeting in 1948, the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Rev. John Geddie, the local church was placed

fully in charge of its own affairs. The island mission councils for Australia and New Zealand were then limited to the affairs of their immediate mission staff. The New Zealand Church continued to provide a large financial grant to the New Hebrides Presbyterian Church. A continued focus remained on training church leaders and education more generally. The Tangoa Training Institute later introduced a curriculum of advanced theological studies.

In the early 1950s, the New Zealand Missions Committee responded to the request for assistance to establish a High School at Onesua on Efate, along with funds and personnel to set up and run a small hospital on Tongoa.



PMB Photo 95_028. Games period, Onesua high school, c.1950-1960.

The Committee viewed this project as a practical means by which the New Zealand Church could provide for a social need rather than a means for furthering evangelistic opportunities. This policy shift in Mission funding opened up other opportunities for aid from the New Zealand Church including developing Navota Farm and opening the Maropa religious bookshop in Port Vila, training local islanders to be trades people and undertake the building work. The New Zealand Bible Class volunteer scheme sent out young people during the 1960s to assist with building, administration and nursing. The Mission, at the request of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides, divested itself of all remaining authority in the Islands so that the New Zealand missionaries effectively worked for the New Hebrides Church. In 1965 a memorandum was prepared which defined the terms of “responsible partnership” and sought to define the responsibilities of each partner. The Church continues today as the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.



PMB Photo 95_029. Reading period, Onesua library, c.1950-1960.

For more information about New Hebrides Mission collections at the Archives of the Presbyterian Research Centre, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, and New Zealand, see: <http://www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz/missions/newhebrideshistory.htm>

Eve and I digitised over 630 photographs in different formats and compositions. The Presbyterian Research Centre Archive established a digitisation program in 2015 with the support of the Bureau's advice regarding technical equipment and standards. The Archive staff have scanned many of their glass plate negatives using a flat bed scanner to a very high standard and kindly gave us high resolution copies of the glass plate negatives that are part of the New Hebrides collections. The images in the New Hebrides photographic collections date from the 1880s to the mid 1900s.

The collections that the Bureau copied include albums collated by the Foreign Missions Committee and images taken and collated by Reverend Thomas and Mrs Helen Smaill and Reverend William and Mrs Jemima Milne. Some of the albums and glass plate negatives were used as "show and tell" images to explain the work of the mission to interested parties in Australia and overseas.

The photographs detail the lives and work of the missionaries on the islands of Ambrim Efate, Epi, Tanna, Tongoa, Tongoa Training Institute and Onesua high School. Subjects covered include daily life, women, local games, house girls, church and mission houses, coral, native teachers and houses, women, babies, arrowroot, village scenes, cultural practices, rock drawings, volcanoes, yam gardens, fishing etc. People featured in the images include local people, the missionaries, their families and important visitors.



PMB Photo 83_003. Preparations for a feast on Erromanga, c.1900.

The Presbyterian Research Archivists kindly supplied catalogue entries and listings of the images which we used to identify photographs. Since returning to the Bureau's office in Canberra we spent a significant amount of time re-purposing the original listings so that the legacy catalogue information from the Presbyterian Research Centre could be imported into the PMB online catalogue. The titles of the photographs were copied from the original titles assigned by the Presbyterian Research Centre, Knox College. The Bureau edited some title words including "native" and "heathen" as we felt that these may be seen as offensive. The notes field of each individual item includes all of the original information prepared by the Presbyterian Research Centre about the image, including the original description. The individual notes field for each item have not been edited by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau.

In order to provide context to the albums that were copied, full pages of the albums were also digitized and then merged into a single PDF. The digitised copies of the full albums are included as the first item of each PMB title. Each individual photograph was then cropped and included as an individual item in the PMB online catalogue. Some of the photographs copied may be found in duplicate form in other New Hebrides mission photographic collections held at the Presbyterian Research Centre and throughout the world. It is hoped that when the digitised collections are published and more accessible via the Bureau's web site, individuals – including Ni-Vanuatu people - may be able to provide more detail and information about the images that will be added to and enhance the Bureau's catalogue record for the images.

The staff at the Presbyterian Research Centre provided access to fourteen manuscript items that were also copied. These manuscripts date from 1870 and include material relating to the Anglo-French relations, including land disputes, the labour and liquor trade; property purchases and agreements of land in New Hebrides; the building of the Ambrym hospital in 1908; events of the 1913 volcanic eruption on Ambrym; New Hebrides native teachers' correspondence and archives; and correspondence of Rev. Peter Milne, his wife Mary Jane and his son Rev. William V Milne. Within the Peter Milne correspondence are a series of letters covering his disagreement with Rev Daniel MacDonald over bible translation work. The collection also includes personal correspondence between William Milne and Oscar Michelson (1915-1934) and a scrapbook created by the Auckland Ladies New Hebrides Mission organisation.

Eve and I continue to work on the post-processing of the images and manuscripts that were digitised in New Zealand and are uploading the digital collections to the PMB online catalogue as they are ready. When the entire collection has been processed and uploaded to the PMB online catalogue I will prepare two digital copies of the collection. One will be deposited with the Presbyterian Research Centre in Dunedin and the other digital copy will be repatriated to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu and Vanuatu National Akaev on behalf of the Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ) and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau.



Kylie Moloney, Myke Tymons and Eve Haddow outside the Presbyterian Research Archive on our final day.

Thank you

I would like to thank the following people for their support and assistance in undertaking this work in Dunedin.

Eve Haddow, PhD student at the Australian National University.

Jane Thomsen, Director, Director of the Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ).

Myke Tymons, Photograph curator, Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ).

Andrew Smith, Archive curator, Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ).

Yvonne Wilkie, Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ).

Sharon Dell, Hocken Librarian, Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin.

Anne Jackman, Former Director of the Presbyterian Research Centre Archives of New Zealand (PCANZ).

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May 2016