

FIJI
MUSEUM

ANNUAL
REPORT

DECEMBER 31, 1964.



FIJI MUSEUM

1964

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DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1964.

OBITUARY: The Board sustained a severe loss in the death of one of the Trustees, the late John Amputch M.B.E. after a long illness. As the first Indian in Fiji to become Commissioner of Labour, John Amputch impressed all who knew him as an able administrator and he was, moreover, a person of wide sympathies. He was always friendly and helpful and both Museum staff and Trustees will miss his quiet, constructive advice which marked him as a man of great character.

STAFF: The usual difficulty was found in retaining young men with sufficient interest in museum work as a vocation, especially in view of the low salary scales which do not attract applicants with suitable academic qualifications. The increasing professional activities of the Museum impose greater demands on local staff who cannot be expected to meet these demands without a long period of staff training. Negotiations with the Art Galleries and Museums' Association of New Zealand indicate that they are interested in trying to help in this matter and it might be possible to arrange for a short period of training in New Zealand for a suitable person. During 1964 Pauliasi Ledua was taken on as a trainee and he has made promising progress under a limited staff training scheme, which, by the very nature of the Museum's staffing position and operations, must be less than satisfactory. It is hoped that in the near future, the trainees will have their course widened to include librarianship and bookbinding as the Museum's reference library is undergoing considerable expansion.

Ponipate Talei, Senior Attendant, has now completed thirty four years of service in the Museum; his knowledge of the exhibits always surprises visiting anthropologists; he knows the date of acquisition and circumstances surrounding most of the items on display. Ponipate's knowledge and appreciation of Fijian customs is invaluable and ensures the success of much of the field work being undertaken.

VISITORS: Attendance figures have increased from 29,000 in 1963 to just on 70,000 in 1964, although the latter figure was partly inflated by the Methodist Inauguration Week when over 10,000 visitors passed through the Museum. School and club parties were again regular visitors; talks and lessons were given in many cases but the new Children's Corner was not used fully because it was needed to relieve the critical shortage of storage space in the rest of the Museum. Tourists formed a good proportion of all visitors and they seemed to find plenty to interest them in the exhibits. Many overseas visitors did, however, suggest that there be some sort of refreshment service as in many museums elsewhere, because they did find the walk from town enervating in hot weather.

The Governor, Sir Derek Jakeway, paid a visit in March and discussed plans for extending the Museum's work in the future with the Chairman and Director. Later in the year, the Member for Social Services, Hon. A.D. Patel, together with Mr Aubrey Parke, Assistant Secretary to the Member, inspected the Museum and discussed matters affecting the Museum's growth.

Research scholars from overseas came to work on documents, with the collections and to discuss research matters in their particular field. Among them were Dr Gerd Koch and Mrs Koch of the Berlin Museum; Dr. Simon Kooijman of the Rijksmuseum, Leiden, Holland; Drs. Kenneth Emory and Yosihiko Sinoto of the Bishop Museum, Honolulu; Dr. R.C. Green of the University of Auckland; Mr Jack Golson, Mr Jens Poulsen, Mr David Routledge and Dr Noel Barnard of the Australian National University, Canberra; Dr Gerald Ward of University of London; Miss Janet Davidson and Miss Eleanor Crosby of the University of Auckland; Professor Hall-ey Cox and Mrs Cox of University of Hawaii; Professor Wilhelm G. Solheim of University of Hawaii; Dr Jose Garanger of Musee de l'Homme in Paris; Professor Marshall Sahlins of University of Michigan; Professor Jean Guiart of Paris; Miss Adrienne Kaeppler of Pacific Scientific Information Centre, Honolulu; Dr Alexander Spoehr of University of Pittsburgh; Dr John Yaldwyn of the Australian Museum, Sydney; Dr Gordon Lewthwaite of San Fernando State College, California; and a party of four Research Scholars from Keio University, Tokyo.

In addition to overseas scholars, many local scholars from Nasimu Training College, Police School, and other organisations visited the Museum for research projects of various kinds. If more space could be provided for natural history exhibits, the numbers of such people will increase as there appears to be a great interest in Fiji natural history. During 1965 there will be more provision for bird, shell and geological displays.

COLLECTIONS:

The most significant addition to the collections was the ethnographic and archaeological material from Rotuma brought back by Mr A.C. Parke. Ranging from the last of the carved umefe or chiefly tables to pearl shell amulets, the collection provides the Museum with a good selection of contemporary material. Mr Parke is at present working on the collection and preparing it for publication.

Mr Hugh Royce of Perth, W.A. presented a fine throwing club or ula tava tava which belonged to Ratu Cakobau. Inlaid with pieces of old tabua, the club is a rarity of its type.

The Methodist Church in Fiji presented a Fijian pottery water vessel while Miss Mary Edwell-Burke donated another similar one. Miss Edwell-Burke also donated one of her oil paintings. Other paintings were presented by the French artist Nicolai Michoutouchkine, the Wallis Island painter Aloysius Pilioko, the English artist Philip Sutton and the Japanese painter Katsura Yabe. Mrs J. Hermes, Master Christopher Bean, Master Richard Morris and other thoughtful people sent collections of potsherds to the Museum to help build up reference material. The Museum is grateful to all these people for their interest and help.

RESEARCH: While the traditional and historic periods of Fiji's past are well covered in the literature, there is a marked gap in the prehistoric period which has virtually received no attention at all. The Museum's Archaeological Survey will remedy this to some degree and all sites seen and visited go on file; to date, several score have been recorded in this way. More significant though, is the fairly complete survey of a particular area and in this case, the island of Wakaya was chosen. All major sites were surveyed and maps of them have been drawn by Mr L.E. Thompson of Suva. In 1965 further work will be done on Wakaya to complete this survey.

Excavations were carried out at Karobo, on the south coast of Viti Levu where a stratified site containing early pottery was located by Fergus Clunie of Suva. Several periods of excavation have shown the presence there of flat-bottomed dishes, relief pottery of paddle impressed type and botanical evidence in association with the cultural material. The relationship of this site to present day sea-level is not clearly understood at present, nor is its relationship to early north Viti Levu sites clear. Further work on this highly important site will continue during 1965.

Mr Ross Duberal of Geological Survey, Suva, has started on a big project, the examination of and plotting from, aerial photographs files of all visible fortified sites on the windward side of Viti Levu. Over 800 have been plotted by this method in conjunction with ground survey. This material is being coded and mapped for publication.

PUBLICITY: The activities of the Museum have been publicised by the "Fiji Times" and the Fiji Broadcasting Service who between them have been generous in their treatment of news items. This cooperation is welcomed and it has helped the public to become aware of the Colony's historic collections and to help them take a greater interest in the Museum. Thanks must be extended too, to Mr Rob Wright MBE, who kindly photographed the Belcher paintings of Fiji birds in colour. This will provide the Museum with excellent lecture material and will enable sets of transparencies to be sold.

During the year a policy was inaugurated of bringing to the public in Fiji, the work of artists visiting the Colony. The first of these was that of the Japanese artist Katsura Yabe who had been lecturing and exhibiting in New Zealand. The eminent English artist Philip Sutton, who spent a year in Levuka, kindly allowed twelve of his charcoal and pastel drawings to be exhibited in the Museum. The most successful, however, was the large exhibition of the work of Nicolai Michoutouchkine and Aloysius Pilioko who transformed the interior of the Museum for the occasion. M. Michoutouchkine's very fine ethnographic collection of artifacts from the South-west Pacific formed the background for their own thoughtful and original work. For most people who came to the exhibition, it was a new experience in art appreciation and it is further evidence that Fiji, and indeed other island territories, need not lag behind older countries of the Pacific in this field.

GENERAL: Consultations between the Director and Mr F.Holtom of Larsen, Holtom & Associates have led to the first sketch plans of extensions to the now overcrowded Museum building. This will greatly relieve the critical pressure on storage space and enable greater conservation measures to be taken in the future. Such extensions will create a modern research institution fitted to cater for the professional requirements now being asked of it from abroad, and provide a community centre in an area of Suva that will grow in importance. In addition to this it will enable the Museum staff to undertake much more fundamental educational work with both schoolchildren and adult groups. The groundwork is being laid now for a Museum Education Service which can expand with more space and with better facilities.

During 1965 it is planned to issue the first Fiji Museum scientific publications; these will appear as Fiji Museum Records (for shorter papers) and as Fiji Museum Bulletins (for longer studies). In addition, there are to be Special Publications and the first of these is to be "A Field Guide to Fiji Birds" by Robin Mercer, the Honorary Ornithologist. The first paper for the Records is to be "The Strombidae of Fiji" by Walter Cernohorsky, the Honorary Conchologist. Mr Cernohorsky has been undertaking sustained research on Fijian molluscan fauna and most of his work has been published in overseas scientific journals. The Museum is very pleased to be able to publish some of Mr Cernohorsky's valuable data. Other long term plans include the publishing of educational pamphlets on natural history topics and possibly an annual magazine on popular natural history, with contributions from well-qualified people in the fields of marine biology, geology, forestry, ornithology, anthropology and related topics, all of which will deal with Fiji.

PAPERS: WALTER O.CERNOHORSKY:-

- "Rediscovery and range extension of a rare Trivia." Hawaiian Shell News Malacological Society of Hawaii, Vol.I2, No.3, p.6, 1964.
- "Note on Cypraea summersi." The Cowry, Vol.I, No.6, pp.81-2, 1964.
- "Rediscovery of Comus clerii." Hawaiian Shell News, Malacological Society of Hawaii, Vol.I2, No.4, p.5, 1964.
- "Atys naucum forma ferruginosa A.Adams; species or subspecies?" Hawaiian Shell News, Vol.I2, No.6, p.5, 1964.
- "The Cypraeidae of Fiji". The Veliger, Vol.6, No.4, pp.177-201, plates 21-26, April 1964.
- "Rostrate and melanistic Cypraea from Mauritius". Hawaiian Shell News, Vol.I2, No.8, p.6, June 1964.
- "Some notes on Murex." Hawaiian Shell News, Vol.I2, No.8, p.6, June 1964.
- "Note on Cypraea esontropia Duclou." Hawaiian Shell News, Vol.I2, No.10, p.7, August 1964.
- "Nomenclatorial changes." Hawaiian Shell News, Vol.I2, No.10, August 1964.

"Transformation of Cypraea, fact or fiction?" Australian Newsletter of the Malacological Society of Australia, Vol.12, No.46, pp 10-11, October 1964.

"The Conidae of Fiji". The Veliger, Vol.7, No.2, pp. 61-94, plates I2-I8, map and text figures, October 1964.

R.C.GREEN & J.B.PALMER:-

"Fiji Sequence: Corrections and Additional Notes for Sigatoka Sites." Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 73, No. 3, pp.328-333.

J.B.PALMER:-

Review: "The New Zealand Maori in Colour". Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 88-90.

Review: "Science in Archaeology." (Edited by Brothwell and Higgs). Asian Perspectives, Vol. VIII.

(in press) "Maori Arts and Crafts". The Oxford New Zealand Encyclopaedia.

"Maori Home Life and Recreation". The Oxford New Zealand Encyclopaedia.

"Maori Religious Movements". Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Government Printer, Wellington.

Biographies of famous Maoris, Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Government Printer, Wellington.



Pottery bowl or Bilogeli, according to the collector, A.B.Lewis, who obtained it in the Rewa locality between 1909-13. Said to be used for water and for cooking small fish, shellfish and greens. Photograph by courtesy of Chicago Natural History Museum.