

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.



MOWCAP
UNESCO Memory of the World
Regional Committee for Asia/Pacific

Nomination form

Asia/Pacific Memory of the World

Register

Polynesian Immigrants Records 1876-1914

Office Use Only	
ID code:	Item or collection short title:
Institution / Owner:	Country or countries
Assessed by: (Rujaya Abhakorn).....(date).... / .. / (xxxxxx).....(date).... / .. / (xxxxxx).....(date).... / .. /	Decision: (circle as appropriate) 1. Recommended 2. Not recommended 3. Recommended subject to the following (attach additional comments if required):

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

(xxxxxx).....(date)...../.../	
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Introduction

This form should be used to nominate items to the Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World* Register. It sets out, in logical order, the range of information needed. Nominations should be expressed in clear concise language and lengthy submissions are not required.

Supplementary data may be attached. Please clearly label and number every page in the boxes provided.

It is highly recommended that prospective nominees should carefully read the *Guidelines* for nominating items and collections to the Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World* Register for further information before and during preparing a nomination. Nominees should also look at the current International *Memory of the World* Register

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php->

[URL_ID=1678&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1678&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

and the [Australian Memory of the World Register](#) to see examples of completed nomination forms.

Please submit two complete document sets on paper (one original and one photocopied versions) and one electronically.

Completed nominations should be posted by mail and submitted electronically to reach the following address:

Ms Helen Swinnerton
 Secretary General of MOWCAP,
 1/F Tower 2 & 3, HSBC Centre, 1 Sham Mong Road, Kowloon
 Hong Kong
helen.swinnerton@gmail.com

The nomination form and any accompanying material will not be returned and will become the property of MOWCAP.

MOWCAP maintains a website at <http://www.unesco.mowcap.org>. Questions may be addressed to the MOWCAP Register Subcommittee (rujaya2000@yahoo.com). Please keep a copy of this form for your records and in case we need to contact you.

Please also keep an electronic version of the completed form as we will need this for successful nominations to speed up entries onto the MOWCAP website.

Ray Edmondson
 Chair, MOWCAP

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

Nomination form

Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World Register* nomination form

Part A: Essential information

1 Summary (max 100 words)

The National Archives of Fiji's collection of records of the imported Pacific Islands Labourers who were indentured to work as plantation workers during the labour trade from 1876 - 1914 constitutes important information for genealogical and historical information.

From 1863, when the first ship "Don Juan" began recruiting from the New Hebrides, until 1911, when the ship "Clansman" returned to Suva (Fiji) with the last group of islanders recruited for plantations, the ships most often seen in these islands were those of labour recruiters.

During this period the Pacific islands of New Hebrides (Vanuatu), Banks and Torres Straits islands, Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati) and Papua New Guinea became a vast labour pool. A cheap source of workers for European plantation owners in Queensland, Australia, Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia. Consequently 61,000 Pacific islanders were taken to Australia, Fiji's colonial plantation owners received 23,000 workers and a combined total of 7,000 recruited personnel were delivered to Samoa and New Caledonia.

Even though the first ship load of labourers arrived in Fiji in 1864, there are no available records from that time to support recruitment and arrival. The earliest records began in 1876. This phase of drama, deception and intrigue was commonly referred to as the era of "Black Birding". These were dark years when islanders were coerced and kidnapped by unscrupulous ship's Captains and crew members and made available at a price to European colonial plantation owner entrepreneurs.

The documentary heritage of the imported Pacific island labourers housed at the National Archives of Fiji, consists only of those that arrived in Fiji between 1876 and 1911. The documentation consists of general shipping records, agent and recruiters' journals, plantation records and personnel documentation that provide an insight into the personal plight of the "recruited" indigenous islanders.

2 Nominator

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organisation)

The National Archives of Fiji

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Official National Repository of Documentary Heritage

2.3 Contact person(s)

Opeta Alefaio, Director National Archives of Fiji

2.4 Contact details

Name Opeta Alefaio

Address 25 Carnarvon Street, Suva, Fiji

Telephone (679) 3314539

Facsimile

Email opeta.alefaio@govnet.gov.fj
fijiarchives@gmail.com

3 Details of the Nominated Documentary Heritage

3.1 Title of documentary heritage item or collection

Polynesian Immigrants Records 1876-1914

3.2 Catalogue or registration details

The Series Registration is appended for your information

3.3 Photographs or a video of the documentary heritage

Attachment

3.4 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

The records are official work product, and were created in accordance with legislation and policies regarding immigration. As such they are a portion of Fiji's permanent documentary heritage, and have passed from the creating agency to the archives in compliance with archival legislation.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

3.5 Bibliography

Corris, P., 1973. *Passage Port and Plantation: a History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration (1870 – 1914)* Melbourne.

Newbury, C., 1972. *Trade and Plantations in Eastern Polynesia: The Emergence of a Dependant Economy*, in Ward, G., Eds *Man in the Pacific Islands*, Oxford University Press.

Siegel, J., 1985. *Origins of Pacific Islands Labourers in Fiji*. *Journal of Pacific History*, 20 (1): 42 - 55

3.6 Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations with expert knowledge about the values and provenance of the documentary heritage

Name	Qualifications	Contact details
1. Peter Corris	PhD	cliffh1@netspace.net.au
2. Colin Newbury	PhD	colin.newbury@history.ox.ac.uk
3. Jeff Siegel	PhD (Professor)	jsiegel2@une.edu.au

The referees you cite will be asked for their opinions. UNESCO may also contact other authoritative referees so that a good spectrum of opinion is available for assessment purposes.

I assert that the above named referees have given their written permission for their names and contact details to be used in connection with this nomination for the Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World* Register, and their names to appear on the website. (Contact details will not appear on the website or be disclosed by the MOWCAP to any third party).

Signature

Full name (Please PRINT)

Date

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

5 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 First criterion: **authenticity**. Is the documentary heritage what it appears to be? Has its identity and origin been reliably established?

These records are official records, generated in compliance with several laws and regulations concerning immigration, and their authenticity is verified by the National Archives of Fiji as the nations repository of official permanent records. These documents have been used by many renowned scholars.

5.2 Second criterion: **world significance**. Is the documentary heritage unique and irreplaceable, something whose disappearance or deterioration would constitute a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of humanity? Has it created a great impact over a span of time and/or within a particular supra-national cultural area of the region? Is it representative of a type, but it has no direct equal? Has it had great influence – whether positive or negative – on the course of history?

These records are the product of several major trends in world history and speak to a number of issues that arise of them.

Globalisation and the Labour Market – As entrepreneurs sought their fortunes in the colonies; the need to have a ready pool of labour became problematic. However, market forces combined with less than scrupulous methods brought “cheap” labour for periods of “indentured” servitude. This raises universally relevant questions about human trafficking, social inequality, gender inequality, racism, crime and social injustices in colonial and post-colonial societies.

Colonialism - Supported by colonial arrangements in response to the abolition of the slave trade. These records provides evidence of colonial policies deployed to meet the labour needs of plantation entrepreneurs were paying for the building and maintenance of vast colonial empires

The impact of these colonial policies had a direct bearing on the development of Fiji (and other such places), as these labourers played a direct role in establishing much of the infrastructure around the capital city, and the impact continues to be felt today as descendants of these indentured labourers have largely been marginalised and are seeking firm standing in their adopted home. This speaks to the very real issues of displaced populations, and the challenges faced by “migrant” communities.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

5.3 Third, world significance must be demonstrated in meeting one or more of the following criteria. Because significance is comparative, these criteria are best illustrated by checking them against items of documentary heritage already inscribed (for example) on the International *Memory of the World Register*:

Time: Is it especially evocative of its time (which may have been one of crisis, or significant social or cultural change; it may represent a new discovery or be the “first of its kind”)

When Fiji became a British Colony in 1874, the expansion of capitalism to the Pacific was fostered and boosted. This allowed for the creation of the plantation system as a major developmental element of western colonial economic activity.

The records in question are work products, reflecting the underpinning beliefs, ethics and priorities prevalent at the time of their creation more than a century ago. Their thorough nature and near completeness makes them an extremely valuable knowledge resource. For those who seek genuine information their testament will continue to be relevant well into the future, connecting and enlightening enquiring minded researchers from all over the world.

Place: Does it contain crucial information about a locality important in the history of the region and its cultures? Or did the location have an important influence on the events or phenomena represented by the documentary heritage? Or is it descriptive of physical environments, cities or institutions since vanished?

As a consequence of “Black Birding” these records provide a crucial link between Fiji, and the original Pacific island countries of the recruited labourers, New Hebrides (Vanuatu), Gilbert Islands (Kiribati), Solomon Islands, PNG etc, They represent an indelible connection to the colonial power (Britain in Fiji’s case) as evidence of the power dynamic of the colonial period, and act as an enduring legacy of a shared history.

People: Is it related to people in a social and cultural context that reflects significant aspects of human behaviour, or social, industrial, artistic or political development..It may reflect the important roles and impact of key or certain individuals or groups.

These indenture period documents contain important personal details which provide an immensely important source of information to the descendants of the Labourers as well as to researchers concerned with humanities and development issues.

More than 50,000 descendants of the original 23,000 recruited indentured workers now live and work in Fiji. The records of their predecessors hold considerable social and historical value in relation to their continued existence in their adopted country as descendants of former displaced peoples of a bygone colonial era.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

Subject and theme: The subject matter may represent particular historical or intellectual developments in natural, social and human sciences, politics, ideology, sports and the arts.

The Pacific Islands Indentured Labourer Records relate to politics, history, sociology, human rights, psychology, displaced communities, development studies, international relations, and Pacific Studies.

The documentary heritage concerns a strikingly important and interestingly intriguing period in the history and development of humankind. A period representing the great struggle by western colonial entities for global influence through economic development and associated actions to boost the power of empire through any means available.

Colonial influence was aimed and propagated with considerable effort, strength and velocity on the continents of the world and in the regions and sub-regions of the world's peoples.

These records were created in a vast oceanic area containing some fifteen thousand mainly small island land masses forming 22 Pacific countries in a region largely composed of sea covering nearly one third of the earth's surface.

The continuing impact on scholars, researchers and other interested knowledge seekers will be felt far into the future.

Form and style: The item(s) may have outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value, be a typical or key exemplar of a type or presentation, custom or medium, or of a disappeared or disappearing carrier or format.

As source documents these records are authentic records of the time and are indicative of administrative paperwork for the period in question.

6 Other matters taken into account: rarity, integrity and threat

Rarity Does the content or physical nature of the documentary heritage make it a rare surviving example of its type or time?

The Pacific island Indentured Labourer Records are only available at the Fiji National Archives in Fiji's capital city, Suva.

Integrity Within the natural physical limitations of carrier survival, is the documentary heritage complete or partial? Has it been altered or damaged?

The Pacific Island Indenture Labourer Records are in good condition and have been microfilmed. Plans are in process to have the collection digitised.

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

Threat Is its survival in danger? If it is secure, must vigilance be applied to maintain that security? Detail the nature and scope of threats.

The collection due to its age is of course under threat of deterioration. However, a preventative conservation management program is in place to ensure its survival, an effort that is constrained by funds. At the same time a conservation assessment of the collection has been carried out to ensure its longevity and preventative conservation plans are developed to sustain the collection. The collection has been microfilmed and the digitisation of the collection in cooperation with a group of specialists from Australia is now in process..

Attach a separate statement if space is insufficient!

7 Preservation and Access Management Plan

Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? Are there strategies to preserve and provide access to it?

YES

If yes, describe or attach a summary of the plan. If no, please provide details about current method of storage and custody of the materials.

Assessment of the physical condition of the collection is carried out on an on-going basis.. Where possible microfilmed copies are dispatched for users, reducing the need to handle the original documents.

8 Any other information

Please provide any other information that supports the inclusion of this item(s) / collection on the Asia/Pacific *Memory of the World Register*.

Attach a separate statement if space insufficient.

The Fiji National Archives has had consistent and productive positive consultations with the Fiji National Commission for UNESCO, the Fiji Memory of the World Committee, the Fiji National University and the UNESCO National Commission of Samoa.

The documents are of great significance to the descendants of the recruited labourers, as they provide crucial information about genealogy as well as social and historical heritage

If this nomination is accepted the Pacific Islands Indentured Labourer Records will be included in the Fiji Memory of the World National Register and covered extensively in

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

future awareness activities of the Fiji Memory of the World Committee. The collection will be included on the Fiji Memory of the World internet website for international accessibility and transmission.

As Fiji's old capital, Levuka, is due to be formalised as a UNESCO International Cultural Heritage Site and as Levuka was the centre where the Indentured Labourer Records were created and kept and the trade and contracting conducted, the collection will be highlighted at the formalisation ceremony to create special awareness of the Memory of the World Programme. With approval already granted the formalisation of Levuka Town as a UNESCO International Cultural Heritage site is due to be conducted during the first quarter of 2014.

9 Checklist

Nominees may find completing the following checklist useful before sending the nomination form to MOWCAP.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MOWCAP website reviewed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Introduction read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | summary completed (maximum 100 words) (section 1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Nomination and contact details completed (section 2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | If this is a joint nomination, section 2 appropriately modified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Documentary heritage identified (sections 3.1 – 3.3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | History/Origin/Background/Provenance completed (section 3.4) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bibliography completed (section 3.5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations recorded (section 3.6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Declaration signed and dated that all referees have given their written permission for their names to appear on the MOWCAP website (section 3.6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Details of owner completed (section 4.1) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Details of custodian – if different from owner - completed (section 4.2) |

Year	Name of documentary heritage	Page no.

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- Details of legal status completed (section 4.3)
-
- Details of accessibility completed (section 4.4)
-
- Details of copyright status completed (section 4.5)
-
- Evidence presented of authenticity (section 5.1)
-
- Evidence presented of world significance (section 5.2)
-
- Evidence presented against one or more additional criteria (section 5.3)
-
- Information presented on rarity, integrity and threat (section 6)
-
- Summary of Preservation and Access Management Plan completed. If there is no formal Plan provide details about current and/or planned access, storage and custody arrangements (section 7)
-
- Any other information provided - if applicable (section 8)
-
- Sample photographs or VDO prepared for MOWCAP use (if required)
-
- Printed copy of Nomination Form made for organisation's records
-
- Electronic copy of Nomination Form made for MOWCAP use (if required)