Belated best wishes to all *Pambu* readers for the New Year. Apologies for this late issue of the newsletter. Part of the reason for the holdup is that Bureau is beginning a new staffing arrangement. A new PMB archivist, Kylie Moloney, was appointed in November 2008. I have started a ‘transition to retirement’, working half-time, over the next three years up to November 2011. This arrangement will give the Bureau the services of two professional staff for the time being.

In July last year the Library of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ, joined the PMB. Ms Jill Durney, the Macmillan Brown Library Manager, will represent the University Library on the PMB Management Committee. There are now ten specialist Pacific research libraries which direct and fund the PMB joint copying project.

I travelled to Kiribati with Richard Overy in July to assist him with digitization of Tuvaluan records held in the Kiribati National Archives, as part of the Tuvalu Endangered Archives Project.

Working again with Sr. Margaret Sullivan on Tarawa, I finished microfilming of the archives of the Catholic Diocese of Tarawa and Nauru (PMB 1289) and microfilmed minute books of the Kiribati Protestant Church (PMB 1317).

In-house microfilming proceeded steadily until September when Dr Duncan Driver, who was undertaking the PMB microfilming on a casual basis, left the Bureau to pursue a career in the theatre. Duncan microfilmed the following record groups:

- **PMB Doc 498 Family News** (Unevangelized Fields Mission / Asia-Pacific Christian...

PMB 1316 SNIJDERS, Fr Jan SM., Solomon Islands Languages Collection: manuscripts and old prints in Malaita, collected by Fr Donatien Coicaud SM and Fr Chris Kamphuis SM, 1918-1996. Reels 1-3. (Available for reference.)


In addition two microfilming projects were outsourced to W & F Pascoe P/L:


PMB 1299 UNEVANGELIZED FIELDS MISSION / ASIA PACIFIC CHRISTIAN MISSION, Archives documenting missions in Papua New Guinea and West Papua, 1931-1992. Reels 12+. (Available for reference.) This is the second stage of the UFM/APCM microfilming project in conjunction with the Library of the Bible College of Victoria, which holds the archives, and supported by the Latourette Fund, through the Yale Divinity Library.

One new photograph collection has been digitized:

PMB Photo 19 BUDÉRUS, Louis, Photographs, Samarai, British New Guinea, c.1900.

A new series of digitized maps has also been commenced:


Stuart Inder put the Bureau in touch with Geoffrey Luck, a retired radio and television news journalist, who has transferred 13 cartons of his papers documenting activities of the Australian Broadcasting Commission PNG Branch, 1957-1967. The papers include an immaculate set of transcripts of ABC Radio, Port Moresby, news broadcasts. Anna Brown, an RMIT Information Management student on placement at the PMB in November, arranged the transcripts and began microfilming them.

Mr Jakob Anderhandt of Sydney has given the Bureau his indexed transcript in modern German of the reports of Captain Alfred Tetens (1835-1909). The reports document Captain Tetens expeditions to the Caroline Islands and Palau, “Expeditionen der Hamburger Brigg Vesta: Die Berichte von Kapitän Alfred Tetens, 1865-1868”. In June the PMB worked with Dr Neil Gunson and Karina Taylor on transfer of archives from the Pacific and Asian History (RSPAS) Records Room to the Pacific Research Archives at the ANU, including papers of Professor Jim Davidson, Ethel Drus (on Fiji), Richard Gilson (on Samoa and the Cook Islands) and Norma McArthur (on Pacific population research). The PMB held on to a relatively small amount of the papers with a view to microfilming them, including an interesting collection of early 20th century Cook Islands land papers and custom stories.

Professor Murray Groves’ professional papers, manuscripts, research papers, photographs and audio recordings, amounting to about 10 shelf meters, were transferred into the custody of Professor Jack Golson in November. Professor Groves’ research materials are mainly on the Motu people of Papua. Part of Professor Groves’ papers were transferred to the Hong Kong University Archives where Professor Groves taught for many years. The remainder are being arranged and listed with a view to microfilming parts of them. Valerie Wilson, Murray Groves’ sister, gave the PMB a box of slides for
digitisation which belonged to their parents, Doris and W.C. Groves.


Kylie Moloney, the new PMB Archivist, and I travelled to Suva for the Pacific History Association conference at the University of the South Pacific, 8-12 December. An open meeting of the PMB Management Committee was held in conjunction with the PHA conference.

Libby Fong, Deputy USP Librarian, and I convened a successful Library-Archives stream of presentations at the conference. The session was titled, “Resources for Pacific History: recognition and access”. The following papers were presented:

- Libby Cass (Information for All Program, USP), “Information for all in the Pacific - reality and hopes”.
- Paul Stuehrenberg (Yale University Divinity Library), "Kenneth Scott Latourette Initiative for the Documentation of World Christianity".
- Robert Appel (SPC, Noumea), "Moving the SPC archives to the Territorial Archives in New Caledonia".
- Karina Taylor (Pacific Research Archives, ANU), “An Overview of the Pacific Research Archives at the ANU”.
- Meredith Batten (National Library of Australia), “Pacific Collecting at the National Library of Australia”.
- Diane Woods (Turnbull Library), “Digitisation Projects at the Turnbull Library”.
- Eleanor Kleiber (SPC), “The CROP Library digitisation project”.
- Monica Rothlisberger (Divine Word University Library, Madang, PNG), “Report on Divine Word University Library holdings, programs and developments”.
- Bishop Terry Brown (Church of Melanesia), “The establishment of the Archives of the Church of Melanesia in Honiara, Solomon Islands.”
- Ewan Maidment (PMB), “A history of Australian involvement in archives administration in Fiji”.
- Karyn Gladwish (Attorney General’s Department Librarian, Canberra) had prepared a paper, on Pacific Islands—Australian Law Library twinning projects, but was not able to attend the conference.

It is planned to collate the papers for publication.

In discussion during the session concern was expressed about the inability of some of the national libraries and archives in the region to meet their responsibilities and user expectations. This concern was referred to the general meeting of the Pacific History Association which carried the following resolution:

“That Pacific History Association notes that urgent attention is required to address the inability of some national libraries and archives in the region to meet their responsibilities and user expectations. These responsibilities are critical to good governance, preservation of culture and social stability. That the PHA collaborate with regional stakeholders to lobby Forum leaders, national governments and development partners for regional initiatives to address this issue. That the PHA appoint a working group to take this matter further.”

While in Suva, with the kind assistance of the staff of the National Archives of Fiji, Kylie and I microfilmed certain issues of Tuvalu newspapers held in the Archives. The newspapers are *Tala o Tuvalu* (PMB Doc 482), *Valo* (PMB Doc 484), and *Headquarters Information Notes* (PMB Doc 483). Some issues are missing from the sets which the PMB microfilmed at the Tuvalu National Library and Archives under the EAP in 2006 and 2007.

Note that Eleanor Kleiber and Robert Appel announced at the PHA conference that the *Inventory of the archives of the Headquarters of the South Pacific Commission over the period 1947-1968 (1969)* has been published and that these SPC archives have been transferred to the custody of the Territorial Archives in Noumea.

Ewan Maidment
PMB Executive Officer, Jan 2009
NEW PMB ARCHIVIST – Report from Kylie Moloney

On 3 November I began working as the Archivist at the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. I have recently returned to Canberra after spending two and a half years in Edinburgh, Scotland where I was working as an assistant curator in the Department of World Cultures at the National Museums Scotland. At the National Museums Scotland I worked on the archives and non-Western music collections, and the Pacific collections. Prior to working in the United Kingdom, I worked at the National Library of Australia for five years and also spent one year volunteering in Vanuatu as an Australian Youth Ambassador (AusAID). I have an academic background in music, librarianship, education and museum studies.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LIBRARY

The Papua New Guinea Institute of Public Administration, formerly Administrative College of Papua New Guinea, moved from several locations to its present site on the Waigani campus of the University of PNG in 1969. Its initial stages of development commenced in 1963.

The objective of the Institute was to provide training in clerical and administrative skills, linguistics, district administration and other areas, to Papua New Guineans appointed to senior positions. The courses taught at the Institute have advanced and developed in many ways up to the present time. Those benefiting from courses run at the Institute are mostly government employees who require additional managerial skills in their work. It is the oldest government institution in the country.

The Institute has a modern library building with a total stock of well over 40,000 volumes. It was established in 1969 and the collections have been developed over the years. The catalogues are yet to be automated and improved access to internet services, an important area in accessing current information, would assist students in their learning.

The Charles Barrett Collection of New Guinea Books

The Library has a Special Reserve Collection of New Guinea books. This collection has been built and developed based on donations made to the Institute by Major D. Barrett on behalf of his father, the late Charles Barrett.

Charles Barrett was for much of his life a student of nature. Born in Victoria in 1879, he grew up in an outer suburb of Melbourne and knew a bush land as yet unspoiled by the industrial growth of a great city. At an early age, he learned to love roaming in the Victorian bush and marvelled at the flora and fauna that abounded in his native land.

Before the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war, he had chosen journalism as his career and soon made his mark as a writer of what was in those days known as natural history or nature study. He was a naturalist in the true sense of the word – wishing to study wildlife and to write about it in terms that the average man could understand and appreciate.
Charles Barrett served in the First World War in the Middle East. He found time to study the natural wonders of the desert and the Nile Valley. He also edited the first soldier’s newspaper, the Kia-ora Cooee. He stepped up his writings back in his native Victoria. By 1930, his works were known throughout Australia. His travel-cum-nature books achieved wide acclaim – The Sunlit Land (a story of Queensland), Isle of Mountains (a story of Tasmania), Around Australia, Pacific Wonderland and others. He also wrote some books on wildlife, including An Australian Animal Book, which were used as school texts.

Though close to 70, he found time and energy during the Pacific War to visit troops in Northern Australia and New Guinea lecturing on friendly plant life, dangerous snakes and other practical subjects. He had always loved the tropics but this was his first introduction to Papua New Guinea.

When Major Don Barrett, his only son, decided to settle in New Guinea after serving with the Pacific Islands Regiment, it was only natural that Charles Barrett should soon think of a visit. Accompanied by his wife and lifelong companion who shared with him the love of the open spaces and the things of nature, he came to Rabaul. Not satisfied to see only a little, he arranged trips to Bougainville, the Highlands and the Sepik.

Before long, he could boast of having seen more of New Guinea than many life time residents; and as he travelled he learned, for he was always a keen and trained observer.

Not content with his first all too short visits, he returned several times. On one occasion, he stayed a full year. At 75 years of age, he climbed Matupit Crator near Rabaul and spent three months as a temporary officer of the Department of Agriculture giving vital assistance with a project to introduce biological control of a serious coconut pest.

From these wanderings and observations came the material for his last and one of his most popular books, Isles of the Sun.

The end came at 80 for Charles Barrett. He died knowing that he left his writings a wealth of knowledge for the students of nature, not only in Australia but in Papua and New Guinea.

From his lately found fantastic interest in this country, came a desire to build a library on New Guinea and the Pacific. He was still engaged in collecting material when he died.

On the day of his death and his last moments of consciousness, he told Major John Barrett clearly that he wished the collection he made to go to Papua and New Guinea where it could be of use to students of that country which had held his interest so keenly.

Major Barrett has honoured this trust and the collection, first cared for by the National Library at Canberra and later by the Archives Section at Port Moresby, now finds a permanent home in a library that Charles Barrett would himself have loved.

Though only moderate in size, it is a fine collection of books on New Guinea particularly works on description and travel, history, natural history and anthropology. The Charles Barrett Collection nevertheless contains a number of items not known to be held elsewhere in the country. The books have served as a basis on which the Administrative College Library’s New Guinea Collection has developed.

Interestingly, the oldest published book about PNG held here is dated 1776. It was written in French by Pierre Sonnerat and describes his voyages in and around parts of New Guinea, the physical and a natural environment including vegetation. The book is 208 pages long and has illustrations. It needs to be translated into English. We hope to find some one to do this for us one day.

The New Guinea Collection is available for use by scholars of this country and others interested in the history of Papua New Guinea. At present, the focus is on acquiring research information on socio-economic and political development of the country. However, this is yet to be realized with limited funds to develop this very valuable collection.

Eric A. Nandoma
Serials Librarian
PNG Institute of Public Administration
26 August 2008

Voyage a la Nouvelle Guinee : dans lequel on trouve la description des lieux, des observations physiques & morales, & des details relatifs a l’histoire naturelle dans le regne animal & le regne vegetal. Paris, Chez Ruault ..., 1776.
PAMBU 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The PMB 40th anniversary celebration on 17 June went very well. About 50 guests were present. Professor Brij Lal welcomed the guests and introduced the speakers who were Hon. Duncan Kerr MP, the Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Islands Affairs, Professor Ian Chubb, the ANU Vice-Chancellor, and Mr Paul Brunton who represented the Mitchell Library.

Mr Kerr said, “Since its establishment in 1968, the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau – PAMBU – has delivered on the vision of its founders – that is, to increase and enrich knowledge of the Pacific islands region.”

“Since its beginnings, PAMBU has produced nearly 3,800 rolls of microfilm material relating to the Pacific. This means essential historical and cultural records have been preserved for the benefit of future generations of Pacific Islanders. In addition, PAMBU’s work has protected and enriched the resources available to scholars both in the region and throughout the world.”

Mr Kerr went on to expound the government’s “Pacific Partnerships” policy and noted that, “one particular area where I’m hoping the Pacific Partnerships for Development will make a real difference is in education. As a former Dean of the Law School at the University of Papua New Guinea, I take a close interest in higher education issues in the region, particularly teaching standards and research. I know that Pambu also takes a close interest in this area and is facilitating closer relations between Australian archives, libraries and universities and those institutions in the Pacific Islands.”

The text of Mr Kerr’s speech is on his website at http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/parlsec/

Professor Chubb said, “We at the Australian National University are deservedly proud of the role we have played in the advancement of Pacific scholarship. It is units like the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau that have put us at the forefront of international learning in the field of Pacific studies.”

“The University’s contribution to the running of the multi-library consortium has been strong and outstanding, and it will continue.”

Professor Chubb went on to comment on the range of archival material which the PMB helps to preserve and pointed out that in recent years “the Bureau has taken a keen interest in helping and training our island neighbours to preserve their own records, working in partnership with archival repositories in the islands.”

He added that “the Bureau runs on a shoe-string budget. The members of its management committee, chaired since 1993 by Professor Brij Lal, offer their expert advice and assistance free of charge. It speaks volumes for the dedication and commitment of our staff.”

Professor Chubb thanked “all those who have been associated with the Bureau over its 40 years to date.” He said, “We recognize and respect all that you have done to advance the cause of Pacific scholarship and we join you in celebrating this milestone achievement.”

Paul Brunton also confirmed the on-going support of the Mitchell Library for PMB and praised the Bureau’s archives preservation projects in the Pacific Islands. There was some banter between Professor Chubb and Mr Kerr about the PMB’s “shoe-string” budget, the outcome of which was that Mr Kerr undertook “to look into it”.

Kefilina Faupula, grand-daughter of Mrs Sioana Faupula who works part-time at the PMB office, danced a mesmeric solo women’s Tongan dance. There was also a men’s Tongan dance by Taani Taungakava and Kauni Puivai, plenty of food, drinks, laughter and talk.
On 20 June, following the celebration Professor Lal wrote to the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Islands Affairs, in part as follows:

“One of our great regrets is that neither USP nor UPNG are members of the Bureau. We have tried very hard in the past to have them on board, but financial difficulties have come in the way, and as you know, we operate on a shoe-string budget. We are convinced that these two institutions would benefit greatly by having regular access to the material we produce. Graduate and undergraduate students, in particular, would be the immediate beneficiaries. The membership fee is just $15,000 per annum. Benefits far outweigh the costs of joining the Bureau. I wonder if the Minister would consider subsidising the membership of USP and UPNG. It will be helping these institutions of higher learning in the region in a major, practical way.”

Mr ’Alopi Latukefu, Mr Kerr’s Chief of Staff, replied on 5 August, as follows:

“Australia’s support to USP includes a Memorandum of Understanding covering the triennium 2006-2008 which provides core budget contribution to program funds. The USP allocates core funding to its budget as necessary. The allocation of program funds is by mutual agreement between the USP and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), to assist USP achieve the goals in the University’s Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

“USP plays an important role in the Pacific, and Australia has a strong interest in strengthening the quality of tertiary education in the region. AusAID will undertake a review of Australia’s support to USP later this year as part of a broad review of tertiary education in the region. Funding for discrete activities at USP may be considered as part of this broader tertiary review.

“At the moment Australia does not provide funding to UPNG. However, over the coming months AusAID will develop an approach to support education in Papua New Guinea. The provision of any future funding to UPNG will be based on this.

“Therefore the Australian Government is unable, at this stage, to subsidise membership of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau for either USP or UPNG. However, the Government is committed to building the capacity of tertiary institutions in the region, and your request has been noted.”

The Pambu celebration was organised with the assistance of the ANU Chancelry Office and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies generously met the cost of catering.

Ewan Maidment,
PMB Executive Officer

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BROWNE & BROTHERS – SOUTH PACIFIC TRADERS

A brief account from a current research paper

Tahiti is a long haul from San Francisco where Robin and her family live. She is a 50 year old, seventh generation descendant of Fletcher Christian of Bounty fame and related through family to Captain Samuel Brothers, a trader of Tahiti in the 1860’s, after whom two small islets on Caroline Atoll in the South Pacific Ocean are named.

Among the surviving family in Tahiti and Raiatea, very little of Captain Brothers’ logbooks or records of his other business activities survived after the fire of 1884. Family history has passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Now Robin has begun to gather this fascinating story together.

Because of its isolation, Caroline Island’s history has been compiled around the lives of the
traders who settled and worked there on their own account or as company agents for periods of time. Other recorded information has been gathered from the logbooks of various vessels of several nations who made visits and landed but kept well clear of its dangerous reefs.

The Coconut Palm \(cocos nucifera\) does not grow naturally on Caroline atoll. The first attempt to establish a coconut plantation was begun in 1846 by a Tahitian firm named Collie and Lucett on the South Islet. The enterprise had limited success and was abandoned after five or six years. A second attempt was made between 1864 and 1865 by Browne & Brothers who successfully re-introduced a copra industry on Caroline Atoll.

Samuel Brotherson, at 24 years of age, was a sea captain from Copenhagen, Denmark. In San Francisco he met Joseph Browne, a British trader and captain from Tahiti, who owned a 61 ton, three-masted barkentine-schooner named \textit{Savage}.

Samuel sailed with him as supercargo to Tahiti in 1854 where he shortened his Danish name to ‘Brothers.’

Joseph Browne had a young daughter whose Tahitian princess mother had died in childbirth in 1845. With Joseph’s approval, Mary, then a sixteen year old, married Samuel in 1861 in Papeete, Tahiti.\footnote{Samuel Brothers 1825-1915. Mary Brothers (née Browne) 1845-1934.}

As a wedding present, Joseph transferred half the ownership of his vessel to Samuel and Mary. Samuel later re-named his schooner, \textit{Maria}, as early in their marriage his wife often accompanied him on his long voyages to San Francisco. They gained American citizenship during these times.

Captain Brothers sailed for other traders out of Tahiti and is recorded as captain of \textit{l'Esperance} on a voyage to Dunedin, New Zealand, taking a cargo to Sydney in August, 1863. He was accompanied by his wife Mary and child.\footnote{Mariners records - NSW Government, Australia.}

Browne and Brothers knew the Pacific atolls and islands well, having made many voyages from Tahiti to the markets in San Francisco, Vancouver and Hawaii. The coconut plantation on Caroline Atoll was a new venture.

Diverting to pick up a labour force of twenty workers from Manihiki Atoll, they selected an islet of 4.3ha on the windward side of Caroline Atoll which was partially protected. It was cleared of ground cover, leaving only the larger Pironia grove of trees which grew on the higher ground.

The young coconut shoots, shipped aboard the vessel from Tahiti, were planted in the rich soil of the small islet which had a natural supply of guano fertilizer.

Many of the small Pacific islands still rely today on the coconut industry for their livelihood. The dried white meat, or kernel, of the coconut is called copra. It is put under pressure to extract the coconut oil, the various refined grades used in soap production or body oil for cosmetics, the residue ground up for fattening cattle and horse feed.

![Map of Caroline Atoll](image)

In those early times, the coconuts were first husked and split in two, when the meat was scraped out and dried in large sheds with a roof impervious to the rain. Under this a floor of planks were attached to rollers which allowed the whole floor to be mobile and pulled out of the shed in the morning and quickly pushed back under cover in the event of a sudden shower or at night-time.

This floor was then covered with sheets of galvanised iron, when the intense heat of the sun, absorbed by the metal, allowed the copra to dry out in one day. Several thousand coconuts could be laid out for processing and packaging each day into baskets for shipment by this method.

Coconuts are ripe all the year round and this allows a trader to make a good profit. Browne and Brothers could export 30 tons or more of copra a
year, earning them in excess of £400, a good income in those early days.

The Caroline lagoon was shallow with an abundance of ‘Beche-de-Mer’, a cucumber shaped sea slug common to the South Pacific atoll lagoons, which comes in four varieties, red, black, grey and leopard. They are called ‘Trepang’ by the Chinese. They grow from six inches to one foot in size and only live in shallow water. After drying and smoking, they are packed into wooden barrels for shipment.3

During this period of time, 1864 to 1869, Captain Brothers employed William (George) Ellis to act as their agent, supervising the copra production and workforce. Ellis had deserted from a Peruvian vessel calling into Tahiti that had been involved with ‘blackbirding’ (slave trading) among the Pacific islands. He later moved on to Penrhyn and Manihiki, as trader for Henderson & Macfarlane of Auckland, New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Samuel and his wife made several voyages on the Maria from Tahiti to San Francisco with oranges, limes, coconuts, vanilla, copra, fish products, baskets of guano and the mail; returning with Californian redwood timber and other general commodities for the Tahitian markets.

It was on one such voyage in 1866 that Mary took along their small son, ‘Willy’ (William). A bout of dysentery struck him down when they were three days out and the child died.

Mary was distraught. Her young daughter had died on a voyage two years previously. Her body had been committed to the sea. On this second occasion, Mary insisted that the boy be given a proper burial.

Captain Brothers changed course and beat up for the Caroline Atoll and the small island which now bore his name, ‘Brothers Islet’, where the young child’s body was interred.4

After the loss of two children on voyages, Mary decided that was enough. Samuel and Mary had eleven children, four boys and five girls survived. Willy’s tiny grave is still on Brother’s Islet.

Trouble with the young Queen of Bora Bora forced Joseph Browne to leave Tahiti with his family in 1875, finally settling in Fiji. He had married Cecelia, youngest daughter of the Rev. John Orsmond in 1861.

In 1868, when Caroline Atoll was visited by the British ship HMS Reindeer, the atoll was proclaimed to be British sovereignty. At the time there were twenty-seven residents on the atoll, living on the South Islet.

With the changing political situation among the Pacific islands, Brothers offered his coconut plantations for sale in 1870. Houlder Brothers of London bought them at a price rumoured throughout the Pacific as ‘a very large sum.’

Samuel purchased land on Raiatea.

Houlder Brothers were granted a licence to ‘mine’ guano on Caroline Island. Between 1872 and 1895 they exported 10,000 tons of fertilizer. Then the supply ran out.

In 1842, the French had taken Tahiti by force. Foreign traders on the independent Leeward Islands came under pressure from corrupt French authorities over the next thirty years, forcing some to leave and others pushed into bankruptcy. Samuel had also been in trouble with the French and the Queen of Bora Bora during 1875. He had been wrongly accused of importing guns for the rebel leader Teraupoo and of evading duty on his pearl shell export-import business to San Francisco from the lagoon on Scilly Atoll, 500km north-west of Papeete.

A saboteur was paid to put Samuel Brothers out of business. The diving-rigged schooner Maria, flying the American ensign, was anchored in a bay off Tahaa Island. Stealing aboard the ship at night, the saboteur opened the sea cocks in the hold of the vessel, allowing seawater to flood in. He was caught escaping by a guard and killed – but all too late – the Maria settled and sank into deep water.

Samuel and Mary were devastated; everything was lost, their ship, trading contracts and livelihood. Forced into semi-retirement, they found work at the retail store Société Commercial de l’Océanie on Raiatea.5

Samuel died in 1915, aged 90 years, and his wife Mary in 1934, aged 89. Both are buried in Papeete, Tahiti.6

Anthony G. Flude
New Zealand historian, researcher and author.

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3 H. B. Sterndale, **Memoranda on some of the South Sea Islands**, 1874.
4 Marine Intelligence (Alta California newspaper), 20 Feb 1866.
5 Claus Gossier, **The Brander family of Tahiti**.
6 Family death records.
ONGOING FIRE-RELATED INCIDENTS PUT PNG PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS AT RISK

Since 2000, there have been six fire-related incidents which have damaged administration buildings and destroyed important provincial Government records in Papua New Guinea. The fires were in Sandaun in 2000, Kerema and Kikori in 2005 and since February 2008 in Popondetta, Mt Hagen and Milne Bay.

On Sunday 14 September 2008 a fire engulfed a two-story pre-independence landmark building, in the township of Alotau on PNG’s southern coast. The building housed the Government’s finance and treasury offices, personnel management, health and education and the deputy administrator’s offices. It has been suggested that an electrical fault may have caused the fire and although fire fighters arrived soon after being alerted, the water pressure from the mains was low making it difficult to control the flames. Local public servants commented that “records and documents for all projects in the province had been destroyed” as well as a substantial amount of money “including cheques for public servants and teachers’ leave fares”. The Milne Bay Governor, John Luke Crittin said, “the damage done to the Province was enormous and could not be calculated in monetary term because all the files, archives and reports were lost for good.”

Another fire burnt down the Mount Hagen administration building, called the Kapal Haus, in the Western Highlands province on Wednesday 22 October 2008. Locals suspect arson in relation to ongoing national election disputes, provincial political leadership struggles, tribal fights and local disagreements. Both fires continue to be the subject of police investigations.

PNG Fire recently warned provincial and district administrations and Government departments to ensure that the buildings they occupy are safe. Fire safety regulations call for owners of buildings to ensure that their properties are fitted with fire equipment like extinguishers, hose reels, smoke detectors, water sprinklers and fire alarms.

The problem of fires in administrative buildings continues to be an issue for Provincial Governments in PNG. Jijiro Tubuna of Port Moresby wrote to The National newspaper on 13 November highlighting the importance of keeping and preserving local records, “we do not seem to understand how important Government records and information are for national development. Information is knowledge. Access to historical and Government records and information contribute directly to economic growth.” Tubuna suggests that “all provincial administrations must have a purpose built mini archive depository with proper disaster warning devices to store and preserve all provincial records.” On 11 November, The National newspaper reported that the National Government of PNG has set aside K13 million in the 2009 Budget as a one-off Government allocation for the rebuilding of the two provincial headquarters which were burned down.

Kylie Moloney
PMB Archivist
ISLAND CULTURE ARCHIVAL SUPPORT

Island Culture Archival Support (ICAS) is a newly formed non-profit organization dedicated to the archival preservation of cultural identity and memory belonging to national and public archives, libraries, cultural centers, organizations and institutions of the South Pacific. We conduct voluntary services, and will strive to be another ally for promoting the preservation and protection of the archival heritage throughout Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

Most recent project. In August of 2008, ICAS assisted the National Archives of the Solomon Islands in Honiara. From the moment of arrival, it was evident that, due to inadequate staffing levels and training, the archives had fallen on hard times. The stacks were full. Records were deposited on the ground, in cabinets, on chairs and anywhere else available. Combined with an intense environment of heat and humidity, a breeding ground for instruments of deterioration to the records was in place. The employees sincerely felt as if their archives were falling behind the rest of the archives in the region.

Together with the government archivist, Julian Chonigolo, and the Records Manager, Bernard Rizu, we developed an action plan to regain control of the records and space in the repository. We created a three-stage plan. The first stage was to identify all the non-archival material. Second, we then shifted and condensed collections to use the shelves more appropriately. It was amazing how much shelf space was created after these first two stages. Finally, the last stage was to tackle the accumulated piles of records and either place them on the appointed shelf, or set aside materials for possible disposal. This phase of the project proved to be the most interesting and deserves to be described more fully.

Tackling the piles. Conveniently, the repository and the conservation room (where most of the unsorted records were stored) were on the first floor next to each other. This made the workload a little more tolerable, especially in an atmosphere with little to no air conditioning. Since we had created quite a bit of shelf space during the first two phases, we designated an entire bay of shelves as “Processing Shelves” where we would place the records in need of future processing. However as we worked through each stack of documents we found that processed archives were among the un-processed records. Basic archival practices in terms of treating used material had to be addressed. The result was that a couple of shelves were designated as “Re-Filing Shelves” for holding processed archives to be re-shelved in their correct place as soon as possible. Our efforts continued for several days until every last document was picked up and either placed on the processing shelf, disposed, or re-filed back into their respective collections. A collection policy was also drafted with the intention of having the government archivist modify it with the specificities of the archives.

Preservation observations. Due to the lack of funding, resources and trained staff, few preservation practices were being followed in the archives. In the harsh environment dirt, dust and insects have infiltrated the records. The archives are predominantly composed of paper records: brittleness, acidity, fading and illegibility are also major concerns. It is believed that even the most basic of conservation methods will help prolong the life of these records.

The future. A successful archives definitely requires and depends upon teamwork. At the National Archives of the Solomon Islands the future does look brighter because it has called for help, not only internally, but externally as well. The government archivist, Julian Chonigolo, has been more assertive in her relationship with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, resulting in improved funding for some aspects of the archives’ infrastructure. Two new staff positions, an archivist and a conservator, have also been approved and advertised. It is hoped that these positions will be filled in a timely fashion. Moreover, the current staff is being more proactive in taking advantage of aid for archival training. With the help of Australian advisors, a Records Management program is in the process of being planned and implemented. This is a vital component for the efficient control, maintenance, use and disposal of records. In 2009 ICAS will return to help in any capacity, but will focus on the preservation of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) collection. We feel privileged to be part of their team.

Brandon Oswald, Executive Director
Island Culture Archival Support

Questions, concerns, recommendations and suggestions are always encouraged to help make us be a better contributor to our mission. For further information visit our website at: http://www.islandarchives.org.

Pambu, January 2009
**Pambu, January 2009**

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