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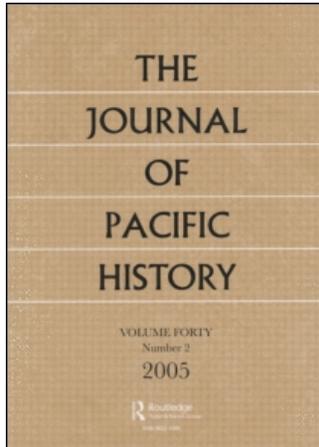
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The Photographic Database at the University of Papua New Guinea Library

Photographs and other forms of media have been collected in libraries, archives and museums across the Pacific Islands region and special collections developed with an emphasis on visual records of historic value to individual nations. One such collection is the New Guinea Collection (NGC) at the University of Papua New Guinea Library.¹ The NGC was developed mainly to collect books and other manuscripts about the Territory of Papua and New Guinea up to 1975 and the new nation after independence. When UPNG started in 1966, there were practically no textbooks for the teaching of Papua New Guinea history. It became necessary for the library to service the teaching of history and related courses on Papua New Guinea and support wider academic research in the University. The NGC started in the mid-1960s and developed into one of the finest collections of New Guineaana. The NGC has three separate databases: the main book collection database, the archives database and the photographic database.

The NGC was meant to collect all material, published or unpublished about the islands of New Guinea and some neighbouring islands, including the then British Solomon Islands Protectorate. In addition to publications and manuscripts, the NGC started collecting private and mission archives. And, of course, included in these collections were photographs. Developments since the 1980s have given a new focus to the NGC. It is now in the process of incorporating the records of the entire University.

The first librarian of the NGC was Nancy Lutton, a qualified librarian and archivist who had earlier served as a House of Assembly librarian. After spending some years at the NGC, she returned to Australia but then came back as Chief Archivist of the National Archives and Records Services of Papua New Guinea. Lutton indeed laid the foundation for the NGC. She began the collecting of books and periodical articles and pushed for the collecting of private archives. The public records and archives of government departments were also added. The archives collection had grown so much by 1980 that she produced a guide to the manuscripts in the New Guinea Collection.² This guide needs to be updated. Lutton also produced short guides to specific collections. The acquisition and collecting policy of NGC at that time was impressive, as Lutton ensured that all materials written about the country were deposited, and she travelled the Territory collecting everything else she could find.

¹This is a revised version of a paper read at the Pacific History Association Conference, University of New Caledonia, December 2004. Parts of this paper were also presented at the 40th PNG Medical Symposium, September 2004.

²Nancy Lutton, *University of Papua New Guinea: guide to manuscripts held in the New Guinea Collection* (Port Moresby 1980).

Lutton wrote about these exciting developments but highlighted the problems encountered by researchers in accessing archival sources in the country.³ Efforts were later made to address these, notably by computerising the library, which included the NGC archives.⁴ Yet some of the problems identified, such as lack of funding and staffing, remain today.

Since the 1980s, practically no new acquisitions have been added to the NGC archives, and the photographic collections and databases have not been updated. A lack of funds and a shortage of staff have prevented fieldtrips to collect new materials. The lack of trained archivists has also meant, for example, that the archives of the Methodist Mission, although collected in the early 1980s, remain to be arranged, sorted and catalogued. The archives acquisition programme has collapsed, and this has received little attention or response.

Photographic Database

The NGC today holds photographs, albums, theses, manuscripts, cassettes tapes, posters, video tapes and other memorabilia of value to researchers. The NGC includes the wonderful prints, lantern slides and photograph albums of, for example, S. Burrows (AL99/11-12), S.R.M. Gill (ALX4-19), J.D. Bodger (ALX-19), H. Newton (ALX 38-5 to 38-10), the Abel family (ALX-1), P.J. Money (ALX-2), J.W. Burton (AL291) and J.W. Dixon (AL21-5). Historical photographs and collections have been gathered from all over the country, and most photographs have been identified and information entered on the photographic database. Holdings include the Richard Parkinson family in East New Britain (AH 209) and the Fryer Collection (AH224) which has important historical photographs taken during the Geological Survey in 1934 and the 1950s in the Sepik and the Gulf Provinces. The Holzknicht collection (AH-224) includes photographs taken of villages and people in the Kaiapit area of Morobe District in 1912, 1916 and 1925. The Frank Hurley (AH-238) collection includes mostly Papuan people and villages between 1920 and 1922. The Albert Charles English collection includes photographs taken in the Rigo area of Central Province between 1890 and 1928. The collection of the Government Anthropologist, F.E. Williams (AH-1-69) includes the Gulf, Oro and Lake Kutubu areas of the Southern Highlands, taken on research trips between 1922 and 1934. The earliest photographs of Papua were taken when Commodore Erskine (AH7-1-42) made a series of annexation declarations along the Papuan coast in 1884. They depict village life and the people of the coastal areas, mostly Hanuabada, Aroma and Suau. There is also a large collection of photographs taken during the 1942–45 war in New Guinea (AH45). Other collections relate to medical expeditions into the highlands, such as one by A.J. Bearup (AH 17). The photographic database also includes published photographs and photographs of historical value held in overseas repositories and institutions, photographs of university life, in particular graduations, as well as photographs reproduced from selected historical books about New Guinea. Research to identify photographs is needed, as well as policies to improve researchers' access to the collection.

³ Nancy Lutton, 'New Guinea Collection', *Man in New Guinea* 6:3 (1974), 13; idem, 'New Guinea Collection: University of PNG Library', *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists* (1975), 112–19, idem. 'Archives in a developing country: The Papua New Guinea situation', *Georgia Archive* (1977), 33–43; idem, 'Researchers, permits and archival sources in Papua New Guinea', *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists* (1977), 19–27.

⁴ Andrew Griffin, 'Computerization of the archives database of the New Guinea Collection', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (1986), 49–50; Sam Kaima, 'Computerization and the archives data base of the New Guinea Collection, Michael Somare Library, University of Papua New Guinea', in R.P. Mathews (ed.), *The National and International Environment: proceedings of the 5th biennial conference of the Australian Society of Archivists* (Canberra 1988), 99–108.

Computerisation of the UPNG Library catalogue was started in 1984 and included all collections within the library. This replaced the traditional card catalogue. As a result there are now several access pathways including the main catalogue, three NGC databases, periodicals, archives, 'Who is who' and the photographs database, Pholib.⁵

Pholib allows users to search using several methods of accessing information from the database. One can search, for example, using a known record number, title, key word, the name of the photographer, location of the photograph, subject, date or book or author if taken from a book. The database includes 'Notes' and 'Provenance'. The photographs in Pholib can also be transferred to modern computerised software to allow for easy access and documentation. When the library catalogue was computerised in 1984, a photographic database was also created, but tragically the card catalogue was then destroyed. This loss creates access problems for researchers during Port Moresby's many power breakdowns, as now there is no back-up catalogue.

Like many new universities, UPNG also developed a photographic record of events and activities that were taking place on the campus. This continued after its inception in 1966. These photographs were used for a photographic essay in 1986, which depicted the university in its first 20 years.⁶ A compilation of historical photographs of the university was again produced for the Silver Jubilee in 1991.⁷

Transferring photographs to digitalised formats seems to be the best future means of preservation and conservation. This will occur at UPNG when there is enough support for funding and staff to allow for the smooth migration of photographic images from different versions of the computer software. To avoid excessive handling, NGC policy is that readers may view only digital images. In 2004, there were 19,057 photographs in the database and more have been added. With the advent of modern information technology, it is clear the NGC will now have to adapt to further change.

SAM KAIMA

⁵ In addition to photographic database, the UPNG library currently uses Biblib (for records of all books held by the library), Serials (for records of all serials held by the library), Archives (for information on the library's archival holdings); Perlib (in which periodical articles written about PNG are entered), and Wholib, the 'Who is who' database. Started in 1984 as the 'PNG Dictionary of Contemporary Biography', it holds biographical information about notable persons from 1945 to the 1980s. This valuable project is yet to be published as a biographical dictionary.

⁶ Anon., *The University of Papua New Guinea, 1966–1986* (Waigani 1986).

⁷ Eve Rennells (ed.), *The University of Papua New Guinea Silver Jubilee 1966–1991* (Port Moresby 1991).