

Map Collections and Map Librarianship in New Zealand: A Synopsis

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NEW ZEALAND WAS FIRST DISCOVERED by Polynesians who had a detailed knowledge of the land.¹ Abel Janszoon Tasman and crews in the *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen* rediscovered New Zealand in December 1642 and partially mapped it.² James Cook and the crew of the *Endeavour* delineated New Zealand between October 1769 and March 1770 during the circumnavigation of the world between 1768 and 1771.³

Ross has adequately described the detailed charting of the coastline, the major contributions being those of the *Acheron* and *Pandora* between 1848 and 1855.⁴ The Hydrographer of the Navy assumed the responsibility for issuing charts of New Zealand from 1816, and subsequently for the detailed hydrographic surveying of the coastline. Since 1950 the Hydrographer, Royal New Zealand Navy, has assumed this responsibility.

The history of the land surveying and mapping of New Zealand is currently being written.⁵ No land surveying or mapping took place until after organized settlement began in 1840. Surveying and mapping was done initially for and by the New Zealand Company. The company became defunct in 1851, and this function became the responsibility of the ten provinces from 1852 to 1876. In 1876 the provinces were abolished, and the central government assumed the responsibility for surveying and mapping the land. A separate government department, now called the Department of Lands & Survey, became responsible for these operations.

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Because of its short European history, it would be reasonable to expect that New Zealand would have a high proportion of its cartographic heritage still intact. This may be so, but the fragile nature of maps has undoubtedly resulted in a number of casualties—natural causes, neglect (because of an uncaring attitude), and fire. Many government records in the past were housed in wooden buildings which were vulnerable to fire. However, most records are currently housed in concrete buildings. The greater proportion of New Zealand cartographic records are in state institutions. There are also small but very valuable collections held by the Hydrographer of the Navy (Taunton, Somerset, England) and by the Public Record Office in London.

Overview of Present Collections

The existing map collections fall into the following broad categories: maps generated by government departments (local government, etc.), and which are used for their day-to-day activities; maps in research collections, such as the National Archives of New Zealand and the Alexander Turnbull Library; and maps in institutions geared to teaching—the six universities. Thus, most collections are in government or government-funded institutions. The staffing, storage and accommodation (with the exception of the universities) range from very poor to fairly good. Map librarianship and reference services fall into the same ranges.

The map collections in the six universities are geared to teaching (with one exception) and generally have better staffing, storage and accommodation than state collections. Since World War II the universities have experienced considerable growth, thus funds have been available for the development of the map collections. Naturally, a demand for maps for the disciplines of geography and associated subjects has been the principal reason for this growth, but there has clearly been much more map awareness by university staff than by those in the state institutions.

A sense of history has only recently developed in New Zealand and has become fashionable. Many New Zealanders, including academic researchers, are graphic illiterates and do not realize the value of maps for historical or other research purposes. Thus, there has not been a great demand or pressure from genealogists and other researchers for the use of maps. The poor staffing, storage and accommodation in most of the state institutions means, of course, that the map collections are not properly organized and therefore cannot be fully exploited. Sufficient

New Zealand

public pressure and demand would result in action. There is an uncaring attitude throughout New Zealand society not only toward map collections but also toward libraries, museums and similar institutions.

State Collections

Department of Lands and Survey

The collection was founded in 1876 and has approximately 900,000 cadastral and topographical survey plans and maps. The department has twelve land district offices, each holding plans and maps for its district. Many of the plans are regarded as working documents, and have been microfilmed and are on aperture cards. The plans are stored in safes but clients may use the aperture cards for reference. Access to the plans and aperture cards is through the use of indexes and registers. The plan rooms are staffed by assistants who have no training in map librarianship, but they are trained to use the land district office system to locate plans, and in the use of aperture cards and reproduction methods. The main users of the plans are surveyors, lawyers, real estate agents, and land speculators. These people know the local land district office system and can locate the information they want. The serious researcher wanting other information must know a good deal about the history of the surveying and mapping of the land district in order to find his way through the indexes/registers to get the plans with the desired information. The plan room staff cannot assist very much because they do not have the knowledge.

The plans, particularly topographical plans and surveyors' field books, date back to the early 1840s and often contain much information on human settlement and the environment. Important manuscript maps are also kept in the land district offices and there is a very important collection of manuscript maps kept in the head office in Wellington. The department also maintains in Wellington a collection of about 300,000 printed maps of English-speaking and foreign countries, obtained largely through exchange agreements. This collection is maintained by members of the department's staff, who also handle the distribution of maps produced by the department. This map collection is mainly used by personnel from government departments.

Map Collection, National Archives of New Zealand

Founded in 1926, the collection has about 500,000 maps and plans which have been generated by New Zealand government departments.⁶ It is estimated that 25-30 percent of these holdings are maps. The

collection of maps and plans rapidly escalated in the 1970s due to extensive microfilming by government departments. The archives collection is open to researchers Monday through Friday. All types of researchers use the collection. Access points to the collection are indexes, inventories and registers. There is no access by area, date or subject. Much of the collection is unorganized and not adequately stored, but the accommodation is fairly good. There is usually only a part-time archivist working with the collection. If the recommendations of the Smith Report⁷ are eventually implemented, the staffing will be improved.

Map Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library

Founded in 1918, the library's collection includes about 19,000 atlases and maps. Areas of specialization are New Zealand and the Pacific, which complements the library's other collections covering these areas. The collection of research materials begun by Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull (1868-1918), a Wellington merchant, forms the basis of the present collection. The collection is open all day Monday through Friday, and is used by researchers and members of the general public. There is a classified catalog. The collection is classified according to the Boggs and Lewis system and is staffed by a full-time map librarian. Storage facilities and accommodation are barely adequate, but will improve when the new building for the National Library of New Zealand is completed.

The map librarian was responsible, until December 1979, for compilation of the montly/yearly *New Zealand National Bibliography*, Section II, "Atlases, Charts and Maps." The bibliography is now the responsibility of the New Zealand Bibliographic Unit. The map librarian is also responsible for looking after a collection of about 23,000 maps held in the General Assembly Library—New Zealand's parliamentary library. The collection's area specializations are New Zealand, the Pacific, and Britain. The collection was acquired through the legal provisions of the Copyright Act and by exchange. (The legal provisions of the act with regard to maps are currently administered by the map librarian.) The collection is adequately housed but seldom used. When the new library building is completed, this collection will be merged with the map collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

University Collections

Geography Library, Department of Geography, University of Auckland

The library was founded in 1946 as a Department of Geography collection, but in 1970(?) became a part of the main university library.⁸

New Zealand

The collection has about 35,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps. Areas of specialization are New Zealand, the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The library is open all day Monday through Friday and is used by university staff, students and is also open to the general public. There is no catalog; classification is by area and subject. The collection has one full-time geography librarian who is responsible to the university librarian. The collection is adequately stored and has good accommodation.

Map Library, Library, University of Waikato, Hamilton

The collection was founded in 1966 and has about 95,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps.⁹ The library includes the map collection of the New Zealand Geographical Society. Areas of specialization are New Zealand, Antarctica, North America, and the Pacific. The map library is a depository collection for the U.S. Geological Survey 1:24,000 topographical series. The collection is open mornings Monday through Friday and at additional times by request, and is available to university staff, students and the general public. There is a classified catalog. Holdings are classified by the A.G.S. system. There are two part-time staff members, responsible to the university librarian. The collection is adequately stored and accommodation is good.

Map Library, Department of Geography, Massey University, Palmerston North

The library was founded in 1959 and has approximately 30,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps.¹⁰ Areas of specialization are New Zealand, the Pacific and Australia. The map library is open all day Monday through Friday and is used by university staff, students and the general public. The map collection has a card index with area and subject entries and is classified by the A.G.S. system. There are two part-time staff members. The map librarian is responsible to the head of the Department of Geography. Storage of the collection and accommodation are adequate.

Library, Department of Geography, Victoria University of Wellington

Founded in 1946, this library has about 26,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps.¹¹ There is no stated area specialization. The library is used by university staff and students and is open all day Monday through Friday. A part-time staff member looks after the geography library and is responsible to the head of the Department of Geography. The collection has adequate storage and fair accommodation.

Map Collection, Department of Geography, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Founded in 1945, the collection has about 80,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps.¹² Areas of specialization are New Zealand, the United States, Canada, and Australia. It is also a depository collection for the USGS 1:24,000 topographical series. The collection is used by university staff, students and general public and is open all day Monday through Friday. The collection has no catalog, and is arranged by region. There is one full-time and one part-time staff member. The map librarian is responsible to the head of the Department of Geography. Storage for the collection is adequate with good accommodation.

Map Collection, Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin

The map collection was founded in 1910 as part of a bequest by Dr. Thomas Morland Hocken (1836-1910) to the people of New Zealand.¹³ The library has approximately 11,000 aerial photographs, atlases and maps with area specializations of New Zealand (particularly Otago and Southland) and the Pacific. The collection, used by university staff, students and the general public, is open all day Monday through Friday, and on Saturday mornings. There is a classified catalog, and the collection is classified by the Boggs and Lewis system. There is one part-time staff member, who is responsible to the Hocken librarian. The collection has adequate storage and accommodation.

Comments

As might be expected, the university collections are better off in terms of staffing, storage and accommodation than the nonuniversity collections. This reflects the attention they have been given, which has been previously outlined. Three of the map collections are part of the geography department and the map librarians are responsible to the department heads; the other three are part of the university library system.

By contrast, the two largest and most important government map collections in the country are very poor relations. This may reflect the fact that the map is regarded as a day-to-day working tool and that there is little awareness of its potential research value or its importance as part of New Zealand's cartographic heritage. There is a dire need for education, not only to make the value of maps known but also to make all concerned map-conscious.

Map Librarianship in New Zealand

The present staff manning map collections have either library science qualifications, degrees in geography, a combination of the two, or no qualifications at all. There was no training conducted within New Zealand in library science until the New Zealand Library School was established in 1946. (The school was disbanded in 1979.) This school ran a one-year course in library science for graduates. The New Zealand Library Association sponsored a library technician correspondence course during which the student received on-the-job training while working in a library. The final part of this course was a session of six weeks at the library school. Since 1980 these courses have consisted of a graduate course at the Department of Librarianship, Victoria University of Wellington, and a technician course at the School of Library Studies, Wellington Teachers College.

Since 1968, lectures in map librarianship have been given to the graduate students by the map librarians of the Alexander Turnbull Library. From 1968 to 1977, this consisted of one 50-minute lecture yearly. After representations by the New Zealand Mapkeepers Circle, the time was extended in 1978-79 to three 50-minute lectures yearly; in 1980, two 50-minute lectures were given. There are no assignments; students are currently given a long reading list which is oriented toward helping them if they ever have to establish or take charge of an existing map collection. There are very limited opportunities for employment as a map librarian in New Zealand, and anyone seeking more extensive training must go overseas. The Department of Librarianship of Victoria University has options in its syllabus for such subjects as map librarianship, and any interested student can make an in-depth study in this field. Map librarianship training is not considered very important at the library schools in New Zealand, nor by book-oriented librarians. There is a tendency for these librarians to speak of books and nonbooks as "us and them"!

Map Librarian Seminars

Seminars in map librarianship began in November 1975 with the organization by the New Zealand Cartographic Society and Victoria University of Wellington of a two-day seminar entitled "The Changing Shape of Cartography in New Zealand." Map librarians were encouraged to attend this seminar, which was followed by a one-day session under the auspices of the Alexander Turnbull Library at the New Zealand Library School. The following day a visit was made to the

Department of Lands and Survey cartographic establishment. About twenty people attended this seminar at the library school. It was agreed that future seminars should be held, and that a mapkeepers' group within the New Zealand Cartographic Society should be founded, similar to that within the British Cartographic Society; the New Zealand Cartographic Society agreed to this proposal. This decision was made because some map librarians would probably not have been eligible to join the New Zealand Library Association, where, moreover, matters would only receive low priority treatment.

The next seminar was held at the University of Otago, Dunedin, in February 1977, and the emphasis was on the use of computers for map cataloging. At this seminar the New Zealand Mapkeepers Circle was formed, and the mapkeepers' group within the New Zealand Cartographic Society lapsed. Seminars have subsequently been held at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, in February 1978; at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, in February 1979; and at the University of Auckland, in January-February 1980. In 1981 the seminar will be held at Massey University, Palmerston North, and in 1982 at Wellington. At the seminars a wide variety of papers and discussions on all aspects of maps and map librarianship are given; usually about twenty people attend. The circle has issued a newsletter twice yearly since 1977.

Conclusion

The main content of the map collections is of New Zealand. Does this reflect the introverted nature of New Zealand's cultural development or the insularity of the population because of the country's isolation in the South Pacific? The major external coverage is found in the map collections at the universities, which are geared to teaching. The only major collection of external material outside the universities is the large collection of maps of English-speaking and foreign countries held by the Department of Lands and Survey.

The major government map collections must be provided with qualified, knowledgeable and dedicated staff. The collections must be properly organized, cataloged and stored in suitable equipment in good, air-conditioned accommodation. Conservation facilities on a scale to handle the amount of work are also necessary. Adequate reference services with the necessary tools must be provided. Unfortunately, financing for such projects is very scarce.

There is a great need for the development of a national map collection which is available to all. The founding of a national map

New Zealand

collection and the development of a national union catalog of maps are important goals for the future. Barton, Marshall and Patterson, at the 1980 seminar, have each expressed thoughts on a national map collection.¹⁴ The combination of the two map collections in the Alexander Turnbull Library and the General Assembly Library would not make a true national collection such as those in the National Library of Australia, Canberra, and in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. The potential for a national collection does exist, however, with the amalgamation of these two collections with the large printed map collection in the Department of Lands and Survey.

Barton has outlined a proposal for a union catalog of maps.¹⁵ The probable place for the development of a national union catalog of maps is in the National Library of New Zealand. Such a catalog should be on-line, but computer facilities do not exist in the National Library (as of April 1980), and are not likely to be available for some time. Therefore, a union catalog of maps must be considered as a long-term project.

In closing, it must be noted that the author of this paper is a public servant employed by the New Zealand government. The viewpoint expressed herein is a personal one and in no way should be construed as being official.

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P.L. BARTON

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