

A singular insight into a period of settlement in the Whanganui-Rangitikei region



Eel or fish weir at Pungarehu, on the banks of the Whanganui River. Whole-plate collodion silver glass negative. Photographer: William Harding, between 1856 and 1889. Ref. 1/1-000483-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, William James Harding Collection.

William James Harding Collection

Harding's studio portraits, street and landscapes provide a detailed picture of Whanganui society from the 1850s to the 1880s, documenting in rich detail the growth of the settlement during a formative time in the history of Aotearoa.

The more than 6,500 photographs are a rich and unique source of information relating to Māori and Pākehā individuals of the

Whanganui-Rangitikei population, and the growth of the settlement during a period of significant conflict and rapid expansion, characteristic of early settler colonialism in New Zealand towns.

What is unique about his approach to photography is his dedication to a faithful depiction of his subjects.

Archive Locations



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MASSEY UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, PALMERSTON NORTH

An overview

By *Louis Annis Changuion*

INTRODUCTION

Massey University Archives is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2024. The university itself traces its origin back to 1927 when the Massey Agricultural College was established in Palmerston North. Establishing a university archive was not a fast process at Massey University. The movement to establish an archive began in 1964, the year Massey gained full university status. In that year, the library first raised its concern at the lack of an archive repository for the university and the disparate state of storage of historical records and materials of the university.

A university archive was eventually established in 1984 to put the management of the university's archival and historical records on a sound footing. This overview will look at the history of the Archives, its spaces and facilities, the collections in its care and the systems used for intellectual control and access.

ORIGIN

In 1984, the Vice-Chancellor of Massey University called together a committee to investigate the establishment of a university archive. The Archives Committee held its first meeting on 10 May 1984.¹ Its first tasks were to determine the scope of the collection, find a suitable space



for the archives, assemble and organise archival material, and appoint an archivist.² This it did efficiently and at the start of 1986, the university archives was able to receive its first researchers.³ The task of assembling, organising, and laying the foundation for the archives continued over the next few years.

The establishing of the University Archives was the culmination of a two-decade long quest by the library and Academic Board of the university to get an archive established. Realising the need for an office of the university to collect and preserve material related to the history of the university, the library was the main driving force behind the efforts of getting the archives established. Through the Library Committee, the library had expressed its concern in 1964 for the preservation of the archival material of the university.⁴ This was seven years after the Archives Act 1957 came into effect.

In 1967 the Library Committee

sent a recommendation to the Professorial Board (later named the Academic Board) for the establishment of a university archive and proposed an outline for the scope of its collections.⁵ The Academic Board, supportive of the recommendation, sent it to the University Council who asked the Vice-Chancellor to report back on the matter at a subsequent meeting.⁶ At that time, financial constraints and the demand for staff work space at the fast-growing university made it difficult to proceed with the establishment of an archive.

The recommendation to establish a university archive was repeated in 1975 by the Library Committee and the Professorial Board.⁷ By that time, with the golden jubilee of the university looming in 1977, it became apparent that something had to be done to bring together the scattered historical material of the university to preserve it, facilitate access to the information contained therein, and reduce the risk of losing this material. In May 1976 an updated proposal, this time with more detailed requirements around space and staff, was tabled at a Council meeting.⁸

This recommendation was forwarded by the Council to the Deans Committee to be considered when the budget was being drawn up.⁹ As it did some years earlier, financial constraints brought a halt to the process of establishing

an archive. Nearly a decade later, it was a new Vice-Chancellor who, in 1984, acted on the recommendation and brought the University Archives into being.

STAFFING

The first three archivists were appointed either on a secondment basis or part-time basis. Keith Carwell-Cooke was seconded from elsewhere within the university to act as the first archives assistant (there was not an established position for a university archivist then)¹⁰ and held the position from 1986 until his retirement in July 1989.¹¹ From the second half of 1987 he was given additional help by an assistant, Susan Hay. During Keith's tenure, the basis of the archival collections was laid. He brought together in the Archives much of the scattered material from strong rooms, storerooms, offices, and cupboard in many buildings.¹² After his retirement in 1989, the archives was managed by Julie McCammon (later Miller), a trained archivist and records manager, on a part-time consultancy basis from late-1989 to 1999.¹³

The Archives Committee met for the last time on 23 October 1990.¹⁴ At the Vice-Chancellor's behest a Working Group on University Archives was called together in November 1993 to re-examine the role of the Archives and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor.¹⁵

Acting on the Working Group's recommendations, the responsibility of the Archives was partly transferred to the Library Committee in mid-1995. A few years later the reporting line of the Archivist was altered so that they, from 1 January 1998, reported to the University Librarian.

Following Julie's departure in 1999, Lucy Marsden held the position of part-time University Archivist from 2000 until her retirement in 2005. During her tenure, several jubilees were held at the university – the major one being the 75th jubilee in 2002 of the founding of Massey Agricultural College. Lucy's efforts of raising staff awareness about the Archives was very successful and led to an increase in deposits, which made the lack of space become quite acute.¹⁶

The passage of the Public Records Act 2005 resulted in many improvements for the University Archives. The act required Crown entities, such as universities, to better manage their records and archives to meet various standards issued by Archives New Zealand. One consequence of this was that a full-time archivist was appointed for the first time. Another, discussed further below, was the provision of much improved archives facilities.¹⁷

The author, appointed in April 2006, was the first fulltime University Archivist. Initially mostly working as a 'lone arranger',

in August 2013 he relinquished that status. This was partly thanks to Dairy Records Archivist, Norah Mosen, utilising the University Archives workspace from then on and the appointment of an Archives Assistant, Jo Buckland, in that month. In November 2017 another assistant, Joel Wood, joined the Archives team. February 2018 saw the appointment of the first Assistant Archivist, Dr Catherine Woeber, on a part-time basis. She was succeeded in November 2018 by Michael Biggs who was appointed as the first full-time Assistant Archivist.

In addition to paid staff, the Archives has had many dedicated volunteers (some, like Joel and Catherine, who became paid staff members) and contract workers over the years. *See Fig. 1. on next page.*

An increase in staffing in the 2010s meant that there was extra capacity to provide archival services. This made it possible for Dairy Records Archives to be integrated into the University Archives in 2016.¹⁸ The last decade saw several important jubilees – the most important being the 50th jubilee of Massey becoming a university – all of which increased the workload of staff.

FACILITIES

The University Archives' first home was a room in the basement of the Sir Geoffrey Peren Building. This space had become available

Figure 1.

Archives staff and friends enjoying Christmas morning tea, 2022. Shown here from left are Norah Mosen, Joel Wood and Louis Changuion. Source: Massey University Archives



Figure 2.

Archives reading room in the Sir Geoffrey Peren Building, 2010. Source: Massey University Archives.

at the end of 1985 and, to make it more suitable to house archival collections, was provided with light-excluding window coverings, ultra-violet screens on fluorescent tubes, air-conditioning, and a dehumidifying system.¹⁹ The room inherently had relatively stable temperature and relative humidity levels. A downside of the basement location that was initially experienced was the occurrence of stormwater seepage due to ineffective drainage around the building.²⁰ Regular maintenance checks eliminated this problem. See Fig. 2.

Within a short while of its opening, the collection outgrew the space allocated to the archives. Additional rooms in the basement were in time converted to archives space. Inadequate as this space was, the Archives occupied the basement rooms until 2012 when the building had to be vacated for earthquake strengthening work to be carried out.²¹

In late August 2012 the University Archives hence moved to its current home, a purposefully equipped space that was made available in the Practical Teaching Complex.²² This was seven years



Figure 3.

Archives reading room, 2024. Source: Massey University Archives.

after the Public Records Act 2005 came into effect. The space, previously used as a teaching and demonstration space for farm equipment (the “practical teaching” in the building’s name), had become available due to changing teaching needs in that subject area. The official opening of the new archives space was done by the then Vice-Chancellor Steve Maharey on 18 February 2013, in the presence of dignitaries such as the Chief Archivist of New Zealand.²³ See Fig. 3.

In its new, much larger repository, which provided proper storage space for its collections, the Archives now had its much-needed room for expansion. The space contained a cold store and a fumigation room and for the first time, the archives also had adequate space for its staff, processing, and public areas.²⁴

Not long after the Archives moved into its new space, Archives New Zealand audited the university’s recordkeeping practices and gave the new space a nod of approval.²⁵

Due to the cost of equipping a space to archival standards, the storage areas were not initially fitted out with a climate control system. Fortunately, a characteristic of this new space was relatively stable temperature and relative humidity levels. A dehumidifying system was installed in 2023 and the installation of a complete climate control system is planned for the not-too-distant future. See Fig. 4. on next page.

To optimise the use of the available floor space in the storage areas, a programme was begun in 2020 to replace the existing static shelving with mobile shelving. About a quarter of the shelving has thus far been upgraded in this way.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The reason for the University Archives’ being is its collections that comprise nearly 2200 linear metres. Today, the Archives’ collections are grouped into two main collections – the institutional archive and the collecting archive.

As an institutional archive,

Figure 4.

Archives storeroom with static and mobile shelving, 2024. The door to the cold store is visible in the distance. Source: Massey University Archives.

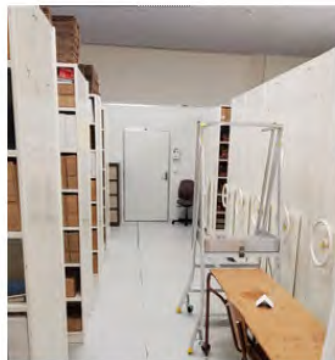


Figure 5.

Volumes of university records, 2024. Source: Massey University Archives.

the Archives serves as the official archives of Massey University and one part of its collections reflect this. The initial focus of the Archives' collecting activities was institutional records of relevance in a historical context to the university.²⁶ This consisted chiefly of official administrative records. Items deemed as secondary materials were only taken on a selective basis.²⁷

As the official records collection became more complete, attention was shifted to include more diverse materials and collections. The aim was to provide a well-rounded source of

information about the activities and history of the university. In time thus, the collections were expanded.²⁸ See Fig. 5.

Nowadays the institutional collection includes the university's public records of archival value, along with other archival material and memorabilia of the university, material of affiliated organisations such as students' associations, personal papers of staff and students, photographs, maps, and plans. To fulfil its function of preserving the university's heritage, the Archives also collects museum objects and artwork that are relevant to the university's history.

The University Archives works closely with the Records and Information Management Service of the university. The disposal of university records is governed by a General Disposal Authority for New Zealand Universities and ensures a steady flow of material to the archives repository.

As a collecting archive, the Archives collects archival material from external sources that have broad links with the disciplines researched and taught at Massey University. Called the New Zealand Institutions (NZI) Collection, this archive may include historical material of entities like New Zealand businesses, individuals and community, cultural and professional organisations. Currently, this collection includes archival material of over 600 of these entities and is constantly

growing. This archive is a good source of information about New Zealand genealogy, local history, businesses and economic activities, and some aspects of the agricultural sector.

Included in this NZI Collection is the Dairy Records Archive, one of the largest collections in New Zealand of business records related to New Zealand's dairy companies, industries and organisations serving the farming community. This important collection also contains some collections of farming records. The Dairy Records Archive collection was begun in the 1960s by the then University Librarian who, encouraged by academic staff who had research interests in this subject, started collecting this material to safeguard it from destruction. For nearly fifty years this archival collection was maintained separately from the University's archival materials and held at the University Library. With the retirement of Norah Mosen the Dairy Records Archivist looming, it was decided to transfer this collection to the University Archives in 2016. See Fig. 6. on next page.

The Archives collects archival material irrespective of format and both physical and digital (digitised and born-digital) materials form part of its collections.

SYSTEMS

The task of maintaining control over the collections and

providing access to the information they contain, is a large one and is made possible by the collection management systems and finding aids the Archives employs.

Intellectual control of the university's institutional archives is established, and access provided by means of an alpha-numerical arrangement system, and a variety of inventories, registers and indexes. During the Archives' initial years, access to materials was provided only in-person in the reading room, or by photocopying material for those who could not visit in person. Later, as technologies improved, scanning-on-demand and emailing services were made available to researchers. While these services were effective, there were still limitations to access to the information held by the Archives.

Technology provided a solution and assisted in providing more equitable access to the collections. In December 2016 the Archives' Recollect online platform was introduced. Named Tāmīro (www.tamiro.massey.ac.nz), this platform has supported access, scholarship, and discovery by providing free online access to the open access heritage materials in the collections.²⁹ Providing this online access is underpinned by a digitisation programme that delivers material for uploading to the platform. This digitisation programme is based on evidence-based decision making. Limited resources meant that the deciding

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ARCHIVES IN THE CLOUD

Exploring machine learning to transform Archives New Zealand's digital services for agencies

By Archives New Zealand¹

INTRODUCTION

Kei ngā iwi o te ao nei, ehara taku toa te toa takitahi, engari be toa takitini. Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

To the many people of the world, it is not through my strength alone but the strength of the many that we will succeed. Greetings thrice over to all.

Between February and July 2022, Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga (Archives) led a proof of concept (PoC) to see how best it could transfer and identify high value agency data, including information that is of interest to Māori. This proof of concept involved analysing hyperscale cloud capabilities and machine learning tools to see how a cloud service provider can support our need to deliver. This article summarises the process and findings of the draft report. While the PoC is only a first exploratory step, findings will be used as a base for future learnings. Any policy decisions or redesigns of our archival management systems would be a separate process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public offices like government agencies and Crown entities create huge amounts of digital information and data in their

day-to-day work. Some of this information has long-term significance to Aotearoa and will eventually be transferred to Archives New Zealand's custody and form part of New Zealand's national archives holdings. The roles of Archives and the Chief Archivist are set out in the Public Records Act 2005.

Our current systems for sorting, maintaining, and ensuring the accessibility of this information were designed with paper records in mind. There are now huge stores of digital information and data held by public offices, from databases with millions of emails to legacy systems and shared drives full of content. This information needs to be appraised by agencies in line with policy documents called disposal authorities to determine how long information will be kept and what will happen to it – usually either destruction or transfer to Archives. It is no longer possible for people to sort through all of this information manually. Without looking for new approaches to appraisal, disposal, and searching for information within our archives it is inevitable that there will be gaps in the memory of government.

Archives wanted to see if machine learning tools and hyperscale cloud capabilities can help to sort this information and solve other information and