

# Pambu

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## PAPUA MINER'S DIARY TURNS UP ON MICROFILMING TRIP

The diary of a miner who prospected in Papua for about five years before World War II was among the interesting discoveries made in Papua New Guinea recently when Mr Kevin Green went on a microfilming expedition to that territory.

Mr Green is project director of the Bureau's Papua New Guinea Records Project, which is sponsored by nineteen libraries in Australia, PNG, New Zealand and Hawaii. Mr Green was in PNG from 26 August to 25 September. He visited Port Moresby, Lae, Goroka, Rabaul, Wewak, and Bereina.

The miner's diary that he turned up was kept by James A. Miller, a well-known figure in Papuan mining circles in pre-war days. Among other things, Miller prospected in the Lakekamu area and Mt Lawson from 1928 to 1931 and also spent some time in Misima Island in the Louisiades.

The diary begins in April 1928 when Miller, in partnership with a Captain Gordon Coghill, left Sydney to join up with one, Charles A. Gough, to develop a find supposedly made by Gough near Mt Lawson.

Miller and Coghill were soon disillusioned. Gough seemed reluctant to take them to his find and expected them to work over the old Lakekamu goldfield, which had been abandoned ten years previously. Miller wrote in his diary on 28 June 1928: 'We (Coghill and myself) feel that we should be either pushing on to our original destination or making for home as we are both unanimous that we would never have come to Papua to seriously look for gold; nor would we have come on this trip had we known that we were to be prospecting and messing around an abandoned mining area such as is the Lakekamu goldfield.'

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*The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau was established in 1968 as part of the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. Its purpose is to locate unpublished documents of value concerning the Pacific Islands and to obtain copies of them on microfilm for five world libraries specialising in Pacific research. The five libraries are the National Libraries of Australia and New Zealand; the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu; and the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.*

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To make things worse, Gough formed a new partnership while Miller and Coghill were still in the field, and this resulted in the dissolution of the Miller-Coghill-Gough partnership.

Miller returned to Australia soon afterwards, but it is evident from a few isolated diary pages for 1929 that he was soon back in the Mt Lawson area.

No diary of his for 1930 has yet come to light. But some pages for September 1931 reveal that he was then working inland from Yule Island, near Mafulu. The Pacific Islands Monthly for December 1931 recorded that as a result of an expedition to that area, he took up a mineral lease of 117 acres near Mondo in the interests of a New Zealand company. This apparently was the same company that sent him and a mining engineer called Mason to Misima early in 1932 to apply for the forfeiture of leases of the Mt Sisa Goldfields NL. At any rate, Miller's diary goes on to tell how the mining warden found in favour of his (Miller's) company, the New Guinea Gold Exploitation Co. Ltd, but that this decision was later overruled by the Executive Council of Papua. The council allowed Misima Options, a company which the Minister for Territories, Charles Marr, had helped to form, to take over the operation of the Mt Sisa goldmine.

In short, Miller's diary is more an account of a miner's frustrations and disappointments than anything else - but that, it seems, was typical of a miner's life in Papua between the wars, anyway.

The complete list of material that Mr Green filmed during his month-long trip is as follows:

PMB 636 CASPAR, Father Joseph (com.) - Roro diaries and songs (collected c.1910-12)

PMB 637 STEAMSHIP TRADING COMPANY LTD - Plantation inspection reports, 1957-59

- PMB 638 MILLER, James - Diaries, 1928-32
- PMB 639 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Correspondence with New Guinea Administration, 1931-41
- PMB 640 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Reports on field trips, 1921-35
- PMB 641 LEHNER, Rev. S. - Anthropological articles
- PMB 642 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Industrial reports, 1921-39
- PMB 643 NEW GUINEA - Town Advisory Councils (Goroka, Kundiawa, Lae and Rabaul) - Minutes, 1959-65
- PMB 644 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Various reports, 1921-28
- PMB 645 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Correspondence with the New Guinea Administration re co-operation with military authorities, etc., 1920-42
- PMB 646 LUTHERAN MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Hospital and medical reports, 1920-38
- PMB 647 'A Nilai ra Dovot' (Kuanua, i.e. Tolai, language (5 reels) newspaper published by the Methodist Mission, New Guinea), 1909-73
- PMB 648 METHODIST MISSION, NEW GUINEA - Reminiscences of various missionaries, compiled c.1970-3
- PMB 649 LIGEREMALWOGA (Methodist church leader) - Autobiography, 1932
- PMB 650 COLLINS, Ella (comp.) - Fables of New Britain and New Ireland, c.1930-5
- PMB 651 EGIDI, Father Vincenzo - Mekeo genealogies
- PMB 653 ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION, PAPUA - DIOCESE OF BEREINA - Roro grammar and syntax, 1898
- PMB 654 NAVARRE, Bishop Louis-André - 'Notes...sur sa vie', c.1907
- PMB 655 EGIDI, Father Vincenzo (comp.) - Roro genealogies, c.1910

- PMB 656 'Ebe Kapana' (Roro newspaper published by the Roman Catholic Mission, Yule Island), 1951-3
- PMB 657 TOARIPI LANGUAGE - Dictionaries, 1932, 1935 and 1968
- PMB 658 NORIN, Father Auguste-Généreux - Comparative dictionaries, English:Motu:Roro:Boyawa:Fujuge:Pokao:Kuni and Apekave/Tajata, c.1940
- PMB 659 ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION, PAPUA - DIOCESE OF BEREINA - Roro and Pokao dictionaries, 1922-43
- PMB 660 NOT AVAILABLE FOR REFERENCE
- PMB 661 ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION, PAPUA - DIOCESE OF BEREINA - Grammars of the Fujuge, Mekeo and Kuni languages
- PMB 662 ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION, PAPUA - DIOCESE OF BEREINA - Kuni and Pokao dictionaries, 1933-7
- PMB 663 ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION, PAPUA - DIOCESE OF BEREINA - Yule Island Station statistics, 1920-59

ISLANDS TRIP FOR  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The executive officer of the PMB, Mr Robert Langdon, will leave Canberra on Sunday, 13 October, for six or seven weeks in the Pacific Islands.

Part of his trip will be as a member of a two-man mission of inquiry into cultural matters which the Australian Government is sending to New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Western Samoa and Tonga. The other member of the mission is Dr J.R. Specht, assistant curator of anthropology at the Australian Museum, Sydney.

The mission will terminate its Pacific tour in Fiji early in November. Mr Langdon then proposes to visit Niue to microfilm records of the London Missionary Society. He also hopes to go on to Western Samoa for further microfilming work. He will return to Canberra in late November or early December, via Auckland and Wellington.