

# The Pacific collections of the National Library of Australia

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## Abstract

Over the last century the National Library of Australia has amassed rich and diverse holdings of manuscripts, printed and pictorial material relating to the Pacific. These holdings have derived in large part from the exertions of private collectors like E.A. Petherick, Sir John Ferguson and Sir Rex Nan Kivell, strongly supplemented by the Library's initiation or support of copying projects, the donation and purchase of the manuscripts and pictorial material of individuals associated with the Pacific and, particularly in and from the 1990s, active pursuit of Pacific-published material through acquisition arrangements and trips.

In addition to their intrinsic interest, the Pacific collections of the National Library reflect individual specialist research interest in the region, Australia's formal political, economic and cultural association with the islands and people of the Pacific, and Australian perceptions of and participation in the Pacific region more generally.

This paper surveys the Library's Pacific holdings and, with particular focus on manuscript collections, discusses what they suggest about these associations, perceptions and interests, and how they have changed over time. It also describes the Library's participation in recent

collaborative research ventures like the South Seas Project and its current focus on improving access to its collections.

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The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library – whose collections were to form the foundation of the National Library of Australia on its establishment in 1960 – incorporated the Pacific into its collecting profile from its inception. This reflected the British settlement of Australia as one outcome of a period of intensive exploration of the Pacific Ocean, and a natural interest by those who became “Australians” in both their own beginnings and the existing people and physical world of their region. It was an interest shared by those whose privately formed “Australiana” collections included material that would become, over the next 50 years, the basis of the Library’s Pacific collections – Edward Augustus Petherick, Rex Nan Kivell and John Alexander Ferguson.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Library’s Pacific collecting also reflected a new awareness of Australia’s contemporary geographical reality and strategic interests. The war of 1939-45 revealed the gaps in information about both the Pacific Islands and South-East Asia, and identification and acquisition of current material about these regions was a significant focus during the war and in the immediate post-war period. By this time Australia already had a special interest in its closest Pacific neighbour, Papua New Guinea, with administrative responsibilities from 1906 until independence in 1975. This special relationship and the other areas of Australian interest and involvement – evangelical, trading, educational, linguistic, anthropological – were also reflected in the material acquired and actively sought by the Library.

In these post war years, a further dimension was added to the Library’s collecting by its initiation or support of projects to identify, copy and make available for research, archival and rare printed materials relating to Australia and the Pacific: the Australian Joint Copying Project, the Pacific Manuscript Bureau microfilming project and, most recently and in a new guise, the South Seas Project. Simultaneously with these initiatives, and while continuing to supplement the great formed collections, the focus of more recent acquisitions has been on government

publications, maps, newspapers and printed books generated by and about the individual Island nations and people. Australian publications relating to the Pacific have been received under legal deposit since the passage of the Copyright Act of 1912. The acquisition of Papua New Guinea works published after 1975 and those of other independent territories elsewhere in the Pacific has proven more problematic, but is facilitated by use of suppliers, gift and exchange agreements, direct subscriptions, and acquisition visits.

This long period of interest and acquisition is reflected in the articulation of the collecting policy and strategic directions of the Library. The first formal statement of the Library's 'selection profile' in 1980 gave the South Pacific ("Pacifcana") a priority A2 rating, second only to Australian materials.<sup>i</sup> This special role has been preserved in the current statement of the Library's policy, which reiterates that "The Library's interest in the Pacific is long-standing and reflects historical, economic and cultural links to countries in Australia's geographic region" and that it is "committed to collecting at research level for all the countries and territories of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia".<sup>ii</sup>

As this summary account of a century of collecting suggests, there has been an enduring interest in and commitment to collecting Pacific research material. There have, however, been influences and shifts in emphasis that have affected the nature of the collections and that can be seen perhaps to reflect something of Australia's changing interest in and awareness of the Pacific region and its place in it.

The collecting aims of the foundation Commonwealth Parliamentary Library were ambitious: the objective was "a great Public Library, on the lines of the world-famous Library of Congress at Washington"<sup>iii</sup>. Special attention was given to "works in any way relating to *Australasia*" and works on the history and geography of New Guinea, Polynesia and Fiji, and on Australasian and Polynesian languages, were a significant part of the collection as recorded in the first published catalogue.<sup>iv</sup> The resources of the fledgling library were, however, very small, and these works

still only amounted to 100 or so titles. It took the gift of E.A. Petherick in 1911 to give the Library any credibility as a research collection, and it was Petherick's collection that was to establish the basis of the Library's Pacific-related collecting.

Edward Augustus Petherick had been dealing in material relating to Australia during many years as a bookseller in London. By the time of his gift to the Commonwealth in 1911, his personal collection comprised more than 16,000 volumes, pamphlets, maps, manuscripts and pictures. Petherick's principal interest was Australia, but his collection included extensive, if not comprehensive, published material and maps relating to the European exploration of the Pacific, and many other works on New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, including sketches of islanders by William Hodges and John Webber, draughtsman and artist on Cook's second and third voyages respectively.

His collection of Pacific-related *manuscripts*, with the exception of material relating to Joseph Banks, are mostly minor, though they do include a typescript copy of 'st Luke's gospel in the language of Iai, Uvea Island' by Samuel Ella-the first native islander to be formally credited as a translator-author. Of more interest for Pacific research are the 92 box files of Petherick's entries for his proposed "Bibliography of Australiana and Polynesia", for which he issued the ambitious prospectus in 1898, but which he had begun much earlier.<sup>v</sup> There are eight boxes on individual Pacific Islands, and another two under the title "Ethnology-Pacific races" with sources on or in the languages of the islands. Cumulatively these provide a rich source of historical information about any particular island, its language/languages and/or culture, at least as reflected in writing about it. It is a resource obviously limited by the date of its compilation (there are few entries beyond 1911) but remains an important and often overlooked starting point for research in a range of areas.

Petherick's prospectus is a revealing indicator of ways of thinking and classifying information about the Pacific. Apart from Pacific exploration and cartography, the

region is encompassed within the section “The aborigines and native races: anthropology and history, including Christian missions”. His collection and his bibliographical intentions both reflected and helped to entrench the incorporation of the Pacific Islands into a particular place within the framework of Australian historical interest for the next fifty years: as studies in ethnography and anthropology and contacts with missionary and “civilising” forces, contained within boundaries defined by specific colonial administrations.

The second major acquisition of Australiana, the John Alexander Ferguson collection, was a massive collection of some 34,000 printed and manuscript items, the largest collection to come into the Library. Ferguson, a legal practitioner, was also a long-time private collector with bibliographic ambitions. Unlike Petherick, his projects came to fruition, and his *Bibliography of Australia* remains the core reference to printed materials (other than literature) relating to Australia published between 1784 and 1900. Ferguson’s own principal interest was Australian history to 1850, including early voyages and accounts of exploration, with additional particular interests in early printing, local history and Presbyterian and other church and mission history.<sup>vi</sup>

Unlike Petherick’s proposed work, Ferguson’s bibliography was limited to publications relating to Australia, and excluded New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. In his *collecting*, however, Ferguson included “Pacific Islands–History–Description and Languages”, “Early Australian and Pacific newspapers”, “Church history and history of missions” and “Material in the vernacular languages of the Pacific Islands” among the 30 fields in which he concentrated, and there is a wealth of material on these. The latter two areas merge in Ferguson’s particular interest in Presbyterian missionary activity in the Pacific, particularly the New Hebrides, and in their accounts and translations. Much of it was incorporated into his early and lesser known work, *A bibliography of the New Hebrides and a history of the Mission Press*, which has enormous detail on individual imprints and the circumstances of their publication, much of it obtained direct from the missionary

authors, translators and printers: indeed, his correspondence with them itself forms a valuable resource for information, not only about the language work they produced but also the evangelical impetus, especially as he was often writing to people in retirement or old age who frequently felt that support had moved on from the fields where they had devoted their lives, and who responded expansively to his interest.

Because of his interest and contacts, Ferguson's collection has the richest accumulation of early works printed in the many languages of the islands and some rare locally published newspapers, as well as numerous related manuscripts, some of which contain additional rich and unexpected information: reports on the health of "Kanakan" (New Hebrides) labourers in Queensland in the 1880s, circular letters about the Papuan Industries venture of 1905/6, and publications of the Kwato Extension Association, all wonderful glimpses of contemporary attitudes and concerns. It was one of the few areas where Ferguson appears to have continued to collect material to a much later date, and includes works up to the 1950s.

The third of the great private collections of Pacific interest received by the Library<sup>vii</sup> was that of (Sir) Rex de Charembac Nan Kivell (1898-1977), a New Zealand-born but London-based art dealer and collector. In terms of historical material, Nan Kivell's early and continuing special interest was European voyages in the Pacific. More than half of his collection of some 11,000 items consists of pictures, prints, photographs and maps, giving a new dimension to the Library's holdings. The manuscripts are mostly single letters, diaries, log books and similar, relating to voyages and expeditions (especially those of Cook, Banks and Bligh), and other aspects of Australian and New Zealand history like convicts, farming, and the so-called Maori wars. As with Petherick and Ferguson, the manuscripts of Pacific interest other than voyages are largely generated by or relating to missionary activities, especially the Tahitian mission, though there are also more general works like John Wedgeborough's journal of an expedition to and survey of the Pelew Islands in 1792-94 (recording among other matters the captain's decision

to remain there) and the Rev. John Thomas's notebook on the Tonga Islands 1862-73, which records Tongan customs, ceremonies, and mythology.

Each of these collections, though accumulated and donated over a period of 50 years up to the 1960s, was essentially concerned with Australian history and links to the Pacific to the end of the nineteenth century. It took the spread of war into the Pacific in 1941 to give a new dimension to perceptions of the region and to the Library's collecting. In 1942 the Allied Geographical Section, South-West Pacific Area sought the cooperation of the Library, along with the Mitchell Library and the Public Library of Victoria, in the preparation of an annotated bibliography of "all recorded material in Australia on the islands of the North". The immediate aim was to gather geographical material of value for military purposes, though the resulting bibliography was anticipated to also be of "inestimable value ... to all Australia during the peace to follow".

After initially advising that "our undertaking the work is, I assure you, out of the question", the Librarian cooperated, assigning a history graduate member of the staff, Laurie Fitzhardinge, to annotate works relating to the area "west of 115 degrees E, minus Bali"<sup>viii</sup>. Fitzhardinge proved assiduous: indeed, earning a waspish reprimand from Ida Leeson for intruding into the Mitchell Library's half of the assigned area.<sup>ix</sup> At the end of the war the Library actively pursued and managed to secure copies not only of the bibliography but also the extensive sets of terrain studies, terrain handbooks and special reports produced by the Survey. These studies had much information beyond the geographical, and may still remain the best resource for information on places that have never again commanded such interest or resources.

But perhaps the most significant outcome of the project-as of the war itself-was to establish a wider awareness of "the Pacific". The South West Pacific was now defined as embracing Netherlands East Indies, Japan, Formosa, the China coast, Indo-China, Thailand and Malaysia as well as New Guinea, Papua, the Solomon

Islands, Melanesia and the New Hebrides. Certainly in post-war collecting and the Library's articulation of its collecting interests, much more attention would be given to developing resources on Australia's neighbours in South-east Asia and the South Pacific.

In the immediate post-war years, some major acquisition programs were undertaken that were founded on pre-war concerns and collecting profiles, but accommodated this new interest in the wider Pacific region. The Australian Joint Copying Project was initiated as an agreement between the Library and the Public Library of NSW to jointly microfilm material in the British Public Record Office relating to Australia. It had been proposed before the war, with the primary objective of supporting historical research on Australia, particularly the long-running *Historical Records of Australia* project. Now it was expanded to encompass material on New Zealand, the Pacific, South-east Asia and Antarctica, and from repositories anywhere in the United Kingdom. Filming began in 1948, and the program continued until 1993, with the last reel received in 1997, during which time over 10,000 reels of records dating from 1560 to 1984 were produced and despatched. The resulting collection is invaluable for research across many fields. Of particular Pacific interest are records of the various missionary bodies, government offices responsible for the colonies, and trading companies; and the papers of those who went to the Pacific as administrators, traders, anthropologists, naval officers, missionaries, linguists, scientists and travellers.

There were other related initiatives, as sponsorship of research in Spanish archives during the 1950s and 1960s to identify and microfilm documents relating to early Spanish exploration of the Pacific Ocean, and an agreement with the South Pacific Commission in 1957 to receive and preserve the microfilms it was making of manuscripts of likely interest. The Library also funded, in partnership with the Australian National University, the preparation by Phyllis Mander-Jones of *Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, which provided a guide for both the Project and research users of the sources identified.<sup>x</sup> This resulted in the identification and copying of such papers as those of James Hornell on Polynesian canoes, of Arthur Grimble on Gilbertese magic, poetry and song, and

Sir George Seymour on Anglo-French relations in Tahiti and to the possible annexation of the "Sandwich Islands" by the United States.

The most important and enduring undertaking in relation to the Pacific, however, was the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB) project. The Bureau was founded in 1968 on the initiative of the School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University to identify and copy contemporary and historical records, private papers and rare published material relating to the Pacific Islands held in the islands and elsewhere. Like the preceding projects, the initiative was by historians for historical research, but in this case, research specific to the Pacific Islands. The PMB was the first to focus on the Islands both as subject and source, and to actually visit them to locate material. It has not only greatly strengthened the available resources on areas long collected, but encompassed bodies previously overlooked, sought out the papers of individual traders, planters, whalers, minor officials, settlers associations and trade union organisations, and extended collecting to newspaper clippings and printed material.

The Library was one of the six original members (sponsors) and continues its support of a project that has become the most significant source of archival and historical documentation of the region, for the Library and many other institutions: arguably, the best expenditure of any of its Pacific acquisitions programs. Further significant resources of specific Pacific relevance acquired in microform include the Trust Territories of Micronesia Archives, records of the Western Pacific High Commission, and German Foreign Ministry archives on the administration of Samoa and other German Pacific "possessions" and Anglo-German relations in the Pacific generally between 1867.

Parallel with these manuscript copying projects, the Library has maintained an interest in collecting original and printed material, but with some significant drawing in of its collecting range. Many single documents and some small collections of Manuscripts were received with the Nan Kivell and Ferguson collections, relating especially to Pacific Ocean exploration and early missionary presence in Tahiti, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. Many more papers have been acquired in subsequent years, largely by donation. The largest body of material still relates to missions-official records of mission societies, and papers of individual missionaries and missionary teachers and doctors spanning some 150 years, many valuable for their information on broader language, education, social, cultural and sometimes political matters in addition to documenting the activities of the missionaries and missions themselves. There

are also papers of administrators, diplomats, naval and medical officers that often contain information on land, social, economic and cultural matters as well as on annexations, government and administration; and papers of traders and businessmen, anthropologists and historians, with original material or copies of documents of interest on areas from kinship and material culture to education, business and governance.

Papua New Guinea is particularly well represented, with some 200 collections: official records, records of companies, papers of government ministers, administrators like Sir Donald Cleland, patrol officers, nurses and medical officers (as Doreen Langley's papers relating to the 1947 Papua New Guinea Nutrition Survey Expedition), school and university teachers, historians, botanists and geologists, writers, adventurers, photographers and missionaries, and accounts of those who served in the region during World War II.<sup>xi</sup> Fiji has (in addition to missionary accounts) the diaries of early governors J.B. Thurston and Everard Im Thurn, the journal of Lever Bros. agent William Wawn, the papers of Lorimer Fison on language, kinship and land tenure, Gerald Maxwell on language and folklore. There is an interesting range of manuscripts relating to Nauru because of the long association through the guano trade, and some original resources on most of the other major islands.

These collections are, however, largely the result of past donations and research concerns. While the Library still receives papers of considerable historical interest—as the John Northcote Deck papers with their superb glass slides taken in the Solomon Islands between 1907 and 1947, or the letters of a former medical assistant at Rabaul with a detailed account of the 1937 eruption of Mt Vulcan—the focus of the Manuscripts collection policy, as of the Library generally, is on acquiring records that relate to the history of Australia and its territories. Pacific-related and island-generated manuscripts are not being actively sought out, and papers likely to be accepted will continue to be those of Australian involvement, in various roles, in the region. Today less than 10% of our individual manuscripts and collections of individuals and organisations are related to the Pacific and, except in the case of Papua New Guinea, where original collections form approximately half of the total manuscript holdings, one would not be able to do comprehensive research without the microfilm collections.

The Pictorial collections of the library illustrate similarly the changing focus of the Library's collecting. As a result of the Nan Kivell gifts and subsequent purchases, there is a particularly rich and extensive collection of images of the Pacific, especially Polynesia, including drawings, watercolours and sketches, generated by artists on voyages, expeditions and visits from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to c1850. From Ferguson and other missionary collections there are also significant pictorial records of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century New Hebrides and, to a lesser extent, New Caledonia. There are particularly strong collections too for Papua New Guinea, including photos taken by Frank Hurley over some fifty years, those of Charles Karius, an Assistant Resident Magistrate, of patrols in 1923 and 1924, Michael Leahy's photographs of ten separate expeditions in the early 1930s, and Brother Ian Carroll's 15,000 or so images of village life, taken between 1972 and c1985.

As with manuscripts, the Pictures section continues to accept images relating to people, places and events in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific, but almost exclusively where they document Australian involvement in the region. This is an area in which we have seen a clear shift from the 1981 undertaking to collect "pictorial material selectively to illustrate the exploration of the Pacific and the history and development of the South Pacific", independently of its Australian content: a shift particularly worth noting in the light of the interest in pictorial records, as both documentary evidence and as a reflection of perceptions of the region and its people, that was evident at the inaugural AAAPS conference and is specifically addressed in a number of papers in this volume. Another area in which coverage has been lost is that of recorded sound and moving image. Responsibility for film was transferred to the National Film and Sound Archive after its establishment in 1984, and *its* mission is to preserve *Australia's* audiovisual culture. The focus of the Library's music section is similarly concentrated on Australia's music culture: the collecting aims with regard to overseas music allow for the acquisition of specialist research material but, apart from some folk music collections from Papua New Guinea and Hawaii, little has been acquired on the music of the Pacific Islands.

Other collections *have* retained a broad coverage of the Pacific region. Like the Pictorial collections, the Map collections have a great richness in relation to early European Pacific exploration, with maps produced by British, French, Dutch, Russian, Spanish and American expeditions. Many have been digitised and provide a superb resource for study of individual voyages or broader investigation of the mapping of the Pacific. There is also good coverage of the Pacific Islands as a group and individually, though this varies, as many of the newly independent nations have few resources available for mapping. As already noted, the best maps for some areas are still those produced as a result of the war (including aerial maps) or otherwise generated during the period of colonial administration, such as the maps from German New Guinea, or the British Directorate of Overseas Surveys map series of the Solomon Islands of the 1950s and 1960 and their later maps of Kiribati, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The current collection strategy for maps emphasises “regions nearest to Australia, including the Pacific and Asia” and the Library does continue to purchase Pacific maps both current and retrospective, although in the intensive map digitisation project now being undertaken, only pre-1900 and Australian maps will be digitised. Maps are obviously an important source of specific information on settlement, terrain, vegetation, population, boundaries and economic matters. They are also themselves a reflection of ideas of place and possession, with their changes of names, division into geographical areas based on administrative “ownership” and control, and evidence of restriction of circulation to protect interests and ownership. Yet they tend to be neglected, whether as a resource in themselves or in conjunction with other documentary and non textual material: Margaret Jolly’s explorations of cartography and geopolitics through maps are an example of what can be done.

In Printed collections the focus of the Library’s post-war collecting of “overseas materials”, as articulated in its collection policy, has also shifted to publications which provide a contextual understanding of Australia’s history and development. Despite this shift, it still recognises the

many important linkages which exist between Australia and its near neighbours, and collects printed materials from within the region as well as books and journals relating to the Pacific published in Australia and elsewhere in the world, and dissertations by scholars from the Pacific nations and elsewhere dealing with Pacific topics. Many publications are hard to get consistently, sometimes as a result of the political or financial instability of a government or a particular department, more generally due to lack of printing, publishing and distribution facilities. Publishing problems are compounded by the absence of national libraries or other major libraries operating within a legal deposit system, and the absence of regular bibliographic documentation in the region. This militates against formal acquisition, and journals and serial publications particularly can be received erratically-particularly noticeable in the case of Papua New Guinea publications which, prior to Independence in 1975, were received under Australian legal deposit legislation. Today, although gift and exchange arrangements are in place for official publications from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Western Samoa and for bodies like the Pacific Community (the former South Pacific Commission) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program, the emphasis has shifted to purchasing materials wherever possible. Strategies to maintain supply now additionally include a blanket order with supplier Pan Pacifica in Honolulu (which makes visits to the region and sets up suppliers with local agents), direct subscriptions (though only about half are received regularly) and, particularly during the 1990s, acquisition visits by Library staff. In spite of difficulties the collection strength in printed materials is good, particularly official and statistical publications, newspapers (many now available online) and works on history and current social, political, economic and cultural issues. The current budget allocation of \$100,000 for titles published in the Pacific region, though still representing only a fraction of the Library's total acquisitions budget, is up more than tenfold from expenditure in 1990/1991.

For all this past and present collecting, there is no denying that there has been a diminution of focus on the Pacific Islands section of "the Pacific" within the Library, as in the wider sphere, where the post-war emphasis on the Asian Pacific, or Pacific Rim, as against the Pacific Islands, remains unchanged. Strategic considerations and political and economic relationships have given much greater significance to South-east Asia, Japan, China and Korea, and collecting from these countries was a major re-direction for the Library from the 1950s and continues to be reflected in resource allocation. An "Orientalia" section was established in 1962, with its own home and reading room within the new Library building from 1968 {now known as Asian Collections}, and an acquisitions office was set up in Jakarta in 1971. There is no parallel section for the Pacific, and today the acquisitions expenditure on Pacific Islands printed materials is smaller than the budget for Korean materials alone. In spite of rhetoric (and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade "Country Information"

statement on the South Pacific sounds remarkably like the Library's current Collection Policy), the Pacific Island countries and territories remain marginal to Australian strategic, political and economic considerations.

As a government-funded institution, the National Library is not immune to such ecopolitics. It has, however, responded to constraints on the comprehensiveness of its collecting by shifting its focus to supporting research in other ways and to making both its own and other collections and resources more easily accessible. Thus many of the Pacific pictures and maps are being digitised, and finding aids to manuscript collections are progressively being published online, making the content of large collections searchable and identifying Pacific material in places where it might not be thought of. Subscriptions to large general online databases similarly make existing but rare, complex or difficult to locate material more accessible and amenable to interrogation: we can now search, for example, the text of works like George Keate's 1789 *Account of the Pelew Islands* on *18<sup>th</sup> Century Collections Online* or find copies of useful documents on Tuvaluan independence by a keyword search on the Gale database of US Declassified documents.<sup>xii</sup> Long-standing links with the Australian National University to support Pacific research, and cooperation with the its Library in the purchase of Pacific newspapers and other published material are maintained, and specific research projects are supported in new ways. Partnership in the South Seas Project, a collaborative research venture to create a multi-media, online companion to Captain James Cook's first Pacific voyage of discovery and an information resource for the history of European voyaging and cross-cultural encounters in the Pacific between 1760 and 1800 generally, is based on the same principle of supporting historical research as the earlier copying projects, though the support is different in kind. The Library also makes a continuing contribution in terms of preservation, both in-house and by training of the staff of Pacific Islands institutions, and is discussing cooperation with music and recorded sound documentation programs like PARADISEC, described in the paper by Linda Barwick in this volume.

Given its history and primary mission, the Library is always going to be a collector *about* rather than *of* the Pacific. Contrary to the ambitions of its founders and private collector-benefactors, it was and is unrealistic to expect that any single institution could provide the resources for comprehensive cultural studies or analysis of past or contemporary politics and society of each Pacific Island country or people. But while there is much to be done (particularly, given the extensive use of non-textual means of documenting and interpreting Pacific history and contemporary life, in relation to video and other multi-media formats), there are other institutions, like the National Library of New Zealand and the Vanuatu National

Library, and other more specialised collections and initiatives described elsewhere in this volume which do or will play a significant role in collecting relevant material. More significantly, the limitations on what is physically acquired can be at least partly balanced by creating comprehensive guides and links between sites and sources so that, as the feasibility of maintaining any single comprehensive physical collection fades, the possibilities for virtual collections expand. The shift in focus to access also fortuitously coincides with a resurgence of interest in existing collections and new approaches to their interpretation. Even if we concede that collections of written records are alien to the traditional culture of the Pacific Islands,<sup>xiii</sup> they can be exploited for other purposes than those for which they were assembled, and claimed by others than those for whose interests they were intended. As the contributions in this volume demonstrate, there are many other ways to construct a narrative and to record, analyse and interrogate history and culture than through actual ownership of material text.

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<sup>i</sup> *Selection policy*, 5

<sup>ii</sup> Collection Development Policy [1998, revised to 2006, section 6.17]:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/cdp/1998/06asipac.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Burmester, ix

<sup>iv</sup> *Catalogue of the Library of the Parliament from its commencement to May 1906*. The bulk of the works relating to the Pacific, though classed as history, were exploration and description (classification 919)-New Guinea, Polynesia and Fiji and comprised 23 (some in French or German), 54 and 13 entries respectively. Works at 499, Australasian and Polynesian languages, exceeded at 17 titles all other works on Philology. The category Ethnology of Pacific Islands comprised only 6 works plus one on New Guinea (note its separation from Pacific Islands even at this stage)

<sup>v</sup> Petherick's bibliographical interests and intentions appear to have prompted his collecting, rather than the reverse, and he had initially begun work on his Bibliography from works in the British Museum, rather than his own collection. Powell, 42-43

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, 52

<sup>vii</sup> The Library was given custody of the collection in 1948, though ownership was formally transferred to the Commonwealth Government, for £70,000, only in 1959, with a substantial further direct gift to the Library subsequently. Thompson, 460 and Thomas, 145-161

<sup>viii</sup> Librarian to Allied Geographical Survey, 3 December 1942 and Mary Collier, AGS Research Officer, to Librarian, 25 March 1943. NLA Archives A3900, Box 2, file A10/3. The Mitchell was to undertake the area east of 115 degrees E, plus Bali; Melbourne had dropped out of the scheme.

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*, Leeson to Fitzhardinge, 28 April 1943.

<sup>x</sup> The proposal for such a guide was initiated in 1963 by two ANU historians, Robin Gollan and Harry Maude-the latter a Pacific historian and former colonial administrator with a particular interest in documentary sources.

<sup>xi</sup> There have been 200 recent publications on Papua New Guinea, mostly by those who had worked or seen service there, making sense in later life of their experiences. Nelson,

<sup>xii</sup> The documents were supplied originally on microfilm, but since 1998 have been digitised and made available online in full text.

<sup>xiii</sup> Wareham, 187-88, 194, 206