

Collecting photographs: The development of Te Papa's historical photography collection

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the development of Te Papa's historical photography collection, from its origins in the Colonial Museum to the present. In so doing, it outlines the collection's contents and shows that the present-day shape of the collection bears the imprint of changing museology and evolving ideas about the role of photography in a museum. It covers the relatively passive collecting by founding director James Hector in the nineteenth century; the concerted effort to build a collection of ethnographic photographs under his successor, Augustus Hamilton; photographic activity by Museum staff during the twentieth century; and the acquisition of major collections from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Such collections include works by photographers like the Burton Brothers, Thomas Andrew, Leslie Adkin, Gordon H. Burt, Spencer Digby, Eric Lee-Johnson and Brian Brake, as well as those assembled by photo historians Hardwicke Knight and William Main.

KEYWORDS: Colonial Museum, Dominion Museum, National Museum, Te Papa, photograph, collection, collecting, ethnographic, New Zealand, history, James Hector, Burton Brothers.

Introduction

The photography collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) is large, containing about 153,300 registered photographs as well as many unregistered, and therefore uncounted, items.¹ It also has a broad historical span, from daguerreotype photographs taken in the 1840s to work made today. However, any expectation arising from these facts that the collection is comprehensive in representing the development of photographic practice, or in documenting New Zealand's history and its peoples, would not be met. Indeed, in these terms it could be described as 'lumpy', with strengths in certain places but gaps in others, and difficult to characterise in an easy summary. Nevertheless, the aim of this article is to attempt, for the first time, such an overview.

One purpose of this exercise is simply to unravel some of the complexities of the collection by setting out what it actually holds and how material was acquired. This is no easy task, not only because of the large unregistered portion of the collection, but also because catalogue information on many items is minimal, with acquisition information before the 1990s often very sparse indeed. Although negatives were usually registered after 1928, accession information was not included. Print material was barely recorded, if at all, through most of the twentieth century. In fact, better record-keeping was often maintained in the nineteenth century, where acquisitions were at least itemised in accession registers and annual reports, though these still had little breakdown of detail. Accession number 1716, acquired in 1886, for example, is unhelpfully described in the register simply as 'Seven photographs of Lake District of New Zealand'

(Colonial Museum 1887–1905). With hundreds of photographs of South Island lakes in the collection today, it is impossible to identify which, if any, this entry represents. Consequently, if this article seems at times dense with facts and figures, it is due to a desire to put on record what can be discovered with a little research: both to establish and clarify what is known, and to provide a basis for future, more in-depth investigations.

The other intention of this overview is to examine the history of the collection's development in order to understand why it has its present-day shape. This article is therefore ordered chronologically by period of acquisition, not by when the photographs were taken. While abandoning the familiar narrative of the history of New Zealand photography may feel disconcerting at times, it also enables a new perspective that foregrounds the processes and contingencies of a collection's creation. These will include how the photography collection has been shaped by the evolving museological approaches and philosophies of Te Papa and its predecessor institutions, as well as by the changing attitudes towards photography and New Zealand history in the wider culture. The end result will reveal a different structure to the collection than that created by an account of the material alone. Knowing how and why the collection was created, as well as simply what is in it, should provide a more complete basis for deciding on future collecting directions.

Reference numbers and measurements

All non-bibliographic references in the text refer to Te Papa files or to collection items. These start with letters such as MU (Museum Archives), AL (albums), O (prints) and MA_ (media assets), or others such as B, C or D, which refer to various negative sizes. For brevity, leading zeros are omitted from the six-place registration numbers.

Negatives and prints have traditionally been classified in standard sizes measured in inches, so these are used here, and to avoid cluttering the text, metric conversions are given in Note 2.²

Defining the collection

Te Papa's present photography collection has developed under three institutions: Te Papa itself (founded in 1992); and its two predecessors, the National Art Gallery (opened in 1936) and the National Museum (originally founded as the Colonial Museum in 1865, and then named the Dominion Museum from 1907 to 1972).

Photographs collected as art by the National Art Gallery, and now by Te Papa, represent a small fraction of the total figure of 153,300 collection photographs, though together they almost certainly comprise the largest such collection in New Zealand. They number about 3755 prints, mostly by New Zealand photographers. They begin with pictorialist images from the 1920s–60s, but largely consist of work made since the mid-1960s, when the notion of contemporary art photography began to develop in this country. They also include a small but significant group of international (nearly all North American) twentieth-century works collected by the National Art Gallery in the 1980s. Following the formation of Te Papa, and in line with Te Papa's founding concept of 'unified collections', the 'art photography' of the National Art Gallery was merged both in its storage and in the collection database with the National Museum's historical documentary material.³ However, in 2008 the term 'works of art' was selectively applied in the classification field of the collection database in order to allow art photography to be conceptually separated from other forms of photography. The criteria for this classification were intentionality and contemporary context: whether the photographers saw their work as art, and whether others at the time did, as evidenced by the sort of contexts in which it originally circulated (art galleries and art publications, for example). These measures are by no means always clear-cut though, especially with notions and practices of art changing over the last 150 or so years. A particularly blurred line exists today with contemporary work whose primary value for a museum is its documentary content, but which is created within the tradition of a photographic documentary aesthetic, and which may be circulated in semi-art contexts and sold at art prices.

Despite some imprecision around the definition of an art photograph, it can still be confidently stated that such photographs have been well documented within the National Art Gallery and Te Papa's collection management systems: all are registered and archivally housed, most are digitally imaged and, as noted above, all are now identifiable as such on the collection database. Given this comparatively easy access and small size of the collection relative to the remaining material, art photography is not addressed further in this article. Nor is technology (such as cameras and equipment) covered, as this material is held within the history, rather than the photography, collection.

A further important distinction to make at the beginning is the difference between museum and collected photography. The term 'museum photography' refers to images taken

Table 1 Collections and categories of photographic holdings at Te Papa. (Figures are as at March 2009 and, except for the history collection, have been rounded to the nearest 10 or 100.)

Collected photographs			Museum-generated photographs			
History collection	Photography collection		Collected archives	Media assets		Museum archives
	Art	Documentary		Digital	Analogue	
75 items	3760 items	149,540 items registered	1540 items	126,600 items registered	74,400 items registered	70 items registered
		? items unregistered		? items unregistered	? items unregistered	? items unregistered

by institutional staff. At the National (and probably Dominion) Museum, some staff kept personal files of photographs they had taken, while others had theirs added into the central catalogue of photographs. The latter integration always occurred with staff who had photographic duties, as they had responsibility for the storage and documentation of collected photography and obviously saw both their own and collected photography on the same terms: as illustrative photography. At the formation of Te Papa, this integration was retained and the National Art Gallery's collected photography – but apparently not its museum photography – was added, creating a single collection of both museum-generated and collected photography. In 2005, however, museum photography was separated from collected photography on the database and classified as 'media assets'. (This separation was at documentation level only – the physical (non-digital) items mostly remain stored with collection photographs.) The reasoning for the conceptual separation was that a photograph created by the Museum is not equivalent to a collection item, but is a form of corporate record and consequently falls under the provisions of the Public Records Act 2005. Thus media asset photographs are now treated like any other in-house Te Papa record, and potentially assessed for retention as archive material after they are no longer needed for everyday use. (Although the Act requires transfer of such public records to Archives New Zealand 25 years after creation, Te Papa has an agreement with Archives New Zealand that allows it to retain its archives.) This approach has clarified the legal status and the responsibilities that consequently apply to both collected and museum photographs. It has also enabled cataloguing of material such as early museum-generated file prints (i.e.

photographic prints originally made from museum negatives simply for reference by staff and external researchers, but which now often have historic and aesthetic value). These formerly sat outside any collection management system but are now being catalogued as museum archive material.

Registration of newly taken photographs by Te Papa's photographers (or other staff) into either the combined electronic database from 1994 to 2005, or as media assets subsequently, seems to have varied, so the current database total of about 201,000 media asset photographs (of which 74,400 are analogue and 126,600 digital) does not represent all the museum photographs taken and stored within Te Papa. It appears to exclude museum photographs taken within the former National Art Gallery and, until very recently, most photographs taken by non-photographic staff.

To complicate the situation a little further, a small amount of collected photographic material is also held outside the photography collection. Te Papa's archive holds 1538 lots of collected photographs, including 258 Theo Schoon negatives and transparencies in the Schoon archive, and 73 photographs in the Woollaston archive. Counting photographs held in the history collection is hampered by the existence of undeleted old database records of items now transferred to the photography collection, but there are perhaps about 75 photographs and albums held in this area. These have often been acquired as part of a broader social history collection, such as the recent purchase of photographs, paintings and a newspaper billboard relating to the life and times of nightclub-owner and entertainer Carmen Rupe.

Despite the recent separation of museum and collected photography (and the consequent sudden reduction in size of what was thought of as 'the photography collection' by

more than half to the current 153,300 items), some earlier museum photography is covered by this article. Given the integrated record-keeping that operated over the first 140 years, there are still times when it is difficult to distinguish some of this work from collected photography. Moreover, the aesthetic and historical values that have accrued to much early museum photography place it on a par with the sort of work that would be considered collectable photography today.

To summarise a complex situation, photographs held by Te Papa comprise either museum photographs (work created by Museum staff that is classified as media assets or museum archives) or collected photographs (see Table 1). Collected photographs are mostly found in the photography collection, but some lie in the collections of other disciplines. The photography collection largely consists of ‘historical documentary’ material, but it also includes work collected as art as well as a large number of unregistered items – neither of which is covered by this article in any significant way.

Beginnings: the Colonial Museum and James Hector

The Colonial Museum was established in Wellington in 1865 as part of the Geological Survey of New Zealand, with James Hector as its director. Prior to his appointment as director of the Geological Survey, Hector had proposed that a museum and analytical laboratory be attached (Dell *c.*1966: 15), and in his first annual report he set out his views on the sort of institution the museum should be:

One of the most important duties in connection with the geological survey of a new country is the formation of a scientific museum, the principal object of which is to facilitate the classification and comparison of the specimens collected in different localities during the progress of the survey. ... In this respect a scientific museum differs from the one intended only for the popular diffusion of natural science. (Hector 1866: 3)

Under Hector’s directorship, which lasted until 1903, the Museum was therefore primarily a geological reference museum, though with a significant component of natural history in general. Ethnology was a very minor aspect and, in line with evolutionist thinking of the time, was probably considered as comfortably aligned with natural science. The photography that was collected tended to be very broadly related to these interests.

The first photograph acquired by the Colonial Museum is recorded in its second annual report as ‘Photograph of casts from the die of the New Zealand Exhibition medal’, gifted by Alfred Eccles on behalf of the exhibition commissioners, and accessioned on 19 January 1867 (Hector 1867: 10). The following year, a more substantial and typical series of donations was listed: five views of Rotomahana from A. Koch of Napier; a photograph of a cement-crushing machine in Charleston; and 12 views of New Zealand scenery by MP, naturalist and amateur photographer W.T.L. Travers.

The remaining years of the nineteenth century continued with the theme of New Zealand scenery, with additions of natural history images (such as one of a whale stranding at Hokitika donated in 1872, and a depiction of moa leg bones in 1874) as well as ethnographic photographs. The total of the latter is low, however, consisting of no more than an unspecified number of images of Māori ‘relics’ in 1876; 11 photographs of implements and carvings from Easter Island in 1877; photographs of rock carvings on the Chatham Islands in 1890; and 10 photographs of Māori carvings across two acquisitions in 1901.

Of those photographs listed in the deposit registers or receipt book to 1905, at least 306 photographs in 39 lots are recorded. Most, if not all, were prints rather than negatives, but the exact number is difficult to ascertain, as quantities are not specified in every case. The majority also appear to have been gifted, though some purchases are noted in the reports. In today’s terms, probably the most significant are several large groups of scenic photographs: a total of 40 by Travers, 56 by Daniel Mundy (purchased), 26 of Otago scenery by the Burton Brothers, 16 by Josiah Martin, and a group of North American photographs (discussed below). But, with the exception of the North American photographs and a photograph of the moon accessioned in 1873 (O.14), it is difficult to trace any photographs in Te Papa’s collection today back to those acquired by Hector, though further collection cataloguing may uncover examples.

Hector was kept busy for much of his term with the international industrial and cultural exhibitions that were such a feature of the nineteenth century following the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. He was executive commissioner for the Philadelphia (1876), Sydney (1879) and Melbourne (1888) exhibitions, and was involved with most others. All featured significant numbers of New Zealand photographs – in the instance of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, as many as 549 prints (Hector 1877: 28). Given Hector’s central role in coordinating New Zealand’s contribution to



Fig. 1 William Henry Jackson: *American Fork, Utah* (c.1869–71). Albumen silver print, 201 x 250 mm (Te Papa O.5904).

these various exhibitions, it is tempting to think that some of the photographs might have come back to the Colonial Museum, especially if they were purchased by the colonial government in the first place. However, this is difficult to verify. While each exhibition has a catalogue listing of exhibited photographs, few, if any, can be cross-referenced to the Colonial Museum's lists of acquisitions, or be found in Te Papa today. This may be because many items were not necessarily purchased by central government for supplying the exhibitions, and even if they were, some were sold or gifted locally at the end of the exhibitions and others may have found an alternative home back in New Zealand besides the Colonial Museum, such as the General Assembly Library.⁴ One definite case where work from an exhibition came to the Colonial Museum is that of four framed photographs by the Burton Brothers and 16 large prints by Josiah

Martin. These were noted in the deposit book as gifted by the government to the Museum in May 1890 and as originating from the 1889 Universal International Exhibition of Paris.⁵

Another possible connection between the international exhibitions and the Colonial Museum collection resides in the group of photographs listed in the annual report of 1876–77 as an unspecified number of 'Photographs of American scenery', acquired on 16 July 1877 and sourced from Hector. These would appear to be the portfolio still held in the collection that consists of 76 mostly whole-plate (6½ x 8½ in) to 8 x 10 in mounted prints by the famous North American topographic photographer William Henry Jackson (Fig. 1), and five landscapes by an unknown photographer.⁶ Given that Hector attended the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and then travelled to San Francisco, it seems very possible he purchased these photographs while

he was in the USA. It is not surprising that such images of the North American West would have appealed to him, as one of his formative experiences was participating as geologist and surgeon on the 1857–60 Palliser expedition to western Canada.

In addition, the collection holds a group of 25 very impressive larger mounted prints (mostly 16×20 in) by W.H. Jackson and fellow North American Carleton Watkins, with no accession history, which were probably also acquired by Hector – either along with the above portfolio, or perhaps later, as 20 of the prints have a New Zealand Institute stamp of 21 February 1888 on their mount.⁷

Finally, if Hector's personal interest in topographic photography needs any further confirmation, there is an album of 30 large-format photographs in the collection with his name inscribed inside the cover that includes five by Carleton Watkins and seven by unknown photographers of North American and United Kingdom scenes, as well as 15 New Zealand views by James Bragge. This album is not mentioned in annual reports during Hector's directorship either, and may have been acquired from his family after his death in 1907.⁸

As befits a nineteenth-century colonial scientist, Hector's interests were wide-ranging, and as the government's only official scientific expert, the breadth of his responsibilities was staggering. Given his use of photography in the international exhibitions he clearly saw value in the medium, but its role in the Museum is less clear. While Hector listed photographic acquisitions in both the Additions/Deposits and Presentations Register and annual reports, they were not included in the main part of his 1870 catalogue of the collection. Here, they were covered in a 'Supplement' that included building materials, maps, plans and drawings, suggesting that they were regarded as ancillary items to the collection proper.⁹ A plan of the Museum galleries in 1870 (Hector 1870: opp. 232) also shows that they did not have an exhibition space of their own. However, they were certainly displayed, as 'views' are visible in contemporary images of the Museum interior hanging high above exhibits somewhat in the manner of international exhibitions.¹⁰ But just how scenic photographs were intended to operate in relation to the other Museum displays is unclear, and similar questions, as well as tensions between the display of photographs as examples of art, illustration or technological achievement, also exist for international exhibitions (Rice 2003, 2007). Given that nearly everything held by the Museum was on display, it may be that Hector simply had to put photographs wherever there seemed room.

Harnessing photography: Hamilton and McDonald

The next phase of the development of the photography collection, and one that was to have a more lasting impact than Hector's activities, was the application of photography as a research tool under the New Zealand Institute. The Institute was created by government in 1867 for the advancement of scholarly knowledge and was given ownership and control of the Colonial Museum and Colonial Laboratory. Hector was designated manager of the Institute (while remaining director of the Museum) and editor of its journal, the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*. The confusing relationship between the Institute and the Museum was later decoupled by amended legislation in 1903, and in 1933 the Institute became the Royal Society of New Zealand.

In 1892, the committee of the New Zealand Institute recognised that reproduction of photographs on the printed page was at last becoming practicable, and 'Resolved that some arrangement be made if possible with the various museums and private owners of Maori weapons, implements, carvings &c to have a series of photo-negatives taken for publication by the Institute in 4to plates' (O'Rourke 2003: 35). Some work had begun in this direction by 1894 when Augustus Hamilton, an amateur scholar and regular contributor to the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, took the initiative by asking for financial assistance from the Institute to photograph 'a selection of pure Maoris, each individual to be taken in profile and full face' (O'Rourke 2003: 36). The Institute agreed, and in the following year its minutes recorded that Hamilton had 'travelled among the East Coast Natives where articles of Maori workmanship abound and now has about 150 negatives' (O'Rourke 2003: 40). The first outcome was Hamilton's landmark series of books: *The art and workmanship of the Maori race in New Zealand*, published in five parts by the Institute between 1896 and 1901 and featuring many of his photographs. The second was a proposal from Hamilton to the Institute committee that he begin a record collection of photographs mounted on card, comprising his own photographs as well as prints made from negatives lent by other photographers. He noted that Samuel Carnell of Napier had already promised his entire collection of cartes-de-visite of Māori for copying (O'Rourke 2003: 5).

By the time Hector was due to retire from the Colonial Museum, there was a good deal of concern within govern-

ment and in other circles about a need to preserve Māori material culture, and Hamilton was therefore an obvious choice for his replacement. On his appointment in 1903, he was directed to give special attention to building up a representative series of specimens of Māori art and workmanship. He deposited his own large collection, and of course his photographic records, and immediately began systematically adding to both. He proposed a studio 'for taking photographs of natives or of any carving that may be acquired' and a darkroom (O'Rourke 2003: 77), and by 1905 he could declare that about 400 photographs of specimens had been taken in the new studio (Hamilton 1906: 21).

Such 'specimens' included natural history as well as ethnographic items, for Hamilton's interests encompassed all the natural sciences, including a particular expertise in butterflies and moths. He also photographed, or had photographed by museum assistant James McDonald, many Māori individuals in the studio, though their names were not usually recorded (Fig. 2). Although Hamilton had written in his 1894 proposal to the Institute that he would use a marked rod alongside his subjects, and 'no garments but Maori ones' (O'Rourke 2003: 5), no anthropometric measuring devices appear in his Museum photographs, and people wear either European or customary clothing. Today, it is sometimes difficult to imagine what scholarly purpose Hamilton had in mind with these photographs, and the images read more as an interesting or curious series of portraits of individuals than as any scientific record.

The use Hamilton anticipated for the type of photographs of Māori he continued to solicit from photographers is also unclear. In about 1911 he purchased, for example, a selection of prints from W.H.T. Partington's negatives, then mostly held by the *Auckland Star*, but Partington's images were taken either for the tourist industry associated with the Whanganui River, or for Māori as clients themselves, and probably not for any ethnographic purposes. Certainly Hamilton seemed to be casting the net wide when he purchased some stereotypically touristic images in 1911 made by Charles Phillips of Rotorua, though Phillips wrote that he had included nude studies because he thought they 'would be acceptable for the measurement of limbs' (O'Rourke 2003: 134).

Some of the most interesting photographs that *were* made with ethnographic intent were those produced by James McDonald on field expeditions (Fig. 3). McDonald had a background that included photography (and later film-making) for the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, and was employed briefly by the Museum from 1905 to



Fig. 2 Augustus Hamilton: [*Portrait of an unknown Māori girl*] (1903–13). Gelatin silver glass negative, 165 × 115 mm (Te Papa MA_B.1975).

1906 as an assistant and draughtsman before being transferred back to that Department. He then worked at the Museum from 1912 to 1926. In this time he maintained the photographic records and took part in a number of ethnographic expeditions.

It is the photographs and films made on these expeditions for which McDonald is best known today. The first, proposed by McDonald and supported by MP Āpirana Ngata, was to a hui in Gisborne in 1919 to welcome home East Coast members of the New Zealand (Māori) Pioneer Battalion. McDonald, accompanied by ethnologist Elsdon Best and historian and ethnologist Johannes C. Andersen, took 'about two hundred plates of Maori types, string games (whai) and cooking in the old-time way' (Department of Internal Affairs 1919: 28). In 1920, the trio attended a gathering of tribes in Rotorua to welcome the Prince of Wales, and in 1921 they spent three weeks on their best-known expedition, along the Whanganui River, filming, photographing and making wax-cylinder audio recordings. McDonald took photographs of flax-weaving and the



Fig. 3 James McDonald: *Whai or Maori string games* (1912–26). Gelatin silver glass negative, 115 × 165 mm (Te Papa MA_B.1643).

construction and use of eel nets in particular. The last expedition was at Ngata's instigation, to his home area of Waiomatatini on the East Coast, and included both Ngata and Māori ethnologist Peter Buck.

In 1913, McDonald also brought with him to the Museum a further 1000 negatives of 'Maori life, art and industry', including images of the Māori village and performances at the New Zealand International Exhibition of 1906–07 in Christchurch (also photographed by Hamilton), as well as a number of cinematic films – all made during his time with the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts (Dominion Museum 1915: 6). He also transferred a body of negatives the Department had purchased from the Auckland studio of Pulman in about 1901.¹¹ These comprise 242 studio portraits of Māori (36 in large-format 10 × 12-in negatives), many with moko heavily retouched on the negative.

It would seem likely that Hamilton stopped using his New Zealand Institute filing cards when he began at the Museum, as other plain cards, numbered eventually to 3289,

were used to mount prints for filing up until 1925. At that date a ring-binder system with cartridge-paper sheets holding mounted photographs was instituted and remained in use for many decades. Prints mounted in all three formats are found in Te Papa today, though, as noted previously, their status as either collection items or museum records was unresolved until recently. By 1926, the number of negatives had risen to around 4000 and clearly also needed some system of filing. In 1928, two negative registers were adopted and retrospective cataloguing undertaken. Elsdon Best was given the task of identifying those by Hamilton (who had died in office in 1913); W.R.B. Oliver (director 1928–47) registered his own 400; and McDonald, now having left the Museum, was paid £10 to identify negatives he had taken. These and subsequent handwritten registers, with their first negatives dated 1902, were used to record the contents of the photography collection until 1994, when an electronic collection management system was first implemented and information in the registers transferred to the database.

A landmark purchase: the Burton Brothers

The acquisition of thousands of negatives from the nineteenth-century Dunedin studio of the Burton Brothers was the first large acquisition of photographs in the Museum's history, and it changed the collection overnight from comprising mainly staff-created photographs to one that combined both collected and museum photography. Aside from the purchase of material related to the New Zealand Wars from W.F. Gordon in 1917,¹² the contemporary collecting of portraits of First World War soldiers, and the salvage ethnology photography of Hamilton and McDonald, the acquisition of the Burton Brothers collection in 1943 also probably marks the first occasion of any significance when photographs were acquired for historical reasons, though statements of rationale are scarce. The best is the Museum Management Committee's minutes of 3 May 1940, which state that the negatives 'would be especially useful if at some time the Museum were to have an Historical Hall' (Museum Management Committee 1936–61). The *New Zealand Science Review* noted that the Pacific Islands images would be particularly valuable 'as they show the native life before it became "Europeanised"' (Anonymous 1943), while the Museum photographer and entomologist John T. Salmon was quoted in the *Southern Cross* as saying that the Burton coverage of Tarawera was 'one of the greatest photographic records ever made of a New Zealand event' (Anonymous 1946: 3).

Such awareness of the historical value of the Burton collection may have had something to do with the establishment of a photography section at the Alexander Turnbull Library. This took place a year after the Burton acquisition but was presumably known about beforehand in the Museum. Almost certainly key was the strong personal interest in photography in general by Salmon, proponent of the Burton purchase. He was an active member of the Wellington Photographic Society, later gained his FRPS (Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society) letters, and kept a photography clipping file at the Museum that included at least one article on the history of the medium (Dominion Museum 1937–40). It is also possible that the recently celebrated 1940 New Zealand Centennial, with its various historical re-enactments and, particularly, its associated popular serial publication *Making New Zealand*, which lavishly reproduced historical images, helped stimulate a general interest in New Zealand's past.

The Burton Brothers studio (1867–98) and its successor, Muir & Moodie (1898–1916), were undoubtedly the most

significant early New Zealand photographic studios on account of both the volume and breadth of their photography. They photographed towns throughout New Zealand, an equally wide range of landscapes (including pre- and post-Tarawera scenes), images of Māori along the Whanganui River at a time when few Pākehā had penetrated the region, and covered the Pacific as well. Their negatives and prints today form the most important body of photographs in Te Papa's collection (Fig. 4).

The Burton collection, including the Muir & Moodie photographs, was purchased in 1943 for £100 from the Dunedin printing and stationery firm of Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd. In turn, it had bought the collection in 1920 from James Webster, an employee of Muir & Moodie who had acquired the firm around 1916. There was some confusion at the time of the Museum purchase over just how many negatives were being acquired, and confusion over numbers has continued to the present. The original Burton handwritten catalogues, which are in the photographic collection of Te Papa, provide one reference point, though not all the sequential numbers listed in the catalogues were necessarily used – gaps would be held under certain subjects, for instance, for adding future negatives. The whole-plate listing runs to number 6583, from which about 200 can be subtracted as numbers not allocated. Removing unallocated numbers from other formats yields the following additional quantities: 581 10 × 12-in negatives; 927 stereo views; eight 14 × 18-in negatives; 89 panoramas; and a postcard (P) series of negatives that number up to 9020, but with so many gaps that the listing probably represents only about 6000 items. These latter were begun in 1904 as whole-plate negatives, but from 1906 were postcard size (Jackson 1985: 17). In total, the quantity of negatives in these different formats comes to about 14,650. They include no studio portraits, which were presumably described in another register, and whose fate remains a mystery.

In the minutes of the Museum Management Committee of 12 March 1943, it was noted that Salmon had collected about 12,000 negatives in Dunedin (Museum Management Committee 1936–61). At this stage, some negatives had already been destroyed or damaged in a studio fire during the First World War, but the number of these is unknown. The quantity actually appearing in the Dominion Museum's register (entered at an unrecorded date) is 8420 whole-plate negatives, already considerably fewer than the 12,000 Salmon may have collected, let alone the 14,650 recorded by the studio, but in 1971 Museum photographer Trevor

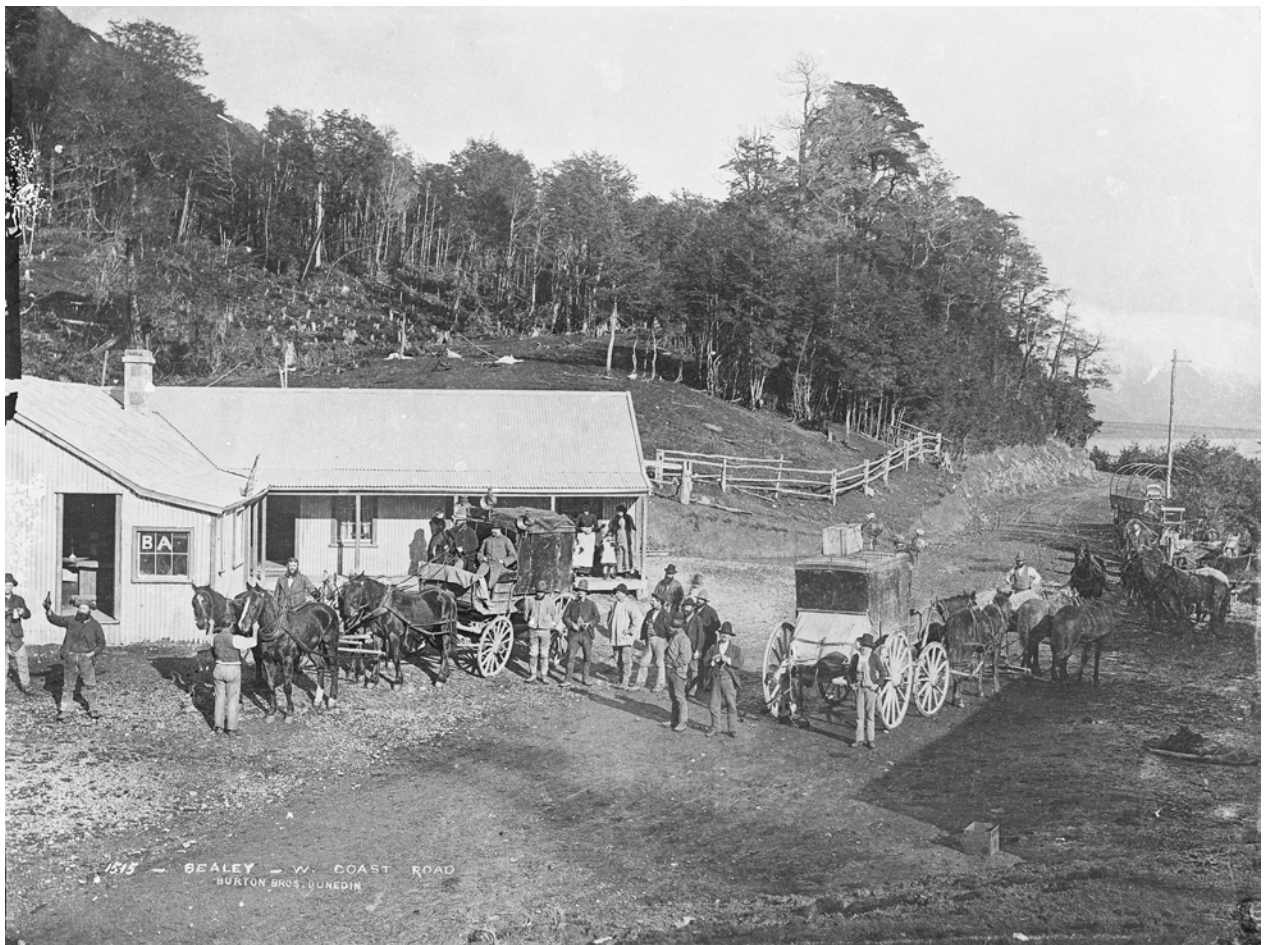


Fig. 4 Burton Brothers: *Bealey, West Coast Road* (c.1880). Collodion silver glass negative, 165 × 215 mm (Te Papa C.15380).

Ulyatt noted inside the cover that by his count 3231 of these were now missing, leaving just a sorry 5189. A persistent rumour within the Museum over several decades was that a Museum photographer destroyed (or disposed of) many negatives during the early 1950s to create more storage space. This is possibly supported by a statement in the annual report of 1955–56, which notes that: ‘In order to reduce the amount of space required for storing the larger glass negatives, more of these have been copied to a smaller size and replaced’ (National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum 1956: 17).

A count today of negatives that have been sighted yields 5006 whole-plates, 18 smaller sizes, three 10 × 12-in plates and 119 lantern slides: a total of 5146 extant negatives. To this should be added 114 American Photographic Company quarter-plate negatives, which are known to have been acquired by the Burtons and hence would have been part of the 1943 Museum purchase, as well as about 40 unregistered

Muir & Moodie panoramas, bringing the final total to 5300 negatives. The tragedy in this story is that the 10 × 12-in and 14 × 18-in negatives appear to have been lost, because not only would these images have been impressive by virtue of their sheer size, but also the difficulties in making large negatives would have encouraged the photographers to reserve them for the best pictorial opportunities. The fact that the larger sizes have disappeared supports the theory that negatives were disposed of at the Museum to make more space.

The American Photographic Company – and other ‘Burtons’

It was a common nineteenth-century practice for one studio to purchase the negatives of another and reissue them under their own name, and the Burton Brothers studio was no exception. They acquired the negatives of the American

Photographic Company around 1878, for example, in order to have a selection of images of Māori in their own catalogue. The American Photographic Co. was a studio operated in Auckland by John McGarrigle from about 1869 to 1876 and is known for its *carte-de-visite* portraits of Māori, claiming in 1873 to have the largest stock of such images for sale in New Zealand. Of interest today is the way the company's images seem relatively unmediated. Other studios that specialised in Māori portraits, such as the Foy Brothers, Pulman and W.H.T. Partington, posed their subjects in accoutrements that were intended to express Māoriness – often using studio props of cloaks and weapons. However, McGarrigle's subjects have a more 'come as you are' appearance, and a greater immediacy for that.

The American Photographic Co. negatives were not the only ones bought up by the Burtons, and such additions complicate the picture even further with the Burton collection today. William Meluish's early scenes of Dunedin are known to have been acquired, for example, though Te Papa appears to have just two negatives that can be attributed to Meluish. Others in the collection that have come via the Burton purchase include 160 by William Hart of Otago and Fiordland dating from 1876 to 1885, although a printed catalogue pasted into the back of the Burton register lists 356 images by Hart, all of which were presumably acquired by the Burtons. Frank Coxhead is represented by 39 scenes of southern New Zealand, especially Fiordland. A.A. Ryan's coverage of the aftermath of the Tarawera eruption is recorded in 58 negatives. Also from the central North Island are 12 of Charles Spencer's 1882 images of thermal scenes. Finally, there are 47 photographs by William Dougall of the Subantarctic Islands taken around 1888. Because the Burtons catalogued the work of all these photographers (except the American Photographic Co.) under their own name, they are included in the Burton figures listed previously.

The Burton Brothers acquisition seems to have consisted entirely of negatives, but like many museums and libraries, Te Papa also has original prints by the Burtons, Muir & Moodie and their acquired photographers. These include a substantial 330 well-preserved loose prints originally owned by Burton employee Thomas Borrow that were purchased in 1981, and a further 71 acquired from another source in 1987. Such acquisitions not only supplement the negatives by being able to function as exhibitable museum objects, but in some cases they help fill the gaps in the Burton catalogue left by the missing negatives.

Natural history photography

A gradual transfer of the functions of the Geological Survey from the Museum to the Mines Department took place in the late nineteenth century, followed by the legal transfer of geological collections in 1903, and eventually their physical move. The result was a shift of emphasis within the Museum from geology in the nineteenth century to biology and ethnology for nearly all of the twentieth. Hector's founding philosophy of a scientific research institution remained, however, and was reaffirmed by incoming director James Allan Thomson in his 1915 annual report, albeit with a stronger role of public education via displays and public programmes. With all directors from 1914 through to the formation of Te Papa possessing a background in the natural sciences, it is hardly surprising that this was where the emphasis of the Museum also lay. In turn, the utility of photography for comparative research work, publication and lectures meant that much photographic activity within the Museum was directed towards natural history. This includes images taken by both photographic and research staff, as well as a small amount of collecting of natural history photographs. Despite this activity, the volume of natural history photographs in the database is relatively low. Perhaps many scientific staff considered their photographs as part of their personal research material – portable, along with their careers, rather than to be registered as museum records. Other noticeable features are the numbers of lantern slides, produced for lectures before 35 mm colour transparencies came into common use in the 1950s, and the variety of subject matter taken outside the scientific specialisation of specific individuals on field trips; for example, seals, birds and plants inevitably feature amongst the images of any who visited the Subantarctic Islands.

This variety of subject matter, the current lack of digital copies of natural history photographs on the collection database, and the absence of large bodies of images by any one individual, all make it difficult to single out specific photographers for discussion. The following lists simply represent those with greater volumes of photographs in the collection and/or whose work may warrant further investigation.

Natural history studio images were always taken by Museum photographers, but the following staff also took significant numbers of field photographs:

- W.R.B. (Walter) Oliver (senior scientific assistant from 1920, director 1928–47): 1348 images, mostly black and white negatives of birds or plants, but also 214 lantern



Fig. 5 William C. Davies?: *Porokaiwhiri* (*Hedycarya arborea*) (c.1920–c.1945). Gelatin silver print, 151 × 109 mm (Te Papa, not registered).

slides, ranging from 1908 on the Kermadec Islands through to 1953, both collected and museum photographs.

- John T. Salmon (entomologist and photographer 1934–49).
- Robert A. Falla (ornithologist and director 1947–66): 919 images comprising some black and white negatives of the Subantarctic Islands in the 1950s, but mostly colour transparencies on a variety of subjects through to 1973, both as collected and museum photographs.
- Frank O’Leary (photographer 1959–66): colour transparencies of Antarctica in 1960 and 1965.
- Richard K. (Dick) Dell (museum conchologist from 1947, director 1966–80): 1531 images, mostly colour transparencies, both museum and collected, from 1958 to 1974, many covering Antarctica and the Subantarctic Islands.
- Frederick C. Kinsky (ornithologist 1955–76): black and white negatives from 1951 to 1961, all of birds.
- John (Jock) Moreland (ichthyologist 1951–81): 958

images, mostly colour transparencies from the 1950s to 1978 taken on the Subantarctic Islands, the Kermadecs, the Chathams and Stephens Island.

- Smaller quantities of images registered as museum photographs include those by Francis Tomlinson from 1891 to 1937; Bernard Osborne in the 1920s; ornithologist Edgar Stead’s lantern slides of birds c.1929; Charles Lindsay (taxidermist 1927–66); and Robert Taylor’s 35 mm Antarctic photographs taken in 1959–60. Since the 1970s, few images taken by natural history staff appear to have been added to the register of museum photography, except until very recently.

Some quantities of natural history photographs have also been collected from non-staff, though acquisition information is often missing (Fig. 5). Significant numbers include those by:

- Algernon Gifford (1861–1948, astronomer and explorer): 489 lantern slides of South Island backcountry landscapes (1890s?).
- Henry Matthews (1861–1934, botanist): 288 negatives taken in 1917–28 of plants.
- Leonard Cockayne (1855–1934, botanist): 577 negatives and five lantern slides, mostly dated c.1922.
- Herbert Guthrie-Smith (1862–1940, naturalist and bird-watcher): 561 negatives from c.1910 to c.1930 of birds.
- Patrick Marshall (1869–1950, geologist): mostly volcanic landforms taken in the 1930s.
- Charles Fleming (1916–87, geologist, ornithologist, conchologist and entomologist): 173 negatives and 1496 colour transparencies of landscapes, birds and plants, ranging from 1928 to 1987.
- Philip Poppleton (b. 1922): 147 colour transparencies taken in the Subantarctic Islands 1956–60.
- Richard Sharell (1893–1986, naturalist): a variety of subjects from the 1950s to 1981 on colour transparency, as well as dramatised black and white photographs of flora and fauna, and 65 museum colour transparencies of Little Barrier Island scenes and gannets at Cape Kidnappers.
- Kenneth Bigwood (1920–92, photographer): 122 black and white prints of birds.
- Bruce Given (1916–2001, entomologist): 530 colour transparencies from the 1970s, and about 2600 unregistered black and white prints, generally of insects.

It is difficult to assess the value of all this photographic work today without the advice of subject experts. Much will have

been superseded by developments in photographic technology that enable better photographs of specimens to be taken. However, some images, especially those that suggest historical population densities or distributions of plants or animals, may be of great value to specialists. And others may have value within a history of photography as examples of scientific photography of their time.

Thomas Andrew and photography of the Pacific

The Dominion Museum had a strong Pacific collection, subsumed under the rubric 'Foreign ethnology' and within the purview of the ethnologist until the separate position of Pacific curator was established after the formation of Te Papa. Images of the Pacific Islands and their peoples were therefore collected, at least from the time of the Burton acquisition (with its inclusion of Pacific photographs taken in visits during 1884, 1899 and 1900). Probably the most significant addition in this area was the acquisition of Thomas Andrew negatives in the 1950s.

Thomas Andrew was a New Zealander who settled in Apia, Samoa, in 1891 as a trader, plantation-owner and photographer. Samoa was a highly visited place in the decades around 1900, and a strong demand existed for souvenir images of the Pacific (Fig. 6). Andrew took many studio portraits of Samoans to satisfy this market, as well as making topographical images and covering political events. His photographs of locals have a more relaxed air and carefully posed nature than the well-known images made by Alfred Burton on his brief visit in 1884.

In 1951, John C. Yaldwyn, later director of the National Museum, was in Samoa and was shown a suitcase full of negatives and some prints by the executor of Andrew's estate, who had an arrangement to send them to the Canterbury Museum. Yaldwyn assisted by packing and shipping them to Christchurch, but it appears they were subsequently transferred to the Dominion Museum later in the 1950s.¹³ Then, in 1980, as a result of a newspaper article about Thomas Andrew, a descendant wrote to the National Museum to say they had Andrew material and were prepared to offer it as a gift. This included four Andrew albums, as well as over 100 loose prints, panorama prints and a handful of negatives. Further gifts were made in 1996 by two additional descendants, bringing the total of Andrew material today to 418 loose prints (some reputedly platinum prints, but this needs verifying), 104 panorama film negatives (possibly mostly



Fig. 6 Thomas Andrew: *Talolo* (1891–97). Gelatin silver glass negative, 215 x 165 mm (Te Papa C.1415).

collected by Dominion Museum ethnologist Terence Barrow in the 1950s), four albums, 27 panorama prints, and 174 glass negatives, usually whole plate in size and often with emulsion badly cracked and flaking around the edges.

Other photographers of the Pacific Islands whose work appears in the collection include:

- George Crummer (amateur photographer, resident in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, from 1890): an album and 227 (now badly deteriorated) negatives taken between 1896 and c.1914, apparently gifted to the Museum by the National Film Unit around 1980.
- Henry Winkelmann (Auckland photographer): 71 lantern slides taken in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands, probably between 1883 and 1911.
- Francis Tomlinson: 28 negatives of Samoan scenes taken around 1900.
- Ken George: 35 mm black and white photographs of Māori and Pacific subjects (as for Winkelmann, with no accession information), taken between 1970 and 1980.
- Roger Neich (Museum ethnologist 1971–86): images of Hawai'i, Samoa and Rarotonga (Cook Islands) are

included amongst 2784 colour transparencies and 58 rolls of 35 mm black and white film covering both Māori subjects and various cultures from around the world.

- Tony Whincup: 43 colour prints of Kiribati dance purchased in 2005.
- In addition, there are large volumes of recent photographic prints that straddle the border between art and documentation by Ans Westra, Glenn Jowitt and Mark Adams.

Leslie Adkin and William Hall Raine

Ethnographic interest probably also lay behind the 1960s acquisition of the Leslie Adkin negatives, and certainly Hall Raine's. Leslie Adkin was a farmer living inland from Levin from 1905 to 1946, with scholarly interests in the areas of geology and archaeology. He wrote two major books on Māori place-names and various articles for the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. He used photography as a recording tool in these pursuits as well as to document his pioneering explorations into the nearby Tararua Ranges. But his photographic reputation mainly lies with his images of family and friends, for he applied the same care and attention to detail in making these more personal photographs as he did to his scholarly activities (Fig. 7).

Adkin's widow, Maud, donated to the Museum 6806 quarter- and half-plate negatives and five albums covering a variety of topics soon after Adkin's death in 1964, as well as his diaries. Most of Adkin's other papers and 27 photograph albums covering geology, archaeology, the Tararua ranges and family photographs were given to the Alexander Turnbull Library by Maud at the same time. The Museum's interest was probably in Adkin's archaeological work, since he had a close association with the ethnologist Terence Barrow, but interspersed amongst the negatives were many personal images.¹⁴ In 1978, an exhibition of Adkin's family photography was created by Jean Stanton and the author, and the 38 prints from this exhibition, made from Adkin's negatives held in the National Museum, were purchased by the National Art Gallery and now consequently appear in the Te Papa collection. Further original material was added in 1991 and 1999, when Derek Noble (son of Adkin's daughter, Nancy) gifted nine further family albums, 308 loose prints and 21 negatives. And in 1992, an anonymous donor gifted 185 loose prints originally acquired from Maud, while Bruce



Fig. 7 Leslie Adkin: *Amy Denton and Maud Herd* (1914). Gelatin silver glass negative, 215 × 165 mm (Te Papa B.22607).

Adkin (son of Adkin's other child, Clyde) donated seven family albums and 830 transparencies in 1997. The gifting of albums and prints by descendents reflected their recognition that this personal work now had significance beyond their own family circles. Today, the total of Adkin material held by Te Papa is 6827 negatives, 22 albums, 806 loose original prints, 831 transparencies and the 38 modern exhibition prints.

At about the same time as the Adkin negatives were acquired, Terence Barrow collected 672 negatives and 14 prints covering Māori subjects from William (Bill) Hall Raine's former studio in Willis Street, Wellington.¹⁵ Hall Raine was a well-known commercial photographer, who operated his studio from 1934 until his death in 1955. He photographed a wide range of subjects, and is remembered particularly for his coverage of Wellington social events in the 1930s and 1940s. However, he also photographed many hui and other Māori subjects in the lower half of the North Island (Fig. 8). He was commissioned, for example, by the Māori Purposes Fund Board to photograph carvings in East



Fig. 8 William Hall Raine: *Maori carvers carving the poupou for Te Ikaroa-a-Maui, Waitara (c.1948)*. Gelatin silver negative, 115 × 165 mm (Te Papa B.13045).

Coast meeting houses. He was also a friend of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana and photographed a number of Rātana Church events. The Alexander Turnbull Library acquired about 4000 of Hall Raine's negatives and prints in 1956 and further negatives in the 1970s, so when making his selection Barrow either ignored other subject matter or, in turn, the Māori material had been left by the Library.

Collecting photography as history: Burt, Butler, Digby, Bragge

Collecting and displaying Pākehā history was never a major activity at the Museum. In Hector's 1870 plan of the galleries, the nearest thing to a history exhibit seems to be a cabinet devoted to coins. For Hamilton, the Museum did have a place for history, albeit a small one. In a 1912 memo

to the Department of Internal Affairs, his list of collection categories included: 'Special collections of a limited size in: general ethnology [as distinct from Māori and Pacific]; general numismatics; specimens illustrating the history of the Dominion' (Dell c.1966: 115). Thomson's manifesto for Museum development, contained in his 1915 annual report, was more specific and affirmative: 'Any specimens, manuscripts, log-books, old newspapers, photographs, prints or pictures which illustrate early New Zealand history are manifestly within the scope of Museum collections' (Dominion Museum 1915: 13). However, the bequest of Alexander Turnbull's library to the nation soon afterwards in 1918 meant that most such paper-based items came under its purview, and the National Historical Collection of documentary material that had been developing at the Museum since Hamilton's time was transferred to the Turnbull Library in 1920 (Bagnall 1970: 99; Colquhoun: 2005). Part of this collection was a substantial volume of

photographic portraits of First World War soldiers begun in 1916, and in 1923 this was also transferred.

As for the exhibition of history in the early Dominion Museum (still in the old Colonial Museum building), an Australasian directory of museums referred to the only history material being exhibited as 'a collection of coins and medals' (Markham & Richards 1934: 112), suggesting that it had changed little from the nineteenth century. There may have been an improvement in history display at the new Buckle Street building that opened in 1936, but even in 1958 the Museum Management Committee was declaring that history collections had a low priority in the face of increasing storage space pressures: 'It was felt that the Dominion Museum should be primarily a natural science and ethnological museum, and that if any extensions were carried out to the present building they should be for the housing of natural science and ethnological collections.' However, it seems to be grudgingly conceded that there was 'a need in the meantime [author's emphasis] for a special section of this museum for the housing of war relics and historical material which are not catered for by any other institution' (21 August 1958, Museum Management Committee 1936–61).

The explosion of interest in exploring a distinctively New Zealand identity in the 1950s and 1960s, as New Zealand history began to be taught in universities and books such as Keith Sinclair's 1959 landmark *A history of New Zealand* became bestsellers, soon ended any notion of 'meantime' for history at the Museum though, and the first historian was appointed in 1968. A corresponding interest grew in New Zealand's historical photographs. Dick Scott's 1962 book *Inheritors of a dream: a pictorial history of New Zealand* broke new ground with its extensive use of such images, and in 1970 a group of photographers formed PhotoForum Inc. to promote historical and expressive photography. They published an influential magazine indicatively titled *Photographic Art and History*, which later became *New Zealand Photography* and then *PhotoForum*. One of the prime movers behind PhotoForum was the Dominion Museum's own photographer, John B. Turner (1967–71), and he was also the organiser of the first major survey of historical New Zealand photography to that time. This was the 1970 touring exhibition for the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, titled simply 'Nineteenth century New Zealand photography'. The exhibition was shown at the Museum in 1971, and other temporary historical photography exhibitions displayed there, such as 'Gaslight on muddy streets' (1968) and



Fig. 9 Gordon H. Burt Ltd: *Publicity photograph for Jantzen swimwear* (1932–33). Gelatin silver glass negative, 215 × 165 mm (Te Papa C.2281).

'Wellington 1857–1973' (1973), would have helped raise the profile of the medium within the Museum. The catalogue for Turner's exhibition was, in fact, the first publication that attempted a survey of New Zealand historical photography, but it was soon followed by Hardwicke Knight's 1971 *Photography in New Zealand: a social and technical history* and a succession of titles from William (Bill) Main, including *Wellington through a Victorian lens* (1972), *Bragge's Wellington and the Wairarapa* (1974) and *Maori in focus* (1976). Bill Main became a regular visitor to the Museum for his research, and like Turner's successor, Trevor Ulyatt (1971–79), and the Museum's historian, Michael Fitzgerald (1971–), was an early PhotoForum participant.

Given this level of interest in photographic history, it was understandable that when word was received in 1970 that the Wellington studio of Gordon H. Burt Ltd was to be imminently demolished and its 10,000–20,000 negatives sent to the tip, John Turner, Bill Main and Turnbull Library staff mobilised. Each quickly sorted through the studio and took away a selection of some hundreds of negatives. The



Fig. 10 William Oakley: *New Plymouth High School Old Boys Surf Lifesaving Team* (c.1930). Gelatin silver negative, 165×215 mm (Te Papa C.3307).

Burt studio was founded in 1924 and became essentially a firm of commercial illustrators incorporating a photographic department. It produced shop window displays, theatre slides, press advertisements and point-of-sale graphics, growing to become a large operation in the 1930s and employing 12–14 people. Te Papa's holding of 727 Burt negatives comprises mostly product shots of clothing (Fig. 9), consumer goods and automobiles. Some original Burt prints are also held, as well as a set of modern prints made from Burt negatives in 1979 by the author for an exhibition at the National Art Gallery that was subsequently acquired by the Gallery. In addition, there are 217 K.E. (Ken) Niven negatives in Te Papa's collection, at least 209 of which appear to have been formerly classified as Burt's but reattributed to Niven, since Niven worked for Burt before leaving to set up his own business after the Second World War. (A similar situation seems to exist with 34 negatives by Maurice Harvey.)

The next major acquisition of social history photography in the 1970s consisted of a gift of 5000 negatives in 1972 from Fred Butler, a New Plymouth collector, photographer

and historian. They consist of images by an assortment of photographers, including 82 by Butler himself, 389 from New Plymouth's Oakley Studios, mostly taken between 1925 and 1931, and 30 from the city's Crown Studios. Sports teams are represented strongly in images from both studios (Fig. 10).

The largest acquisition of negatives in the history of the Museum took place in the 1970s. These were from the Spencer Digby studios, Wellington's most fashionable from the 1930s to the 1950s, where anyone of note seems to have been photographed (Fig. 11), including prime ministers, governors-general and royalty. The famous portrait of Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage, which once hung in the homes of many Labour Party supporters, was taken by Digby. His studio was taken over by Ronald Woolf in 1960, although Digby himself had ceased to play an active part in the business from 1952. In 1975, and again in 1985–86, Woolf donated tens of thousands of Digby's negatives, as well as 200 exhibition prints (including some by Woolf himself) and equipment. The Digby negatives



Fig. 11 Spencer Digby: *Miss H. Hedley* (1953). Gelatin silver negative, 215 × 165 mm (Te Papa C.24542).

remain in their original glassine negative sleeves today, with each sleeve registered as a single item (currently numbering 21,972) but often containing several negatives from a single portrait sitting. Combining these with perhaps another 40,000 still unregistered lots brings the potential total of individual Spencer Digby negatives to as many as 300,000.

Far fewer in number, but of equal importance, are the James Bragge negatives that were purchased in 1979. Next to the Burton Brothers, and perhaps alongside the American Photographic Co. and Thomas Andrew, the negatives and prints of James Bragge are some of the most significant nineteenth-century photographs held by Te Papa. Bragge's images of Wellington, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa landscapes and town scenes from the late 1860s to the early 1870s have an evident care in their composition that reflects the technical skill and deliberation necessary to produce large-scale wet-plate negatives (Fig. 12). Such negatives – 144 measuring 10 × 12 in and 25 measuring 12 × 16 in – are among the largest in the collection and were acquired from two sources. The first group of 51 appears to have come from a Wellington photographer in 1955, and the second of 114 was purchased from a vendor in Ashburton in 1979.¹⁶ Two of

Bragge's remarkable 'Wellington to the Wairarapa' albums of approximately 50 prints are also held in the collection (one acquired in 2008, the other at an unknown date), as well as 91 loose prints and 16 in albums of mixed authorship.

In connection with Bragge's large negatives, mention should also be made of the biggest negatives in the collection: eight measuring 16 × 20 in and one measuring 12 × 16 in, created by Wellington's Connolly and Co. Made in 1887–88, and originally consisting of 23 negatives purchased in 1918, this group depicts a range of dignitaries such as Sir William Jervois and Archbishop Redwood in stiffly formal poses.

Collecting photography *as* photography

At the point when they were disestablished to form Te Papa, the National Museum and the National Art Gallery had a combined total of about 68,000 registered collection photographs, just under half the 153,300 registered today. Of that number, 22,000 alone were Spencer Digby negatives. These figures show just how active collecting has been since the formation of Te Papa in 1992, though again, a small number of acquisitions have disproportionately increased the volume of material. The latter include the Bill Main (5452 items), Ans Westra (8300), Eric Lee-Johnson (11,900) and Brian Brake (37,900) collections. A substantial amount of cataloguing of existing items has also contributed to the increase in the recorded size of the collection, as has the transfer of photographic prints and albums from the history collection, where such material was previously housed.

All these changes reflect one of the significant impacts that the formation of Te Papa had on the collection: the appointment of a dedicated collection manager. At the Dominion Museum and later the National Museum, the negative collection had been the responsibility of the photographers, and its care and documentation a task that was fitted in where possible around a steady stream of orders for photographic work. As an awareness of the value of historical photography grew, and information about archival standards of care became available, the photographers sent repeated and largely ineffective complaints to the Museum administration about the state of the collection. In some cases they simply took things into their own hands: John Turner, for example, carried Adkin negatives home, where he and his wife spent evenings cleaning and bagging them. By 1981,



Fig. 12 James Bragge: *Victoria Hotel* (c.1875). Collodion silver glass negative, 255 × 305 mm (Te Papa D.32).

nationwide concern about photographic preservation generally had reached the point that a strongly attended three-day symposium organised by the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand was held on the subject at the Museum. And in the same year, *Pictures*, a feature film on the Burton Brothers, suggested in its credits that the Burton negatives were not well cared for. The film catalysed 20 years of agitation, and in 1985 a large government grant was made towards a rehousing, cataloguing and duplication project for the Burton Brothers negatives, marking the first official recognition that the photography collection had been neglected and was in need of urgent care. By the time Te Papa was formed in 1992, it was fully recognised that it was no longer desirable for photographers in a service department to be caring for collection items, and a separation was made between photographic services, collection management and photo library.

A conceptual shift in how photography was thought about in the wider world had taken place by this time too.

The aims of PhotoForum were largely achieved: photographs were now collected by art galleries throughout the country (including the National Art Gallery, upstairs from the National Museum), exhibitions of photography in public institutions were regularly staged, and there was a small but significant body of publications on New Zealand photography. It was now possible to think about photographs beyond simply being bearers of information, and as things worthy of study and collection in themselves, as historical and aesthetic artefacts. With new staff positions at Te Papa filled by individuals who were passionate about photography, such as collection manager Eymard Bradley and history curator Paul Thompson,¹⁷ acquisition activity increased radically, and from collecting photography as history, there was also a trend towards collecting the history of photography.

The first major photography acquisition under Te Papa was a selection from the collection of pioneer photo historian Hardwicke Knight in 1992. Probably the most important part of the acquisition was actually the New Zealand-made



Fig. 13 Giorgio Sommer: *Pickpocket at work* (1850–65). Albumen silver print, 235 × 185 mm (Te Papa O.20274).

Girvan cameras reputedly used by the Burton Brothers, but also included were 67 mostly nineteenth-century albums, as well as 316 loose prints. The majority of albums were British and European, with a few from New Zealand and other parts of the world, and included an impressive 1850–65 album of Naples by Giorgio Sommer (AL.27, Fig. 13), and a pair of 1857 Francis Frith volumes on Egypt and Palestine, also containing prints in excellent condition (AL.13, AL.14). A c.1880 ‘counter’ album of sample views by Dunedin photographer John Morris (AL.12), made for customer perusal, was a valuable acquisition from a photo historian’s perspective.¹⁸

Another well-known figure in the New Zealand photography scene was the subject of a large acquisition the following year. Over 8300 work prints by Ans Westra covering a 30-year career to 1990 were purchased from the photographer. Westra’s contact prints and negatives are held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, but the work prints give an indication of the negatives either she or her clients considered worth printing at the time. These prints are in addition to



Fig. 14 Berry & Co.: *Mrs Prince* [client] (c.1924). Gelatin silver negative, 165 × 115 mm (Te Papa B.43834).

exhibition prints by Westra that have been purchased on various occasions for the collection.

A complement to the studio portraiture of Spencer Digby was the purchase in 1998 of 3876 negatives from the studio of Berry & Co., a firm that operated in Wellington’s Cuba Street from about 1901 to 1925, although some negatives are inscribed with dates up to 1944. These later images are presumably the work of photographers who followed on from Berry in the same premises, since all the Te Papa negatives, along with studio account books, were found in a cupboard in the original studio building by a tenant in the late 1990s. Berry & Co. was both an earlier and more humble operation than Spencer Digby studios, and the value of its portraits is that they are often full-length images illuminated with natural light, yielding both valuable information on period costume and an open window onto a cross section of society of the time (Fig. 14).

In 1997, four years after his death, the photographic life’s work of Northland artist and photographer Eric Lee-Johnson (1908–93) was purchased from his widow. It ranged from

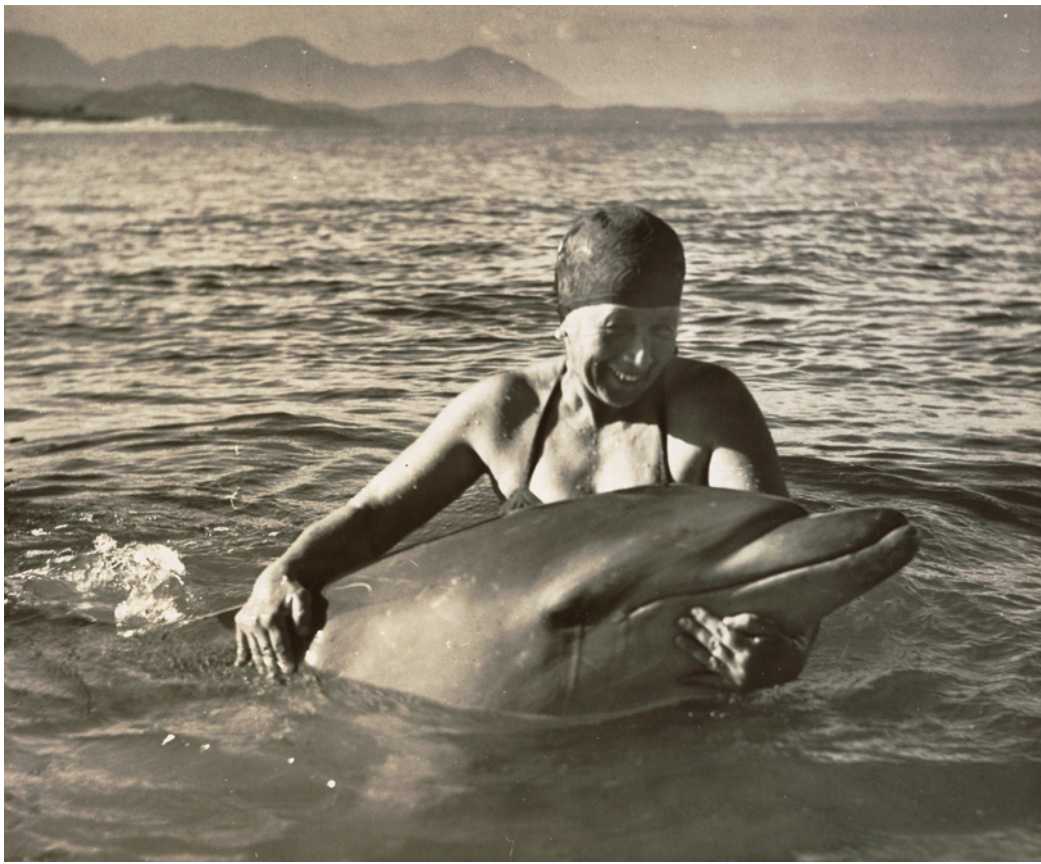


Fig. 15 Eric Lee-Johnson: *Mrs Goodson and Opo* (1956). Gelatin silver print, 240×291 mm (Te Papa O.6623/06).

images taken around 1920 to his last photograph, a self-portrait made in 1993. Registered material in the collection consists of 904 large-format negatives, about 1851 rolls of 120 and 35 mm film, 3800 prints, and about 1600 colour transparencies (with the possibility of thousands more transparencies as yet unregistered). Lee-Johnson's subjects included family life, leisure and entertainment, work scenes, landscapes, and Māori-Pākehā interaction in semi-rural Northland. Of particular interest are his photographs of Opo, the dolphin that entertained residents and visitors to the township of Opononi in 1956 (Fig. 15), and a series on the 1940 Centennial Exhibition in Wellington. The acquisition proposal pointed out that his images of everyday New Zealand life filled a gap between the Museum's holdings of Adkin and those of Ans Westra's from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Steve Rumsey is another photographer whose work alternated between documentary and art, and blurred the line at times. He worked as a photographer in a variety of government and commercial positions from 1949, before establish-

ing his own advertising photography business in 1965 (Fig. 16). He is particularly known for his photographs relating to the art and craft communities of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as for his personal work made within camera club contexts in the same period that pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable in that system. In 1998, Te Papa purchased 307 large-format negatives, 3350 strips of 35 mm and 120 film, and 40 exhibition prints by Rumsey. Unfortunately, a plan for the photographer to catalogue his work as part of the acquisition did not eventuate and no information is currently recorded about most of the negatives, although the prints are well documented.

Following on from the purchase of material from Hardwicke Knight in 1992 was the 1999 purchase of the collection of William (Bill) Main, New Zealand's other foremost historian and collector of historical photography. This collection of 5452 negatives, prints and transparencies, as well as equipment, was so large and diverse that, in combination with the Hardwicke Knight acquisition, it had the effect of changing the shape of the Museum's collection



Fig. 16 Steve Rumsey: *Tissue culture* (1957). Gelatin silver print, 508 × 405 mm (Te Papa O.27055).

as a whole. Aside from the single Westra acquisition, to this point the collection consisted mostly of negatives. The Knight and Main additions significantly increased the number and variety of prints and albums, adding 154 albums alone to a previously existing holding of 98.

The William Main collection contributed over a thousand negatives, including the 325 by Gordon Burt that Main had collected at the studio's demolition in 1970, and a large number by the team of George Crombie and James Permin that supplemented the 91 acquired from Hardwicke Knight. It also added some very rare early New Zealand colour work: 39 Autochromes by Robert Walrond made in Auckland from between 1913 and 1915. In addition, it included 77 albums, with an excellent-condition 1860s–70s album on Rome by Gioacchino Altobelli (AL.61), complementing the one on Naples from Hardwicke Knight; a beautifully preserved compilation of New Zealand views by Muir & Moodie and others (AL.149); and another on early Dunedin with photographs by Meluish, Burton Brothers and Muir & Moodie (AL.48). The acquisition brought a substantial number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century loose prints to the collection, with carte-de-visite images by the American Photographic Co., and larger views by the Burtons, Bragge, Herbert Deveril

and Mundy. Daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and stereo cards were a particular strength: six of the former were added to the five already in the collection, and 24 ambrotypes to the 10 previously held. About 2000 colour transparencies on natural history and other subjects by Richard Sharell, Charles Fleming, the National Film Unit and an unknown photographer were included. Also by the Austrian immigrant Sharell was a unique set of folios and albums of photographs dating from around the 1930s and 1940s, influenced by European pictorialism and the Germanic concern with form in nature (Fig. 17). Pictorialism generally has been an interest of Main, and the addition of his collection more or less single-handedly endowed Te Papa with a representation of this genre of art photography from the 1920s through to the 1960s. Main operated the photography gallery Exposures in the 1980s and 1990s, and some contemporary work acquired during this period was included in the collection as well.

Finally, in this account there is an acquisition that stands alongside the Spencer Digby material in terms of number of items added to the collection. This is the acquisition of work by Brian Brake, probably New Zealand's best-known photographer. Brake made his reputation working as an international photojournalist from 1955 to the late 1960s, especially for his features in major picture magazines such as *Life* and *Paris Match* on China in the 1950s, his 'Monsoon' photo-essay published widely in 1961, and his series on the Roman Empire and ancient Egypt for *Life* in the 1960s. His New Zealand work includes photographs taken for the best-selling picture book co-authored with Maurice Shadbolt, *New Zealand: gift of the sea* (1963), and his studio photography for *Art of the Pacific* (1979) and *Craft New Zealand* (1981).

Brake died in 1988, and in 2001 his partner, Wai-Man (Aman) Lau, donated his life's work of some 37,900 photographic items to Te Papa, as well as archive material such as caption sheets, tear sheets and books containing Brake's published images, press clippings about him, audio interviews, his documentary films and personal photographs. The photographic work consists of over 2000 rolls of black and white 35 mm film and about 29,000 colour 35 mm transparencies. In 4 × 5-in format there are around 3700 colour transparencies, 700 colour negatives, and 800 black and white negatives. As is generally the practice with the rest of the Museum's photography collection, the 35 mm black and white films have not been catalogued frame by frame, only as whole rolls, but assuming that each roll represents



Fig. 17 Richard Sharell: *Stick insects and their grotesque shadows*. From the portfolio: 'Untitled [insects]' (1940). Gelatin silver print, 78 × 100 mm (Te Papa O.31235).

36 frames then the total holding of Brake's work would be about 113,000 separate images. There are few original prints (aside from personal snapshots of Brake) in the collection, though this is not surprising given that the main venue for his images was the printed page.

Conclusion

The above account covers only some of the major features of Te Papa's historical photographic collection, and many other bodies of work could also have been mentioned. The constraints of space, time for research and the demands of narrative have prevented covering, for example, the many prints and negatives by architect and photographer J.W. Chapman-Taylor, the topographical negatives by Frederick Brockett (c.1910), material related to General Motors, and several large postcard acquisitions. However, the major gap in this collection outline lies with the unregistered material – a largely uncharted realm that may be as large as the catalogued collection itself (certainly so in the area of print material). Other ways of 'slicing' the collection could also

have been adopted. Here, a course of least resistance has often been followed, with a focus on individual photographers (selected on the basis of established reputations) and/or acquisitions by largest volume.

We have seen that the nature of the collection today derives from the varying concerns of the Museum and its staff over time. Changing values and interests in broader society also have played a part, especially as so much of the collecting activity was essentially passive, dependent on what members of the public thought the Museum should be collecting.

Hector set the Museum on a path as a scientific research institution but had relatively little direct influence on the development of the photography collection. In his time, photography was a recent invention, and photographs possessed the aura of the new, rather than that of age, and seem to have been acquired and treated in this light: as items for display rather than as core collection material for preservation. As a result, most of the nineteenth-century work held in the collection today was actually collected in the twentieth century.

It took Hamilton to see a further application for photography within the Museum, and as a consequence of his enterprise the medium was largely considered a research tool within the Museum through most of the twentieth century. The integration of collected and museum photography only reinforced that view, and helps explain why the National Museum lagged behind changing ideas from the 1970s onwards about the value of photography as an object of study in its own right. It also partly explains why collecting activity was relatively low.

Moves by Te Papa to create the position of a photography collection manager, separate out museum from collected photography, and appoint a photography curator have put the focus on the collection as an entity in its own right, with a past, a shape and a future. They also raise the question of 'where to now?' The idea of operating a museum photography collection simply as an image bank seems increasingly pointless in the face of digital imaging, electronic databases and ready access to other collections via the Internet. For Hamilton, it was imperative to build up an image file for his research, but today it matters less where those images are held. What has become important for present-day museums – especially ones like Te Papa with a background that straddles art and other disciplines, and that have a more active exhibition programme than the National Museum – is possessing photographs that can be displayed as objects. While the future development of Te Papa's photography collection does need to recognise existing holdings, it certainly need not follow the sort of thinking that led to their acquisition.

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Notes

- 1 The number of registered items at 13 March 2009 is actually 155,880, but 2617 of these are 'child records' of multi-part items, such as prints contained within albums. Given that only a small portion of albums have their prints separately registered, including these at present is not useful in assessing the size of the collection.
- 2 $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in = 165 × 215 mm; 8 × 10 in = 205 × 255 mm; 10 × 12 in = 255 × 305 mm; 12 × 16 in = 305 × 404 mm; 14 × 18 in = 355 × 457 mm; 16 × 20 in = 405 × 508 mm.
- 3 Te Papa's founding concept statement proposed that: 'The unified collections and capabilities will be seen as a total resource able to be drawn on to present new and varied views of and insights into the richness of our cultural heritage' (Project Development Board 1989: 2). Whether the actual physical and documentary combination of the two photography collections was necessary to form this 'total resource' is a moot point.
- 4 In some cases, exhibition reports note provincial governments, local commissioning committees, city councils or professional bodies providing exhibits. Photographers may have supplied exhibits gratis in other cases, as there was the incentive of awards to be won. In the case of the Philadelphia exhibition, Hector's report states that all non-privately owned exhibits would be gifted to the National Museum of the United States, though whether this actually occurred has not been verified by the writer (Hector 1877: 27). And in one copy of the *New Zealand Court catalogue* held in Te Aka Matua Library and Information Centre at Te Papa is written either the letter 'R' (possibly meaning 'return' or 'returned') or price/sale details against the various photographic items in Hector's hand (Centennial International Exhibition 1888: 18–21).
- 5 Although detail is lacking in both Museum and exhibition records, similar-sounding items are listed in the catalogue of the 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition, suggesting that they were first shown there (Centennial International Exhibition 1888: 18).
- 6 The portfolio is currently catalogued as AL.229. Photographs by Jackson are of western United States landscapes and are mostly dated 1870–72. On the cover of the portfolio is an adhesive label containing the handwritten inscription 'American Photographs' that appears to be in Hector's writing. Fifty-one of the 81 prints have the letters 'CM' (presumably Colonial Museum) pencilled on the reverse of the mount.
- 7 The prints are currently catalogued as O.5799 to O.5823 and consist of 11 by W.H. Jackson, dated 1871, 1873 and 1875; and 14 by Carleton Watkins, dated 1861, 1867 and 1869. Like the portfolio AL.229, their condition is variable and unfortunately most have some fading or foxing. They were apparently held in the New Zealand Institute library (originally housed in the Colonial Museum), and they were acquired by the National Museum when the Royal Society

- library (devolved from that of the New Zealand Institute) was merged with the National Museum's own library in 1990. This suggests that other collected photographs could have been held at the Colonial Museum as library material as well.
- 8 AL.2. The cover of the album is embossed with the words 'Views of NZ Scenery', and inside is written, though not in Hector's hand, 'Views England N. America, Hawaii & NZ (Hector)'. Thirteen leaves have been torn out; assuming these were double-sided with photographs like those remaining, they represent 26 missing prints. W.H. Jackson himself visited New Zealand on his world tour of 1894–96, and it is possible that Hector purchased prints from him then, but this does not explain so easily the Carleton Watkins photographs in the album.
 - 9 Hector (1870: 323). The author has not been able to locate a copy of the 'Supplement' referred to in this catalogue and it is possible that it was never printed.
 - 10 MA_B.11506 and B.4141 (both taken c.1895). Photographs in the latter (and more clearly visible in the 1903–13 photographs MA_C.1048 to MA_C.1050) appear to be carbon prints made by Daniel Mundy, of which four are catalogued in Te Papa's collection (O.2038, O.31053, O.31054 and O.31055), although they are not listed in nineteenth-century annual reports as acquisitions.
 - 11 In 1930, the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts asked for the Pulman negatives back, claiming that they were just a loan, but they decided to gift them when W.R.B. Oliver, the Museum's director, pointed out that they were in poor condition and probably not of use to the Department anyway (O'Rourke 2003: 197).
 - 12 Along with various documents purchased from Gordon were 154 negatives and 630 carte-de-visite prints, both mostly portraits of soldiers in the New Zealand Wars. In 1984, an album compiled by Gordon (titled 'Some soldiers of the Queen who fought in the Maori Wars and other notable persons associated therewith' (AL.76)) was also purchased.
 - 13 Yaldwyn says he found the negatives at the Dominion Museum around 1960, soon after he began work there (Anonymous 1996), but no mention of this transfer appears in either annual reports or the minutes of the Museum Management Committee for the 1950s (Museum Management Committee 1936–61).
 - 14 The division of material between the Museum and the Alexander Turnbull Library may seem rather haphazard in terms of subject matter, but it was probably difficult for Maud to separate material (and near impossible for anyone to sort Adkin's negatives). At the time of the donation, the Museum also tended to collect negatives rather than prints and did not generally collect papers. Barrow was unhappy that some negatives went to the Turnbull and asked for them to be transferred to the Museum, which duly occurred, but he refused to transfer the diaries to the Library when requested in turn (Winchester 1965).
 - 15 The acquisition was made between 1962 and 1965 according to Barrow's assistant, Betty McFadgen (Bradley 1998), but no trace of such an acquisition can be found in the Museum-wide accession register for these dates.
 - 16 These figures are taken from the 1980 annual report but may not be accurate, as the 1979 annual report states that 93 negatives were acquired in Ashburton, and an examination of negative titles in the 1955 offer suggests that 63 may have been acquired at this date. There are 169 Bragge negatives in the collection today.
 - 17 The number of history curators also increased after the formation of Te Papa.
 - 18 Unfortunately, other interesting-sounding items listed in a brief inventory made by Museum staff in November 1990, before an acquisition proposal was made, do not appear in Te Papa's collection database. They include a daguerreotype by Antoine Claudet, an album of 10 × 12-in Herbert Deveril views in apparently excellent condition, and a Burton album titled 'The camera in the coral islands'.

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