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Pambu news

Greetings from 30,000 feet! I’m writing this somewhere over the Pacific Ocean en route to Fiji. What a pleasure it is to be able to travel again; to connect with friends and colleagues in person again and to work with collections in the Pacific again. Since international travel restrictions eased mid-year, this is the third trip I’ve made: two to Fiji and one to Cook Islands. The first half of the year was occupied with administration: negotiating a new Agreement with our Members and incorporating a new Subscriber category into the Agreement and working through the recruitment process for two part-time Research Officers: Annie Kwai and Deveni Temu. I worked through rights clearances to digitise and put online microfilms from our collection related to the Melanesian labour trade (see p. 4) in conjunction with the Australian Dictionary of Biography Oceania Working Party ‘Melanesian Life Stories’ workshop. I worked with a software developer to resolve some of the back end issues with our online database. The School of Culture, History and Language installed a compactus unit for our internal archive, so materials the Bureau has accumulated over decades, and moved from office to office during the Coombs Building refurbishment are now finally together again.

As COVID-restrictions eased during the year it felt like everything that had been on hold since 2020 happened in rapid succession. In May, we hosted an on-campus presentation on PNG photos by independent researcher Jan Hasselberg. Jan has compiled a list of PNG photo collections 1875 – 1940, which is now available on our website. In July, I was in Fiji digitising papers at Davuilevu Theological College and speaking at a workshop for postgraduate history students at USP (see p. 3). In August, I hosted the first of our two annual Member-only webinars introducing staff in member libraries to the work of Pambu.

(top)

W.C. and Doris Groves
*Women dancers,
 Manu Manu*
 PAPUA NEW GUINEA
 TRANSPARENCIES, MAINLY
 1950s. PMB PHOTO 26_075

In September, in partnership with other Canberra collecting institutions, we submitted two successful session proposals for the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) conference which will be held at ANU in 2023. Also in September, I travelled to Rarotonga for the Archiving Cook Islands symposium (see p. 3). In October, we hosted our second webinar for member libraries about images of PNG pre-WWII, featuring presentations from Jan Hasselberg, Deveni Temu and Nigel Bond. In October, I worked with a wonderful team at the National Library of Australia on a Pacific Collections learning webinar (see p. 4). The Australian Society of Archivists conference also came to Canberra in October, and it was wonderful to see everyone in person again. Deveni and I also presented to a group of visiting archaeologists and museum professionals from around the Pacific as part of the Collective Biography of Archaeology in the Pacific project. At the start of November we were awarded a small grant from the ANU Gender Institute to update the PMB Women's index (see p. 9) and at

the end of November, here I am at 30,000 feet for more digitisation work and more meetings in Suva.

It's been a good year, one that owes thanks to many people, but in particular to part-time staff who have assisted at various points throughout the year: Suliljaw Lusausatj, Niroshnee Ranjan, Annie Kwai, Deveni Temu, Eve Haddow and Stephanie Xu. Many thanks to the School of Culture, History & Language admin team, and to the many supporters and collaborators in our network including Dr Nic Halter, Dr Nick Hoare, Deborah Lee-Talbot, Dr Matt Fitzgerald, Lisa Mudge, Mark Triggs, the ANU Pacific Institute, the ANU Gender Institute, our member and subscribing libraries and all who contribute to this network. A particularly large thank you this year to the PMB Management Committee for patience, enthusiasm and generosity with time and knowledge. I'm thankful, and I'm excited for 2023.

KARI JAMES
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DECEMBER 2022

Fiji



In 2022, I had the good fortune of visiting Fiji twice. I spent most of my time at Davuilevu Theological College (DTC) making preservation copies of the library's holdings of student theses. DTC is the training college of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma (MCIF). It is located about 40 minutes from central Suva, just across the river from the airport at Nausori. DTC's main offering at present is the Diploma of Theology. Committed to improving its digital infrastructure and resources, DTC has established a Digitisation

Committee, headed by Rev. Savenaca Vuetanavanua with Librarian Aneeta Ruben and a group of DTC students. The Digitisation Committee hosted PMB and assisted with the listing and digitisation of student theses. The digital copying was completed over two trips, with more than 230 student projects and theses copied, totalling around 13,000 pages. The theses range in date from 1990 – 2021. The preservation of these documents is so important because these student works are written by Fijian, Rotuman and

(above)
Executive Officer Kari James with the DTC Digitisation Committee.

Pacific students on issues relevant to Fijian, Rotuman and Pacific communities. A number of early theses are written in Fijian language. Given the variable lighting conditions there will be a lot of work required in post-production but we aim to complete the collection in 2023 as PMB MS 1444.

Vinaka vaka levu to Principal Rev Jolame Sedra, Rev Savenaca Vuetanavanua, Librarian Aneeta Ruben, students Jiare, Jone, Waqa and Freddie for their enthusiasm for this project, their assistance with the day-to-day work required and their very warm welcome to the DTC community. Thank you also to Rosarina, Linda, Abraham and families for their dedicated hospitality and kindness. I'm thankful for all the great conversations, delicious food, laughter, and of course the work we achieved together.

While in Fiji, I was also invited to speak to postgraduate history students at the University of the South Pacific (USP) about the PMB collection. It was an immense privilege to speak with students and learn about their research projects. I also had the opportunity to return digital copies of PMB microfilms to the MCIF and the Oceania Marist Province Archives. I was also fortunate to visit the National Archives of Fiji, *The Fiji Times*, Fiji National University Library, The USP Library, Pacific Islands Universities Research Network and others. I was also



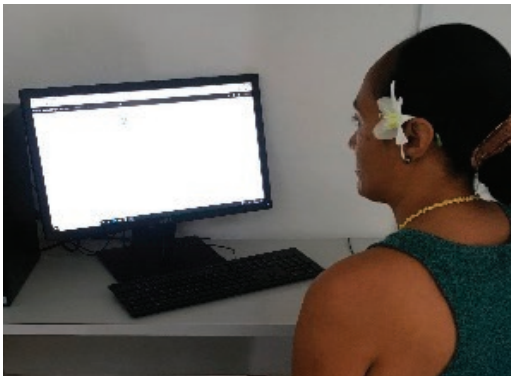
lucky enough to catch Professor Edvard Hviding from the University of Bergen—the only library in Europe to subscribe to PMB—to discuss PMB digitisation work and locating old Pacific weather records for climate data rescue.

Vinaka vaka levu to all who greeted me with such warmth and generosity. You can read the full trip report at our website.

(above)
Talking to USP postgraduate history students about PMB archives.

PHOTO COURTESY NIC HALTER

Public access to the PMB digital collection at the new USP Cook Islands Campus Library



In September, PMB was invited to attend the symposium *Archiving the Cook Islands in the Pacific Context*. The symposium was hosted by Te Puna Vai Marama—Cook Islands Centre for Research at the University of the South Pacific (USP) Cook Islands Campus. It was curated and organised by Tim Jones. Tim worked at Te Puna Vai Marama through the New Zealand skilled volunteers programme Volunteer Services Abroad throughout 2022. Tim spent most of the year at USP listing, arranging and digitising the papers of the late Ron Crocombe. He also built an Omeka database for the Crocombe collection and established a content partnership with Digital Pasifik.

In the course of his assignment, Tim liaised with PMB over work previously carried out at USP,

including the Don Marshall (PMB MS 1035-37) and Ron Crocombe papers (PMB MS 1412). He invited PMB, and other collection professionals he liaised with throughout his time at Te Puna Vai Marama, to come together at Avarua to discuss Cook Islands heritage collections. The symposium brought together collection professionals from Cook Islands, Aotearoa New Zealand, Hawai'i and Australia for an excellent three-day discussion. It was a very engaging, rewarding and multi-disciplinary symposium, with new connections forged and useful knowledge shared. Thanks particularly go to Tim Jones and Campus Director Dr Debi Futter-Puati for creating a welcoming environment to have honest, difficult and productive conversations, and to the Cook Islands collections professionals who welcomed us so generously.

My other priority while in Avarua was to visit the new USP Cook Islands Campus Library and to ensure campus staff were aware of the PMB services they are entitled to as a branch of USP Library. I ran an introductory workshop for USP CI staff and students, and worked with campus librarian Tai Parima to set up a computer in the library where USP staff, students and members of the public can search the PMB catalogue and access PMB digital content. USP staff and students can also access PMB digital content remotely by logging into the USP Library with their university login details.

(above left)
USP Librarian Tai Parima searching the PMB catalogue at the USP Cook Islands Campus Library.

Digitised blackbirding collections

This year we digitised thirteen microfilms from our collection related to blackbirding and the Melanesian labour trade. The digitisation was funded with a small grant from the ANU Pacific Institute to support the Australian Dictionary of Biography Oceania Working Party workshop 'Australian South Sea Islander and Melanesian Life-Stories' which was held at the ANU in April.

The digitised titles offer different accounts of the labour trade, including the diaries of 'recruiting' voyages (PMB MS 15, 496); eyewitness accounts of blackbirding raids documented by missionaries Elizabeth and William Gray (PMB MS 1046-1048, PMB MS 1123); official correspondence and published discourse about the trade (PMB MS 1213-1214); and a register of labourers sent to Samoa to work for Deutsche Handels and Plantagen Gesellschaft (PMB MS 1210). There is already significant interest in this register and we are

9963	Siame	54	11738	2a ²	1		
4	Karum	55	11739	2a ²	1		
5	Smalby	56	11738	2a ²	1		
6	Bitai	57	11731	2a ²	1		
7	Sagiam	58	11732	2a ²	1		
8	Sosalla	59	11733	2a ¹	1		
9	Sigan	60	11734	2a ²	1		

Chyaki man em 2. Januar 1900 mit
1899 Jajra
1899
Kamathan
Kamathan
6 km S von
Senham
6 km N von
Laua
Nukuste
Bouka
Bouka
Sougainodie

exploring funding options to have it translated and transcribed.

These accounts particularly relate to Queensland, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, New Guinea Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Samoa. In addition to offering accounts of blackbirding, these collections will also be useful for researchers interested in climate history, earthquakes, colonial relations and pearling amongst other subjects.

The full list of digitised titles can be found on the last page of this newsletter. Many thanks to the ANU Pacific Institute for supporting this initiative.

(above)

Extract from 'Registers of Melanesian indentured labourers, 1887 - 1913'

PMB MS 1210,
 DEUTSCHE HANDEL UND PLANTAGEN GESSELLSCHAFT. ORIGINAL REGISTERS HELD IN THE ARCHIVES ROOM OF THE NELSON MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, APIA.

Researching the Pacific at the National Library of Australia

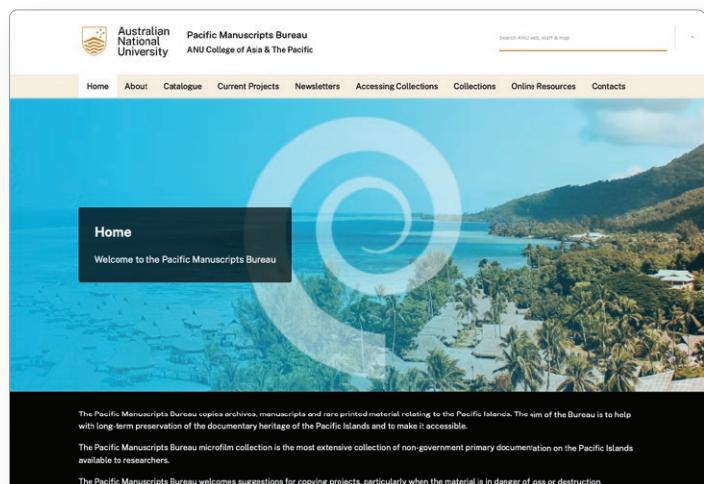


In November, I recorded a learning webinar with librarians Alex Cameron and James Cruz on 'Researching the Pacific at the National Library of Australia'. The webinar discusses the Rex Nan Kivell, Chinnery and Spencer Collections, the guide to formed collections, searching the NLA catalogue, Pacific newspapers and magazines, Indian emigration passes to Fiji, the Oral history and Folklore Collection, Digital Pasifik—and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. You can watch the video on the NLA Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/hMphINJwb7s>

(left) NLA Librarians Alex Cameron and James Cruz with PMB Executive Officer Kari James

Website upgrade

The College of Asia and the Pacific is upgrading all its websites. There are still some glitches with links on our site and links from our catalogue to the PMB website. Please contact pambu@anu.edu.au if you experience any problems with broken links on the website or the catalogue so we can fix them for you.



Gordon Parsonson and the Peter Milne Papers

The only stakeholders more excited by the publication of a new PMB document than researchers with an interest in the topic are the source communities whose lives, landscapes and pasts are described in the papers and portrayed in the images. The release over the past eight years of a series of documentary and photographic archives relating to the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides (PCNH), held at the University of Otago's Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena and at the Presbyterian Research Centre at Knox College, both in Dunedin, has been enormously significant for living communities of central and southern Vanuatu.

Amongst these PCNH documents are the diaries (PMB 1402), journals (PMB 1403) and miscellaneous papers (PMB 1407) of Reverend Peter Milne, the first European missionary for the district of north Efate and the southern Shepherd Islands, which he administered from his base on the island of Nguna from 1870 until 1924. This remarkable body of material, extraordinarily rich in the detail of local lives and comprehensive in its coverage of the period, is the foundation for any future history of this area, and a resource of primary importance for local communities.

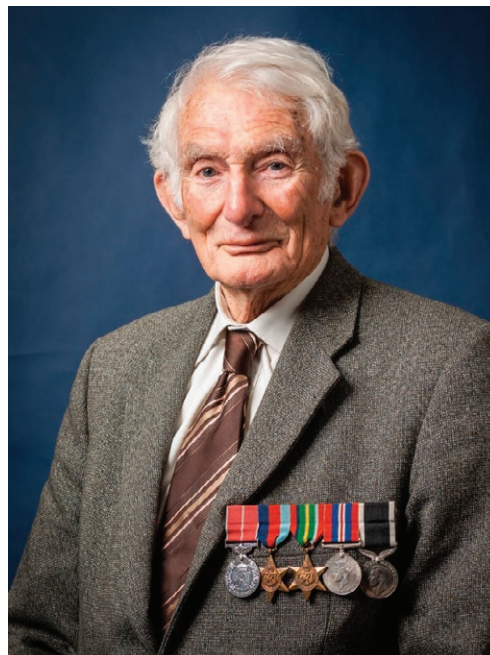
However, Milne's handwriting, the conventions of the times, and the numerous proper names combine to defeat most local readers of the copied documents, placing these materials frustratingly out of reach. Enter Dunedin historian and Associate Professor Gordon Parsonson,

rightly renowned for his painstaking transcription of the papers of Samuel Marsden, which are now available online to a global readership (<https://marsdenarchive.otago.ac.nz/about/gordon>).

Gordon had played a central role in the transfer of the Milne papers to the Hocken Library in 1956, having completed his Master of Arts thesis in 1949 on "Early Protestant Missions in the New Hebrides 1839 – 61". While working on the Marsden papers, he had also begun the monumental task of transcribing Milne's diaries and journals—the diaries alone consist of over 1,500 pages of closely written text.

Gordon was still working on the Milne papers when I met him in Dunedin in 2006, and has only recently retired from the project, celebrating his 103rd birthday last year. His daughter Ann has very generously worked with Gordon to assemble his Milne transcripts, passing them on to me to edit. Our current plan is to link Gordon's transcripts with the individual PMB documents, and then to work with Mr Taman Willy, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre's Nguna fieldworker, to develop a protocol for repatriation of the Milne archive to the Nguna and other north Efate and southern Shepherd Island communities. While this process will unfold over time, it is essential that Gordon's foresight in securing the archive, and his prodigious labour of transcription, be acknowledged.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CHRIS BALLARD, ANU



(above left)

Rev. Peter Milne, c.1900, Foreign Missions Committee.

PMB PHOTO 93-006. ORIGINAL IMAGES HELD AT THE PRESBYTERIAN RESEARCH CENTRE, KNOX COLLEGE, DUNEDIN.

(below left)

Portrait of Gordon Parsonson

3/8/627, AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM, ONLINE CENOTAPH, 2014.

(© NZIPP PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN DOVE 4011. CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.)

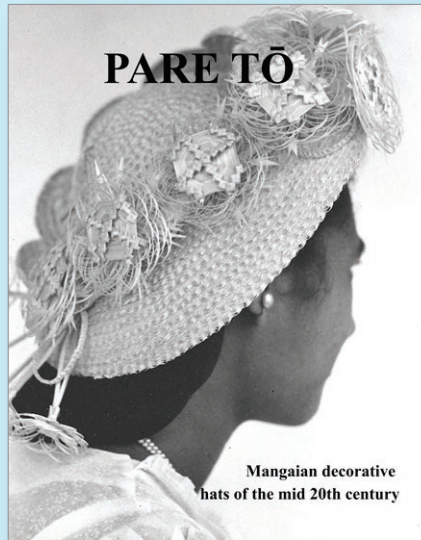
2022 book releases

It was a prolific year for the Mangaia Cultural and Historical Society releasing two books in 2022:

Pare Tō

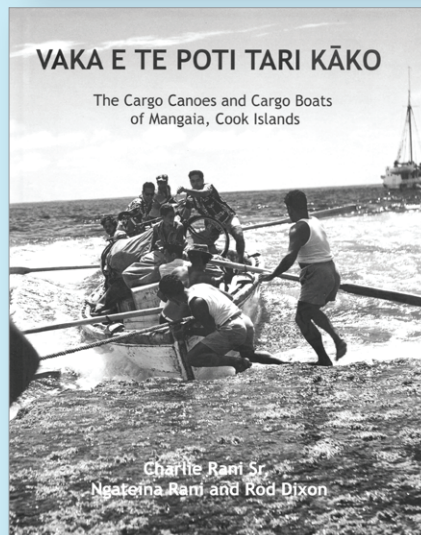
Mid 20th Century decorative hats from Mangaia, Cook Islands

Tells the story of hats made from kaka'o reed (pare tō) on the island of Mangaia between the 1940s and 1980s. Pare tō were popular church wear and their popularity led to design competitions between districts on Mangaia, resulting in over 400 pare tō variations. This book includes archival images of women wearing pare tō at church, including wonderful photos from the D.S. Marshall collection held at the University of the South Pacific Cook Islands Campus. It also shows photos of surviving pare tō held in both public and private collections today. <https://www.blurb.com/b/11271672-pare-to>



Vaka e Te Poti Tari Kāko

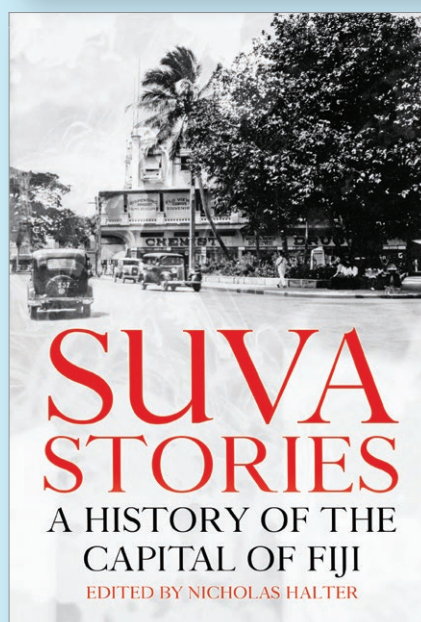
Tells the story (in English and Mangaian) of Mangaia's cargo canoes and cargo boats; the crews who negotiated the dangerous reef surrounding the island and helped build a trading economy; the village boat companies, the boatmen's unions and the application of their skills as boatmen in Palestine in the First World War. Extensively illustrated with archival images. <https://www.blurb.com/b/11006599-vaka-e-te-poti-tari-kako>



Suva Stories

A history of the capital of Fiji

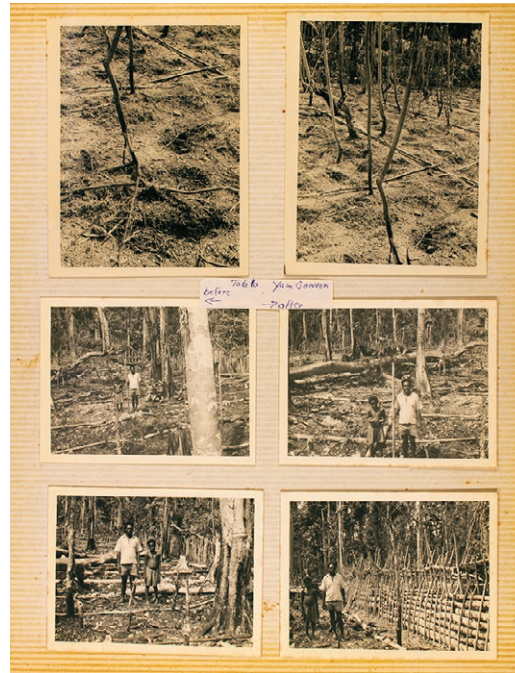
In 2022, ANU Press released ***Suva Stories: A history of the capital of Fiji***. This collection of histories was edited by Nicholas Halter and features the writing of the late Brij V. Lal, Robert Nicole, Daryl Tarte, Kaliopate Tavola and Anurag Subramani, amongst others. It includes histories of Suva as an indigenous village, a British colony and a diverse contemporary capital. It is available for download. <http://doi.org/10.22459/SS.2022>



Rescuing JFK

2022 also saw the release of a book for children about how two young Solomon Islanders—Aaron Kumana and Biuku Gasa—who served as Scouts for the Australian Royal Navy's Coastwatchers, rescued future American president John Fitzgerald Kennedy and his crew after their boat was rammed during battle in World War II. ***Rescuing JFK: How Solomon Islanders Rescued John F. Kennedy and the Crew of the PT-109*** is co-authored by Alan C Elliott and Anna Annie Kwai, with illustrations by Evelyn Morgan. ISBN 0927523124.

A Journey of Remembrance with Pambu



(left)

[Photograph album, page 1] 'Yams, Kira Kira [Kirakira] and Guadalcanal'

(right)

[Photograph album, page 4] 'Marau—garden layout and fence, pana layout.'

A photo album of yam gardens and vines is not one that would immediately excite a non-botanist, or most other scholars. However, the digitised album catalogued as *PMB PHOTO 48 Margaret Tedder and James Tedder, Gardening: an album of photographs of subsistence gardening in eastern and central Solomon Islands* is more than just a collection of images of yams and yam gardens, it is an historical visual treatise on traditional gardening methods, structures and processes, and of the interconnectedness of people and their environment.

The Tedder family lived in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate from 1952 to 1974, where James served in various positions in the colonial administration. His wife, Margaret, had a keen interest in gardening and botany, and spent a lot of time researching plants and their usage. The photos in this collection were largely taken and captioned by Margaret. The family travelled extensively throughout Solomon Islands and with Margaret's background in botany, it is no surprise that the Tedders would have an album dedicated to yams and other tropical root crops.

While the collection might seem monotonous for some at first glance, it offers a rich cultural experience for Islanders like myself with a rural subsistence background. It offers an experience of remembering and reliving memories of gardening traditions. The literature on memory, photography and culture is vast (and is beyond my scope here). Yet while memories sometimes fail to linger or are fragmented in their constitution, pictorial records like this collection offer an indelible record and aid to recollection, even if only to enable new opportunities to relearn forgotten traditions.

I immediately formed a connection with the photos in the album in ways not fully explainable, as they ignited lapsed memories of gardening and traditions learned during my upbringing. Studying the album became a personal journey of remembrance. Memories of the labour of cultivation but also of the joy and satisfaction of a good harvest. Specific memories of planting an entire grid of taro only to look back at my mother uprooting every single one because they were not planted at the right depth. In Kwara'ae there



(left)

'Yams, Leone [Leone Anderson, wife of District Commissioner, Eastern District], Greg [Tedder], [James Tedder], Kira Kira'

(right)

'Swamp taro *alocasia* sp.' [and Margaret Tedder]



(left)
‘Mrs Bombala harvesting yams’ [Guadalcanal]

(right)
‘Mrs Bombala harvesting yams’ [Guadalcanal]

is a saying that elders often use, *magaom go’o sa limaum, ni bilia’a nama aoko hung* (your life is in your hands, they must be dirty before you can eat). In other words, you must make gardens to survive and often the person’s quality of life is reflected in the health of their garden.

There are also memories of gardening and spirituality, the awareness that we live among others who we cannot see yet we share the same space. Hence, we alert them of our doings (cutting trees, clearing land), assure them of our care (we can only take and use what we need), seek their blessing (for a fruitful harvest), ask for permission so that we can eat our harvest without getting sick and ask for forgiveness (if

our activities might cause unease or disturb the spirits). While Christian prayers are now dominant for almost every activity of interaction with the environment, talking directly to the ancestral guardians of the land is still an integral tradition in rural areas of places like Malaita, especially for certain things including clearing new gardening land or cutting trees in specific areas. Indeed, individual experiences of the archives varies, and it is within this wide range of variation that the possibilities and opportunity for remembrance can ensue, and traditions revived.

BY ANNA ANNIE KWAIANU
PHD CANDIDATE AND PMB RESEARCH OFFICER



(left)
‘Valasi, Nako, preparing to plant; appealing to garden spirits’

(right)
‘Sakis Tasimboko; Kaho’

Women in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau collection



We are thrilled to announce that the Bureau has been awarded a small grant by the ANU Gender Institute to update *Women in the Pacific: a guide to records on microfilm written by, or about, women in the Pacific copied by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau*. Responding to requests from researchers, the original index was compiled in 1992, by then Executive Officer Gillian Scott. In the 30 years since, more than 60 collections written by or about women have been added to the Bureau's catalogue, and countless photos of unidentified women. To mark the 30th anniversary of this document, we will create a new, dynamic, and contextualized finding aid for modern users, incorporating new approaches in feminist theory, Indigenous scholarship and archival practice.

The updated guide will be co-authored by PMB Executive Officer, Kari James, and Pacific scholars Annie Kwai and Deborah Lee-Talbot throughout 2023. We hope the resource will become a useful guide for researchers, students and teachers alike and we believe it will be the starting point for further research into many untold stories of women in the Pacific. As the work progresses, we will present a webinar to discuss our findings. Follow our Facebook page for updates and associated events. Many thanks to the ANU Gender Institute for their support in this endeavour.

Have you used a PMB collection by or about women? We'd love to know about it! Contact us on pambu@anu.edu.au.

Citation

Scott, G. (1992) *Women in the Pacific: a guide to records on microfilm written by, or about, women in the Pacific copied by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau*. Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Australian National University. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002708574>

(left)

'The South West Bay PWMU [Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union] ladies show what they have made for the bazaar', early 1960s.

PHOTO BY DEACONESS LYNETTE WALKER, PMB PHOTO 115-03A. LYN WAS A MISSIONARY TEACHER WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MALEKULA, VANUATU (THEN NEW HEBRIDES). LYN WAS INVOLVED WITH THE PWMU AND THERE ARE MANY PHOTOS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES IN HER PHOTO COLLECTIONS. WE'D LOVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PWMU AND ITS NI-VANUATU MEMBERS.

In memoriam

2022 saw the loss of two greats of Pacific archives and libraries. On Monday 5 September, Acting University Librarian at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), **Mr Kametan Parkop**, passed away at the Port Moresby General Hospital after a long illness. Mr Parkop had a long career in librarianship, starting out as a Library Assistant at UPNG, before taking on increasingly higher posts with the then Papua New Guinea Institute of Public Administration, Deputy Librarian at the University of Goroka and then Deputy Librarian at UPNG. PMB had worked closely with the late Kametan, though plans to visit UPNG Library were postponed due to the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in Australia. Our thoughts are with his family and friends, as well as the UPNG Library community that has tragically lost two University Librarians in four years.

On 1 December, **Taraeka George Paniani**, former National Archivist for the Cook Islands National Archives, passed away at Rarotonga Hospital at the age of 65. Paniani was also an active member of PARBICA and worked in various other senior roles for the Cook Islands government. He also served as Chair of Te Kōpapa Reo Māori Committee (Cook Islands Language Commission) and worked as a broadcaster for Radio Cook Islands. Many of us in the Pacific archives community know George's daughter, Paula Paniani, and we at PMB send Paula and family love and strength.

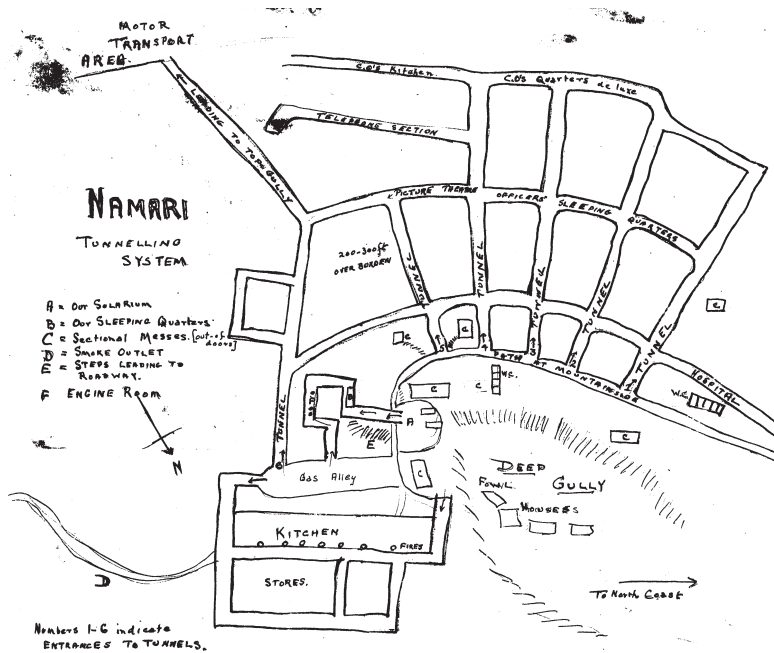
We pay our respects to both late Kametan Parkop and late Taraeka George Paniani for their years of service to their countries and to the archives and library professions.



Country Women's Association

Were you involved with the Country Women's Association in PNG from the 1940s to 1981? If so, Deborah Lee-Talbot would love to hear from you. She is a historian who is currently researching the historic relationships and experiences of women involved with the PNG CWA. Email colourfulhistories@gmail.com

New Finding Aid with Titles Documenting the Second World War in the Pacific



In July 2022, Pambu made identifying records on the Second World War that little bit easier by producing a brand-new **Finding Aid** including details for over 80 Pambu collections (manuscripts, printed documents and photographs). The wide-ranging Finding Aid was created to help students taking the ANU's undergraduate course, **War in the Islands: The Second World War in the Pacific** but will be a valuable resource for students and researchers with an interest in the Pacific War at any level.

Kari introduced Pambu and the Finding Aid to the students at the start of the semester and course convenor, Nicholas Hoare, encouraged its use over the following 12 weeks of class, especially for primary source analysis and biography assignments where students are rewarded for originality. While it takes a lot of cajoling to convince busy undergraduates to get

accounts of life under Japanese occupation for non-White subjects within the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. For students who gravitate towards Australian or other expatriate POW experiences, the *Rabaul Times* journalist and editor Gordon Thomas's account at **PMB 36** (also digitised) and **PMB 600** is always popular. Thomas was one of only four POWs who stayed in Rabaul for the entirety of the Japanese occupation.

As a digital document, the Finding Aid is easily searchable, but it also has a useful five-page index, painstakingly organised by name, location and key words. Pambu now has 17 thematic and geographic finding aids available to download on the website. If you have an idea for a further finding aid that would help with teaching, please feel free to email the Bureau.

DR NICHOLAS HOARE, ANU

behind a microfilm reader when so much digitised material is available through the **Australian War Memorial** and **Trove**, the inclusion of 16 digitised items on the list was received very warmly.

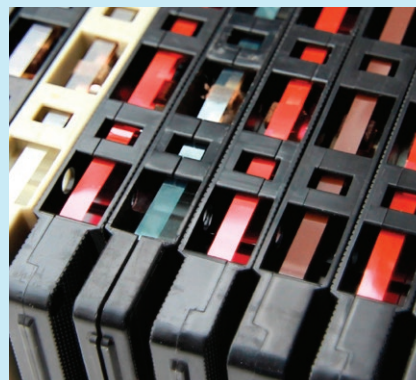
Students are always fascinated by **PMB 1249**, 'A brief sketch of the fate of 3000 Indian POWs in New Guinea' recorded by Captain Chint Singh, as well as the War Diary of Nauruan Patrick Cook available at **PMB 1418**. Both provide detailed but harrowing

(above left)

Namari tunnelling system in 'Rabaul—1942 – 1945' by Gordon Thomas
PMB MS 36, P.376

Clock ticks on digitising magnetic tape

There is consensus in the international archives community that magnetic media that has not been digitised by 2025 will likely be lost forever. Tape degradation, obsolete playback equipment, a shortage of spare parts and a decline in relevant expertise all mean that the end of routine or large-scale transfer from magnetic tape is fast approaching. Check your institutions and private collections for carriers like audiocassettes, open reels, VHS, U-matic tapes and any other audio/audiovisual formats that use magnetic tape. If you're unsure what formats you have in your collection, www.knowyourcarrier.com is a really useful resource to help identify formats.



(left)

Christian Schnettelker from Essen, Deutschland
CC BY 2.0 [HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0) VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Marjorie Tua'inekore Crocombe—an Exceptional Life

Marjorie Tua'inekore Crocombe (née Hosking) was born in 1930 in Rarotonga, the youngest of 11 children of Dr. Rupert and Vaevae Hosking of Titikaveka.

Marjorie was educated at Titikaveka Primary School (1936 – 44) and in 1944 won a Maui Pomare scholarship to finish her secondary schooling in New Zealand, initially at Epsom Girls Grammar School (1945 – 6) and later at Whanganui Girls College where she became the first Polynesian Head Prefect (1947 – 50).

It wasn't until many years later that she realised that her time at the school had been instrumental in allowing more New Zealand Māori girls to complete their secondary schooling at Whanganui Girls'. In an interview with Katrina Lintonbon (*Cook Islands News*, 13 June, 2020), Marjorie recalled that—"When she thinks about it now, there were only three students that weren't European when she was at the college. She used to wonder why "Miss Baker" would come to see her every night to see how her studies were going.

"All those years later I finally realised what she was doing, she had been fighting with the school's board of governors to allow Māori girls to attend the school," she says.

"There was so much racism back then."

In 1951, Marjorie trained as a teacher at Ardmore Teachers Training College, graduating in 1952. After a year's teaching at Henderson Primary School, Auckland (1953 – 4), she returned to Rarotonga to begin work for the Cook Islands Department of Education, and in 1955 became the first Cook Island's female lecturer at Nikao Teachers College. During this time she also worked on developing primary school readers in the Cook Islands Māori language.

At a dance in 1955 she met her future partner, Ron Crocombe. Ron had come to Rarotonga initially as Clerk of Works in the Public Works Department and was then appointed as Resident Agent on Atiu.

As Marjorie recalled to journalist Katrina Lintonbon, Ron was on his way back to New Zealand from Atiu and asked if she would join him.

"I said to him no way! For a start I don't even know you."

Ron replied, "We can get to know one another on our way back to New Zealand."



They were married in 1959 in Masterton, NZ and a 50-year partnership began.

That same year, Marjorie accompanied Ron to Canberra where he had been offered a PhD scholarship in Pacific History. She was initially barred from entering Australia under the racist "White Australia" policy, but finally, under protest, was allowed entry.

While Ron worked on his thesis, Marjorie commenced work on *The Works of Ta'unga; Records of a Polynesian Traveller in the Southern Seas, 1833 – 1896* (ANU Press, 1968). This work, (co-edited with Ron) "combined the two strands of ethnohistory and an Islands-focused historiography" to become one of the foundational texts of Pacific History (Gray and Munro 2018).

In 1962, Ron and Marjorie and their family moved to live and work in Papua New Guinea following Ron's appointment as Executive Officer, and from 1965, Director of ANU's New Guinea Research Unit. In Port Moresby, Marjorie became a lecturer at the Teachers College and at the Administrative College, as well as conducting a regular ABC radio broadcast "Malanga Moana"

(above)

Marjorie Crocombe in Rarotonga, 2015.

covering Pacific music and current affairs (1966–9).

In 1965 during sabbatical, she undertook a part-time Anthropology degree at the University of California (Los Angeles) and in 1968, studies in Pacific history at the University of Hawaii.

In 1967 she began a degree at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), studying creative writing under Ulli and Georgina Beier while also researching the work of the influential Manganian missionaries to Papua, Ruatoka and his wife Tungane. All this was achieved in addition to bringing up two children without added help, for Ron and Marjorie refused on principle to employ domestic servants,

In Port Moresby, Marjorie was again forced to confront racial discrimination as Ron later recalled. "The first time she went to buy meat at the main Burns Philp shop in Port Moresby she was refused service. She came home in tears after being told that natives can only be served through the outside hatch. She had been in many countries but never treated like that. She never went back, but it was a small part of the accepted code of the Australian system in Papua New Guinea".

In 1969 the family moved to Suva, following Ron's appointment as Foundation Professor of Pacific Studies at the newly established University of the South Pacific. At USP, Marjorie completed her Arts degree majoring in History and Education. Influenced by her creative writing teachers at UPNG, she helped establish and became first President of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPACS), a post she retained for 23 years (1977 – 2000). Once again she was required to battle established thinking, this time within a University that, at the time, placed greater emphasis on economic and social development than on the creative arts.

SPACS provided a platform for a 'New Wave' of Pacific writers through its journal *Mana* with Marjorie as Editor. Many of the early writers published in *Mana*, including Albert Wendt, Konai Thaman, the late Alistair Te Ariki Campbell and the late Grace Molisa, were or became internationally famous writers and scholars, leading the Cook Islands academic Emma Powell to wonder, would there have been a Pacific Literature at all if Marjorie and her colleagues had not established SPACS and sustained *Mana* with their own tireless work? "Writers and publishers from the wider region," writes Dr Linda Crowl, "owe a deep debt to Marjorie's foresight and generosity."

In 1974 Marjorie completed her Master of Arts degree at UPNG with a dissertation entitled—*Maretu's Narrative of Cook Islands History*—later published as *Cannibals and Converts Radical Change in the Cook Islands* (USP Press, 1983).

At USP, both Ron and Marjorie were indefatigable advocates of a decentralized university with Ron writing and teaching one of the first degree level correspondence courses offered by USP Extension, *An Introduction to Pacific Land Tenure* in 1974. At the same time,

Marjorie worked as Director of the Fiji Extension Centre, then at the Solomon Islands Extension Service, and finally as Director of USP Extension Studies (1983 – 88), with responsibility for delivering extension studies to the University's 12 member countries.

In September 1987, Marjorie was sitting in her office at USP Laucala campus when soldiers arrived with orders to "off the [satellite] machines" as Fiji's September coup was under-way. Uncowed by threats of violence, Marjorie spent a brief afternoon in detention, guarded by a young and apparently respectful armed soldier, musing how she might overpower him and "pin him to the ground in one helpless pile of jungle greens."

For their 20 plus years in Suva, Ron and Marjorie's home at 6 Mariko Street, was a refuge for Pacific students— in the words of former USP Cook Islands Director John Herrmann— "a marae, in essence 'a home away from home' for many students and staff members from across the region ... [providing] a homely outing, a quiet exchange, some informal counselling, and above all else, some island songs from home."

Following her retirement from USP in 1988, Marjorie was appointed Senior Lecturer and Foundation Director at the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland (1990 – 1993).

Returning to the Cook Islands she was appointed Deputy Chair of the Cook Islands Media Council, a member of the Biodiversity Committee, and of the Education Sector Review, the Higher Appointments Committee, the Cultural and Historic Places Trust, and the Cook Islands Research Association while also supporting innumerable NGOs and lecturing at USP Cook Islands.

Following Ron's death in 2009, she co-edited (with Rod Dixon and Linda Crowl) a book on his life and work, entitled *Ron Crocombe: E Toa: Pacific Writings to Celebrate His Life and Work*.

Despite advancing age, Marjorie continued to champion poetry and literature, and, as Rachel Reeves noted, remained "outspoken about encouraging Pacific writers to analyse contemporary life through poetry, art and stories." This bore added fruit in 2003 with the publication of the 400 page *Akono'anga Māori – Cook Islands Culture* featuring 25 local authors writing on aspects of Cook Islands culture, economy and society, followed in 2016 by *Art and Architecture of the Cook Islands* (co-edited again with Rod Dixon and Linda Crowl).

Among her honours, Marjorie was named by *Island Business* their 1990 Pacific Islands Woman of the Year, and in 2000 the Cook Islands Business and Professional Women's Association as their Woman of the Year. In the 2009 New Year Honours List, Marjorie was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the Cook Islands, the Pacific, education, literature and the community

In 2011, her alma mater honoured her with the award of a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) in recognition of "her exceptional academic, literary



and community achievements". The citation included 6 full pages recording all of Marjorie's published works covering subject areas including Pacific History, Pacific Literature, Education, Current Affairs, Information Technology, and Pacific Women as well as 22 edited publications.

The following year, USP Cook Islands campus commissioned a full-length portrait from the Pacific artist Nanette Lela'ulu. The artist pictured Marjorie in doctoral robes with bare feet on a woven mat emphasizing her 'groundedness' in the Pacific. Ron's empty chair standing beside her in the portrait depicted the now absent 'other half' of a 50 year partnership.

On the University's 50th Anniversary in 2018, USP Cook Islands celebrated Marjorie's pivotal role in the development of Pacific Literature with publication of the book *Mana – 50 Years of Cook Islands Writing*, a tribute to Marjorie Crocombe.

In the same year, Marjorie fulfilled another goal by successfully lobbying the University to develop a full degree programme in her much-loved Cook Islands Māori language. Attending the opening of the Confucius Classroom at USP Cook Islands, Marjorie took the opportunity to question the Vice Chancellor as to why the University taught Chinese but not Pacific languages. As the University approached its 50th Anniversary, she argued, that the teaching of Pacific vernacular language programmes would help affirm the University's commitment to

regionalism. The Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna had been recently installed in the largely ceremonial, yet influential, role of Chancellor of the University and Marjorie was quick to lobby him for a degree in Cook Islands Māori. The degree was introduced in 2018 and once established, was followed by Tongan and Niuafo'ou, Vagahau Niue, and Rotuman. The first students with a Diploma in Cook Islands Māori graduated in 2021.

Anyone who has borrowed books from the Crocombe's extensive library will have noticed an Ex-Libris plate on the inside front cover of each book containing the words of the French-American Quaker missionary Stephen Grellet, which reads—"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again."

In living a fulfilling life, not deferring nor neglecting

but actively seizing opportunities to do good, helping innumerable lives along the way, Marjorie and Ron lived up to their exacting life motto. Their combined efforts have impacted and inspired uncountable others. We were privileged to know them.

Marjorie is survived by three children, six grandsons and four great-grandchildren.

ROD DIXON

FORMER DIRECTOR, USP COOK ISLANDS MANGAIA,
COOK ISLANDS

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(above left)

USP Cook Islands
Campus Librarian Tai
Parima sits beneath
portrait of late Marjorie
Crocombe by artist
Nanette Lela'ulu.

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