

Arranging and describing archival cartographic collections in the Alexander Turnbull Library

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Introduction

This article provides an overview of the archival processing, arrangement, and description of unpublished cartographic collections in the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand. The Library, established in 1920, was originally based on the 1918 bequest of bibliophile and collector Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull (1868-1918). Its mandate is to preserve, protect, develop, and make accessible documentary heritage and taonga for all the people of New Zealand.¹

Cartographic collections are defined as material containing information that has a geographic location and is usually depicted graphically. The Library's primary areas of cartographic collecting are material relating to exploration, discovery, settlement and ongoing development of New Zealand and Pacific Islands, as well as other geographic areas with strong connections to New Zealand or New Zealanders including Antarctica. Today the cartographic collections number over 50,000 published and unpublished maps, plans, charts, and atlases. The Library holds individual maps, atlases, and groups of maps, but maps are also found within many 'multi-format' archival

Arrangement

Legacy arrangement is coupled with emerging developments in the arrangement of cartographic collections, including born-digital originals and digital surrogates. Unpublished cartographic material is not a standard size or shape. Most physical items are stored in acid-free enclosures in drawers of plan cabinets. The items themselves are a range of sizes and are housed in folders with a standard-sized piece of acid-free paper between maps. This interleaving has the Library's reference number written on it in pencil for the map above which helps with identifying and retrieving an item. Some other items are bound, oversize, or stored rolled on racks.

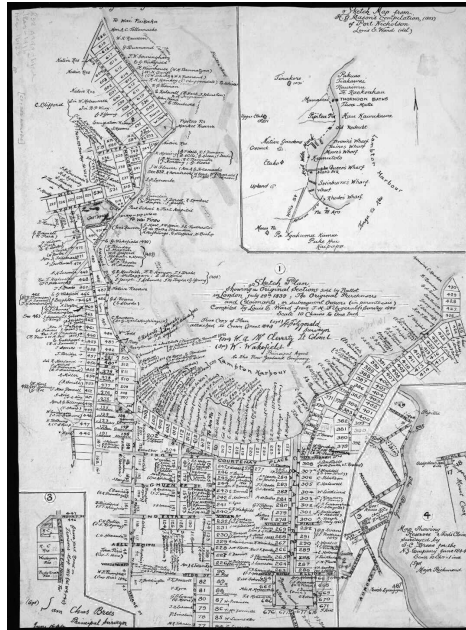
Some of the cartographic material in the collections has been digitised and is able to be accessed online via Tiaki and the National Library website³ this allows access from a distance and also protects the original maps which are often unique and sometimes fragile. Digital cartographic material is stored and delivered via the National Digital Heritage Archive (NDHA).⁴

Description

The description of unpublished maps and related material is completed by members of the Arrangement & Description team working closely with the Curator Cartographic. Descriptions to make each map discoverable online are created based on international descriptive standards. Records are created to comply with Encoded Archival Description (EAD)⁵ encoding standards and are exported as part of the Turnbull Unpublished open dataset⁶.

The description of what are often unique maps encompasses measuring the dimensions and capturing cartography-specific metadata. Not all of the collections are digitised so the aim is to provide as much detail as possible about the map. Some of the core metadata we capture is the date of the creation of the map, or the date of the information depicted on the map (which is not always the same), the physical description, and relevant Authority Terms: Subject, Place, and Type of Material.

Unpublished maps do not always have a title so sometimes

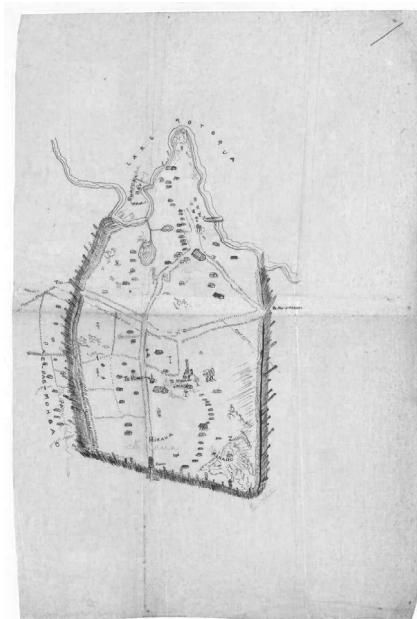


description involves creating a descriptive title, for example “Sale plan of sections at Point Howard, Wellington” (**Figure 1**). The statement “Title supplied by Library” is used to make it transparent that this title is applied rather than transcribed from the map.

To ensure consistency and compliance with EAD standards, all newly created descriptive records for unpublished material are peer-reviewed by another member of the Arrangement & Description team before being published on the Library’s online finding aid Tiaki. All new authority terms, for example, a place name like ‘Lowry Bay’ or a type like ‘Cadastral maps’ are reviewed by an in-house Authorities Review Group, before being published on Tiaki.

Classification

Most of the maps in the collections are given a classification based on the 1945 Boggs & Lewis system, along with a unique accession number, to create the Reference Number applied by the Library. The



Boggs & Lewis Area Classification Schedule⁷ is a system for organising cartographic material; one of the principles is to show change in place over time and collections are stored near items of similar geographic location. For example, **Figure 2** has the reference number “MapColl-832.4799gbbd/1840-1916/Acc.16123”.

The first part of an Alexander Turnbull Library cartographic Reference Number corresponds to a geographical location. The 800s are Australia and New Zealand, 832.4 refers to Wellington Region, and 832.4799 specifically is Thorndon. The next part is the subject code, or type of map. The code “gbbd” indicates a map relating to land ownership, and the date “1840-1916” is the date of the information on the map, rather than date of creation. The final part of the Reference Number is the “Acc. number” or accession number. This is a running number unique to each individual cartographic item held in the collections of the Library.

Some map collections are described using hierarchical

description and are held together as named or formed collections without Boggs & Lewis classification. For example, **Figure 3** is a map from the Cowan family collection⁸, which contains over 700 items of manuscript, photographic, drawings, and ephemera, as well as cartographic material. The maps in this collection are physically stored with other cartographic material of the same archival provenance, instead of being stored near items of similar geographic location. The hierarchical description places the maps in a Subseries of maps, within a Series of maps and other pictorial material, within a Collection.

Finding aid

Tiaki is the Library's name for the in-house Axiell EMu/IMu collections management system. EMu (Electronic Museum) is the back-end where staff enter metadata, and IMu (Internet Museum) is the online finding aid. Tiaki is the name for our customised versions of both EMu and IMu. Most unpublished formats are accessioned and described directly into Tiaki, but in the case of cartographic material, unpublished maps are accessioned into a spreadsheet which is the source of the accession number, and then described in Tiaki.

Geographic Name

Within Tiaki, Geographic Name authorities or place names are used for unpublished material similar to the way indexing terms are used in the cataloguing of published collections. For most cartographic materials the broadest applicable terms are applied, to create discoverable links between related items in the collections beyond a specific archival format. This means a researcher can use a Geographic Name term to locate photographs and oral histories for example, as well as cartographic material, relating to a Geographic Name.

Geographic Name authorities are created in a hierarchical structure of broader and narrower terms, for example Thorndon has a broader term of Wellington City and narrower terms for street names within the suburb. Note that Geographic Name terms are only created to describe material held by the Library, so Tiaki does not include an exhaustive list of New Zealand place names. Recent enhancements to Tiaki have resulted in the addition of format-specific fields applicable

to Geographic Name authorities.

Georeferencing

One recent enhancement has enabled georeferencing of Geographic Name authorities, with the addition of metadata fields including Feature Type, Latitude and Longitude coordinates (in decimal degrees format), the applicable Coordinate System, for example New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 (NZGD2000) and Authority (e.g. New Zealand Geographic Board). For New Zealand place names found on the New Zealand Gazetteer of place names⁹, the Name ID number is also referenced. The Feature Type can help to differentiate between for example Lowry Bay the suburb of Lower Hutt, and Lowry Bay the coastal waters within Wellington Harbour, as seen in **Figure 1**.

Geographic Name authorities also include names not gazetted, for example, local authority names for streets and public places, historic place names, Pā and Marae names, and mines and cave systems. Going forward the aim is to add further enhancements to existing geographic name authorities to incorporate georeferencing, based on authoritative sources, similar to the New Zealand Geographic Board in other international jurisdictions.

As the creation of Geographic Name authorities, especially those not already found on an official gazetteer, requires original research and disambiguation, the Source of Information is recorded in the form of a citation to the primary and secondary sources consulted. For example, the term for the historic Te Pukeroa Pā has a source of information given for transparency.¹⁰ Another recent enhancement is the addition of Unicode which enables the entering and search on words with macrons and other special characters. A search for Te Pukeroa Pā with or without the macron would be directed to this Geographic Name.

Name authorities

As well as places, name authorities are the other main set of terms used to enhance the description of cartographic materials and create links between items. For example, the names of surveyors, cartographers, printers, publishers, and issuing bodies may be

indexed. Encoded Archival Context – Corporate bodies, Persons, and Families (known as EAC-CPF) is the standard used to create these authority terms. Name authorities and Geographic Name authorities are also linked directly by association. For example, the Name authority for the Department of Lands and Survey describes the predecessor and successor agencies in associations.

Conclusions

Described above are current practices for arranging and describing unpublished cartographic collections at the Alexander Turnbull Library using Encoded Archival Description standards, physical housing in acid-free enclosures, and digital storage on the National Digital Heritage Archive, as well as the intellectual and physical organisation of map collections using a combination of Boggs & Lewis classification system and hierarchical archival description.

The article introduces the customised Axiell EMu/IMu content management system Tiaki and describes the use of linked Authority Terms such as Geographic Name and Name authorities for corporate bodies, persons, and families. As well as outlining some of the recent enhancements and improvements, including peer-review of descriptions and terms, authority through use of official gazetteer data, transparency of sources, and the exporting of datasets.

Planning for the future of arrangement and description of archival cartographic material at the Alexander Turnbull Library includes developing further the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capability and accommodating new born-digital and digital surrogate cartographic material, while constantly striving to preserve, protect, develop and make accessible the unpublished cartographic collections that are part of the taonga and documentary heritage of New Zealand.

Endnotes

- 1 This article is based on a paper presented at GeoCart Conference, 5-7 September 2018, held at the National Library of New Zealand.
- 2 Tiaki is the in-house name for the Library's Axiell EMu/IMu collections management system.
- 3 <https://natlib.govt.nz/>
- 4 NDHA is the digital preservation system at the National Library of New Zealand, launched in 2009.
- 5 <https://www.loc.gov/ead/>
- 6 <https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/alexander-turnbull-library-unpublished>
- 7 Boggs, Samuel Whittemore & Lewis, Dorothy Cornwell (1945). The classification and cataloguing of maps and atlases. New York: Special Libraries Association. 175 pp.
- 8 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Cowan family: Collection (ATL-Group-00003) <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.795907>
- 9 Land Information New Zealand <https://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/find-place-name/new-zealand-gazetteer-place-names>
- 10 Geographic Name authority <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ethesaurus.337977>