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# Steamships and Tourists

Romance and adventure are inseparably bound up with our literature of these Islands, and we have almost got to think of them as mythical isles of beautiful imaginings, creations of the poetic brain of genius, only to be enjoyed in book or picture, like fairy tales of modern Arabian Nights. And yet, these beautiful scenes are very real, and very easy to reach for the fortunate residents of this great Southern Continent ... Sydney is the starting point of the fleets of vessel which carry the flag of Commerce amongst the Southern Seas, and the advent of the modern mail steamer, with its charted route and regular timetable, has proved a real 'open sesame' for the everyday holiday makers, to scenes which before were only accessible to the fortunate ones of wealth and leisure.<sup>1</sup>

As suggested by this 1912 promotional brochure from Burns, Philp & Company (an Australian shipping business), the rise of the steamship made travel to the Pacific Islands more accessible to Australians. Offering safe, comfortable and exciting journeys through the Islands, steamships popularised certain routes throughout the Pacific. The expansion of steamship routes from the Australian continent to the Pacific in the late nineteenth century coincided with the growth of travel writing and public interest in the wider region. These steamship vessels did not only carry passengers and cargo; they were also loaded with symbolism, which was emblematic of modernity, mobility and nationalism. They relied on the routes that overlaid pre-existing imperial networks (and that occasionally subverted them), and their cargo supported island nodes in the 'webs

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1 Burns, Philp & Company, Limited, *Picturesque Travel*, no. 2 (1912), 54.

of empire'.<sup>2</sup> Controlling these lines of communication offered steamships and the companies that owned them immense power that could shape Australian government policy as well as the Island destinations. Yet they were also precariously situated in a relationship that relied on government subsidies and approvals, and their business reflected colonial ambitions and desires. This was most clearly visible in the composition of the ships' crews who, by the twentieth century, were carefully chosen according to the immigration rules of the White Australia policy.

The ways in which this mode of transportation shaped Australian perceptions of the Pacific Islands is not yet fully understood. The most obvious influence that steamship companies exerted on the Australian public was through branded publications—countless holiday promotions and tourism ephemera that spread editorialised messages of leisure and pleasure in the Pacific. However, steamships also shaped the experience of travel in more subtle or unintentional ways. Within the confines of a ship, travellers were carefully guided towards particular expectations, and the islands that they saw with their own eyes were framed through a porthole. For travel writers, the arrival was the most anticipated and vividly described moment of the journey. But unlike the first encounters of Europeans on the beach, arrival by steamship was set to a predictable rhythm and pace, and the Island ports were ready and waiting.

It is unsurprising that the transformation of cargo ships into cruise liners could be credited as creating a particular kind of traveller, one often termed as the 'tourist'. In contrast to the lone, adventurous explorer or wealthy yachtsman of the past, the tourist was considered the modern voyager of the twentieth century. The increasing number of tourists in the 1920s and 1930s encouraged the development of a commercial industry in Australia and the Islands that catered to their increasingly conformist routes and responses. However, the popularity of the masses sat uneasily with some, particularly Australian travellers who had grown up reading pioneer legends of the Australian outback and romantic tales of South Sea vagabonds. These travellers desired to forge their own paths in Australia's unexplored backyard instead of following in the footsteps of their colonial predecessors. Travel writing highlights the uncertainties and ambiguities that characterised the early growth of steamships and tourism in the Pacific.

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2 Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*.

## Steamships, Stopovers and Destinations

The first steamer in the Australian colonies travelled along the Parramatta River in 1831, though it was not until the 1840s that the invention of the screw propeller and metal hulls began to displace sailing ships. Sailing ships were still useful in the nineteenth century, in part because they were cheaper to build and run and because they were important in inter-island Pacific trade (as they did not require deep harbours or channels). Constrained by the wind and seasonal weather variations, prompt arrival at port was never guaranteed, though sailing ships did follow predictable paths in the Pacific to try and maximise efficiency. Several significant local and global events were needed to trigger the widespread use of the steamship in the Australian and Pacific colonies. This included a period during the Australian gold rush of the 1850s (which attracted steamers from the US), the construction of railways (e.g. in Panama from 1850 to 1855, in the US with the US transcontinental railway from 1861 to 1869 and within Australia from the mid-1850s), the extension of communication cables (including the Pacific Cable in 1902) and the opening of the Suez and Panama Canals (in 1869 and 1914). The opening of the canals was especially important for bringing Australians closer to the northern hemisphere. As Grimshaw noted in 1907: ‘The opening of the Panama Canal route will bring the islands so much nearer to the great trading highways, that they [the New Hebrides] will become more important than they are at present, both from a strategic and a trading point of view’.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, steamships contributed to the gradual compression of time and space, which made Australians ever more conscious of their global citizenry. In doing so, these ships disrupted the established routes and ports of call in the Pacific, and their journeys were plotted on maps according to straighter and sharper lines.

Multiple services were provided to Australians travelling to, and through, the Pacific Islands by competing steamship companies—most notably by the Oceanic Steamship Company, Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes, Union Steamship Company, Burns, Philp & Company and the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company. Beginning as coastal services, these companies slowly expanded their fleets and routes into the Pacific, diversifying their operations to include passenger transportation, island trading stores and plantations so that they could remain profitable.

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3 Beatrice Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907), 177.

Winning lucrative government mail contracts in this competitive environment was important for maintaining long Pacific voyages, with the major mail routes running from Brisbane to Singapore (via the Torres Strait), from Sydney to Vancouver or San Francisco (via Fiji and Honolulu, or Rarotonga and Tahiti) and from Sydney to London (via the Cape or the Suez).<sup>4</sup> As the rise and fall of certain shipping companies in the Pacific has already been well documented in economic and business histories, only a brief summary of their major routes and achievements is provided below. Recent maritime histories have tried to address this myopia by emphasising themes of mobility and interconnectedness, but the prolific archival record of tourist promotions and company publications scattered throughout the region has yet to be studied in depth. Like travel writing, this subject area can potentially expand our understanding of the relationship between company, crew and traveller within colonial Pacific networks.<sup>5</sup>

The Oceanic Steamship Company began its operating services from the North American coast to Hawai'i from 1881, later establishing a regular route from San Francisco to Honolulu, Pago Pago, Suva and Sydney in conjunction with the Union Steamship Company. It was acquired by Matson Navigation Company in 1926—another American-owned company that had been competing in the Hawaiian route since 1882 and that continued Oceanic's trans-Pacific services until 1970.<sup>6</sup> In response to the growing passenger traffic to Hawai'i, Matson constructed some of the fastest and most luxurious ships to traverse the Pacific at the time. In 1927, the *Malolo* was the fastest ship in the Pacific, cruising at 22 knots. It was followed by the *Mariposa*, *Monterey* and *Lurline* between 1930 and 1932. The *Mariposa* and *Monterey* regularly conveyed Australians through the Pacific and were so popular that their names were re-used in subsequent

4 Kevin T Livingston, *The Wired Nation Continent: The Communication Revolution and Federating Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

5 For example, see Steel, *Oceania under Steam*; McCreery and McKenzie, 'The Australian Colonies in a Maritime World'. See also the special issue titled 'Crossing Over' in *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 3 (2015).

6 See Jacob Adler, 'The Oceanic Steamship Company: A Link in Claus Spreckels' Hawaiian Sugar Empire', *Pacific Historical Review* 29, no. 3 (1960): 257–69, doi.org/10.2307/3636164; Duncan O'Brien, *The White Ships: Matson Line to Hawai'i, New Zealand, Australia via Samoa, Fiji, 1927–1978* (Victoria: Pier 19 Media, 2008); John E Cushing, *Captain William Matson (1849–1917): From Handy Boy to Shipowner* (New York: Newcomen Society in North America, 1951); 'About Matson: History', Matson, www.matson.com/corporate/about\_us/history.html; S Swiggum and M Kohli, 'The Fleets: Matson Line 1882–1980', The Ships List, www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/matson.shtml.

liners until 1970. Matson was also responsible for the construction of the Moana Hotel in 1901 (the first hotel of its kind in Honolulu), followed by the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in 1927.

The Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes (MM) was a French steamship service founded in 1835. It began its services from Marseille to Melbourne, Sydney and then Noumea from 1882, transporting mail, passengers and cargo. From 1901, a smaller vessel named the *Pacifique* operated an inter-island route between Sydney, Noumea and the New Hebrides. From 1922, ships travelling via the Suez Canal terminated at Sydney, and a new Panama Canal route to Noumea added Papeete, Wellington and Suva to the list of stopovers. After the severe losses that followed World War II, MM's passenger fleet was rebuilt; however, it was eventually abandoned by 1972.

The Union Steamship Company (USSCo., or the Union Line) was a Dunedin-based coastal shipping company that was established in 1875. It ran a regular route from Auckland to Fiji from 1881, expanding to Melbourne in the following year and to Sydney by the end of the decade. USSCo. established cruises that were specifically aimed for tourists travelling from Auckland to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga in the 1880s. Its success, though limited until the late 1890s, was due to effective marketing and the construction of the passenger steamer, *Waikare*.<sup>7</sup> Services were then expanded, including an additional tour of the Cook Islands, Tahiti, Samoa and Tonga, as well as an extension of the Fiji–Tonga–Samoa circuit to the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island and Sydney. In 1901, USSCo. acquired the Canadian–Australian Royal Mail Line—also known as the 'All-Red Route', because it used British-owned ships and only visited British territories (excepting Honolulu). This allowed USSCo. to deliver passengers from Sydney to Auckland, Suva, Honolulu, Victoria and Vancouver until 1953. In 1909, USSCo. redirected its service from Sydney to San Francisco via Rarotonga and Tahiti in response to the US's restrictions on trading between US coastal ports. This service lasted until 1936.

Burns, Philp & Company (BP) became the most prominent Australian shipping company in the Pacific in the early twentieth century. Originally a Queensland coastal shipping company, it expanded to the pearl-shelling

7 Frances Steel, 'An Ocean of Leisure: Early Cruise Tours of the Pacific in an Age of Empire', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 14, no. 2 (2013): 1–12, doi.org/10.1353/cch.2013.0019.

industry in northern Queensland in the 1880s. From its branch at Thursday Island, it extended its services across the Torres Strait to Port Moresby in 1883. Demand for shipping and commerce in the British protectorate was inconsistent, and BP's early ventures abroad were a struggle. Similarly, trips to the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides were intermittent until 1896, when the purchase of two steamships allowed BP to offer a circuit from Sydney to British New Guinea, returning via the Solomon Islands, and a circuit from Sydney to the New Hebrides.<sup>8</sup> From 1902, BP operated a service to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, gradually extending to the Marshall Islands, and transported phosphate from Ocean Island. In 1904, it established a six-weekly service from Sydney to Java and Singapore. BP diversified its commercial operations by purchasing land, operating plantations, opening trading stores, acting as an agent for other shipping companies and even issuing its own stamps and banknotes. Copra, phosphate and sugar were the company's major investments. The 1910s and 1920s were marked by an expansion of BP's inter-island trading networks, through its Suva-based offshoot, Burns, Philp (South Sea) Company.<sup>9</sup>

The Australasian United Steam Navigation Company (AUSN) initially disrupted BP's attempts to monopolise the entire Melanesian trade. AUSN was another Australian-owned shipping company that was formed in 1887 by the amalgamation of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company and the Queensland Steamship Company. By this time, routes between Australia and New Zealand, and between Sydney, Brisbane, Fiji and Noumea, had already become well established.<sup>10</sup> In cooperation with USSCo., the newly formed AUSN expanded its services to, and within, Fiji and the New Hebrides. After World War I, it gradually abandoned these services until it had completely withdrawn from Pacific trade by 1928. Careful to avoid conflict, BP operated copra trading in Fiji through a subsidiary company called Robbie, Kaad and Co., and then poached the government contract from AUSN in 1923 for an inter-island Fiji service. This was the first of many contracts that AUSN lost to BP.

8 Kenneth Buckley and Kris Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp: The Australian Company in the South Pacific* (Sydney: Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd, 1981), 68–71.

9 Kenneth Buckley and Kris Klugman, *The Australian Presence in the Pacific: Burns Philp, 1914–1946* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983), 108–24.

10 See Norman Lang McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown: The A.U.S.N. Story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977); Ronald Parsons, *A History of Australasian Steam Navigation Company and Australasian United Steam Navigation Co. Ltd* (Adelaide: publisher unknown, 1960).

Due to their size and the extent of their routes, these five companies had a significant and long-lasting influence on Australian travel to the Pacific, and they appeared more regularly in public discourses about the region. Of course, there were many other competitors who engaged in Pacific transportation. European liners dominated passenger traffic between Fremantle and Sydney until the late 1890s, when Asian companies such as Nippon Yusen Kaisha and the China Navigation Company began to undercut prices. The Singapore route was also crowded by German, Dutch and British shipping companies—including the German company Norddeutscher Lloyd; the Dutch-owned Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij; the British India Steam Navigation Company; and the British-owned Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O). Other smaller ships plied the Pacific waters, owned by trading companies such as Lever Brothers, W.R. Carpenter & Company and the Colonial Sugar Refinery, as well as other ships that were directed by Christian missions, such as the *John Williams* and *Southern Cross* fleets.

As shipping companies grew in size and strength, they became significant players in national and international geopolitics. Because the economic viability of routes was often determined by government subsidies and mail contracts, shipping companies actively lobbied governments and contributed to public debate. In the late nineteenth century, Pacific shipping had to negotiate with the Australian colonies of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, who competed to subsidise direct mail routes.<sup>11</sup> Other private organisations complicated this competitive situation, such as Christian missions or major export businesses in the Islands who also provided lucrative subsidies. Additionally, growing nationalistic sentiment in the Australian colonies concurrently resisted foreign influence and competition. Foreign vessels were regarded with suspicion, according to Frank Coffee's recollection of a Sydney journalist's impressions when the first passenger boat arrived from the US in the 1870s:

Her entry into the trans-Pacific trade aroused jealousy in the breasts of many people, who thought that the new line would interfere with the P. & O. steamship service, and, furthermore, by bringing Australia into closer relationship with the wide-awake United States weaken the ties that bound the Colonies to Great Britain.<sup>12</sup>

11 McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown*, 194.

12 Frank Coffee, *Forty Years on the Pacific: The Lure of the Great Ocean; A Book of Reference for the Traveller and Pleasure for the Stay-at-Home* (Sydney: Oceanic, 1920), 6.

In this competitive colonial environment, the steamships themselves were bestowed with a symbolic status of national pride, which was evident in the naming of the vessels and in their routes of passage. The All-Red Route symbolised the imperial connections to which Australian and New Zealand shipping companies contributed. This route circumnavigated the globe and privileged British transportation and communication networks to connect the empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

As the new Australian nation emerged in 1901, internal conflict was gradually replaced by a growing concern about external threats. Australians turned their attention to colonial rivalries in the Pacific, many of which shaped, and were shaped by, the routes of steamships. Frances Steel asserted that the mobility of steamships in the Pacific signified that they crossed multiple colonial spheres of influence and that their routes were 'highly politicised relationships'.<sup>14</sup> This competitiveness was particularly rigorous before World War I, when shipping monopolies had yet to form and when Australia was one of many colonial powers asserting themselves in the Pacific. Steamship companies thus had to negotiate political rivalries, sometimes acting as agents of an informal imperialism—or, at other times, challenging them. Melanesia was one of the first regions in which the new Australian federal government staked its claim. When French government subsidies of MM limited the efforts of BP and AUSN to expand to New Caledonia, the Australian federal government responded by subsidising Australian shipping to stabilise Australian and British interests in the nearby New Hebrides.<sup>15</sup>

Colonies and companies clung to each other when it was convenient, but loyalty was not absolute. In the case of New Caledonia, French colonial officials were willing to use Australian vessels when French shipping companies became indolent.<sup>16</sup> Shipping companies also formed alliances

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13 Steel, *Oceania under Steam*, 36, 43. See also Frances Steel, 'Re-Routing Empire? Steam-Age Circulations and the Making of an Anglo Pacific c1850–90', *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 3 (2015): 356–73, doi.org/10.1080/1031461x.2015.1071416; Frances Steel, 'Lines Across the Sea: Trans-Pacific Passenger Shipping in the Age of Steam', in *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie (London: Routledge, 2013), 315–29, doi.org/10.4324/9781315879499.ch21; Frances Steel, 'Maritime Mobilities in Pacific History: Towards a Scholarship of Betweenness', in *Mobility in History: Themes in Transport: T2M Yearbook 2011*, ed. Gijs Mom et al. (Neuchâtel: Editions Alphil, 2010), 199–204.

14 Steel, 'Maritime Mobilities in Pacific History'.

15 Steel, 'Maritime Mobilities in Pacific History', 31.

16 McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown*, 175.



among themselves, as was the case with several Australian companies in response to unionism. This in turn fostered public suspicion of large monopolies and their agendas in Australia, which can be evidenced in popular nicknames such as ‘Bloody Pirates’ (for BP) and ‘Would Rob Christ’ (for W.R. Carpenter & Company).<sup>17</sup>

Shipping companies also had to negotiate port regulations in the Pacific Islands and, in this way, European colonial powers could exercise a degree of control over shipping to protect their own interests. These regulations could entail significant ramifications for mobility and commerce in the Pacific. For example, in 1900, the US declared Honolulu a coastal port, prohibiting foreign ships from trading between Hawai‘i and the US mainland. This forced foreign steamships to divert to Canada or to transfer passengers to American steamers at Honolulu. Concurrently in Australia, the *Navigation Act of Australia* (1912) impacted Australian shipping wages and the use of ‘coloured’ labour. A part of the White Australia policy, the *Navigation Act* was resisted by Australian shipping companies whose profits relied on cheap foreign labour. During the debate, BP lobbied to include Papua within Australia’s coastal area. This bid failed and a clause was added to all government shipping contracts that prohibited foreign labourers on their ships from entering Sydney Harbour. This meant that foreign crews had to be unloaded from the ships at the last port of call before Australia and then retrieved on the next journey out.<sup>18</sup>

Excessive or restrictive government regulation of ports occasionally provoked resistance from shipping companies who defied international diplomatic protocols. One Australian case illustrates this situation. In 1904, BP publicly protested against being charged exorbitant fees for trading licences in the Marshall Islands, as German trading company Jaluit Gesellschaft protected its monopoly. Not only did BP actively generate public interest in the matter in the Australian press, it also pursued the German company to Europe for compensation, extending beyond diplomatic channels to publicise its cause in the British press and Parliament until the issue was resolved in 1906.<sup>19</sup> In 1920, BP still proudly boasted about its triumph against ‘the Kaiser’s government’ in its company publication, *Picturesque Travel*. Although Australia may

17 Steel, *Oceania under Steam*, 37; McKellar, *From Derby Round to Burketown*, 147.

18 Buckley and Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp*, 235–41.

19 Buckley and Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp*, 149.

have been a relatively small player on the global stage at this time, it was actively concerned with establishing its presence in the Pacific arena, with shipping companies being crucial players in solidifying Australia's commercial Pacific empire.

In this contested and competitive environment, BP and USSCo. quickly recognised the potential of Pacific Island tourism for expanding their revenue in the Australian and New Zealand markets. BP's general manager, James Burns, possessed a strong flair for publicity and was ahead of his time in his aiming for the tourist trade.<sup>20</sup> The first tourist trip that BP offered was in 1884 aboard the *Elsea*, from Thursday Island to Port Moresby and back in seven to eight weeks. For £25, it provided that 'capital shooting and fishing is sure to be had, and intending passengers should therefore take rifles and fishing tackle'.<sup>21</sup> Subsequent trips that BP offered varied from an around-the-world trip commencing from Sydney, to a three-week trip for school teachers during the Christmas holidays. USSCo. was also eager to expand its New Zealand coastal tours to the Pacific, which it did in 1883 by offering a winter cruise from Auckland to Fiji. From 1884 to 1899, it offered several more round-trip tours—initially a circuit to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, and then expanding to eastern Polynesia and Melanesia. USSCo. was innovative in its approach because it constructed a steamer, the SS *Waikare*, that was specifically designed for cruising. William Meeke Fehon's travel account in 1898 described how the 3,000-ton *Waikare* carried 160 passengers and that:

The steamer was specially fitted with first-class accommodation only and she carried no cargo ... no expense appears to have been spared in studying the most minute details for the comfort of the passengers.<sup>22</sup>

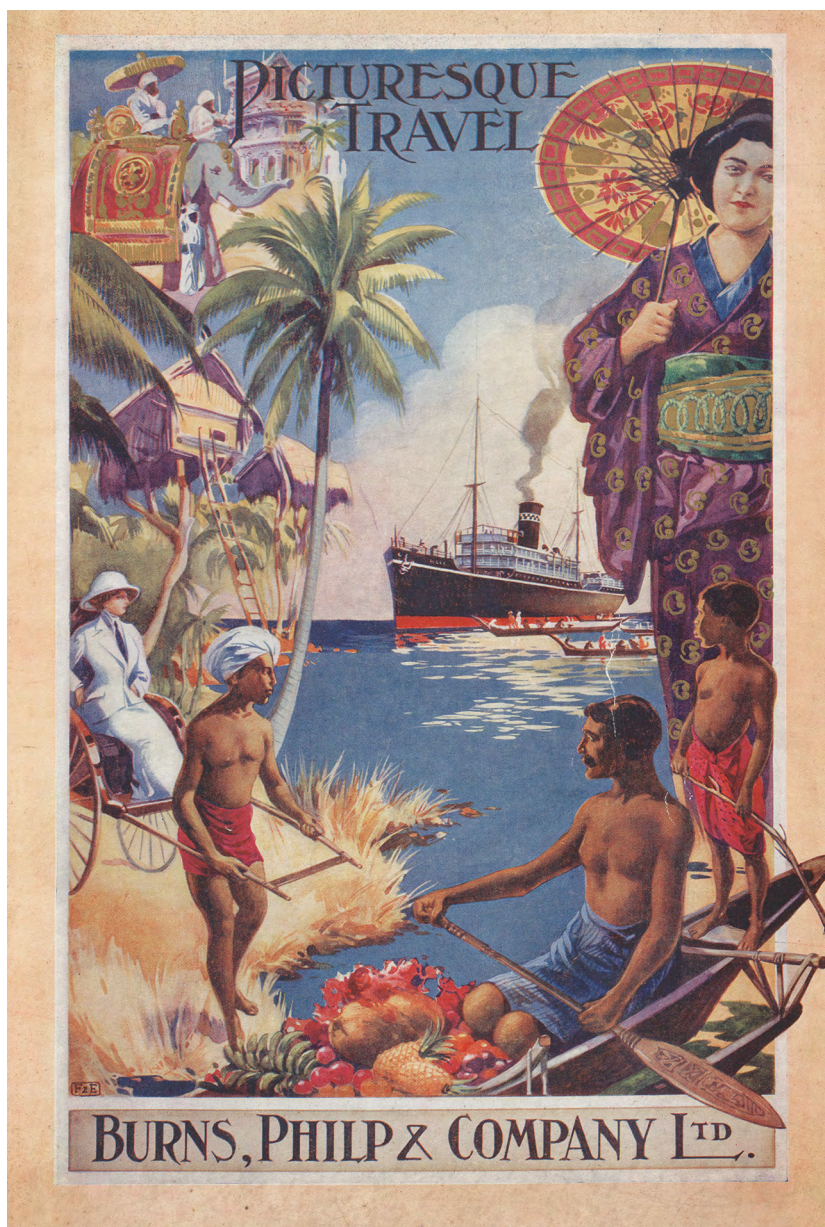
20 Buckley and Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp*, 53.

21 'Clipper Yacht Elsea, for New Guinea', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September 1884, 1, nla.gov.au/nla.news-article28369242.

22 William Meeke Fehon, *Six Weeks' Excursion to the South Seas and Eastern Pacific Islands: Comprising Raratonga, Tahiti, Raiatea, Samoa and the Friendly Islands, by the New Steamer 'Waikare', 3,000 tons: (Union Steam Ship Company of N.Z., Ltd) from Sydney, 30th June, 1898* (Sydney: S.D. Townsend and Co. Printers, 1898), 1.

These early forays into tourist cruises were short lived and did not become economically viable until the interwar years. Indeed, they were only possible due to the size and profitability of BP's and USSCo's business operations, as the two had gradually incorporated smaller competitors in the region. For most shipping companies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, passenger travel to the Islands was an additional source of income, and travel schedules were second to the demands of cargo.

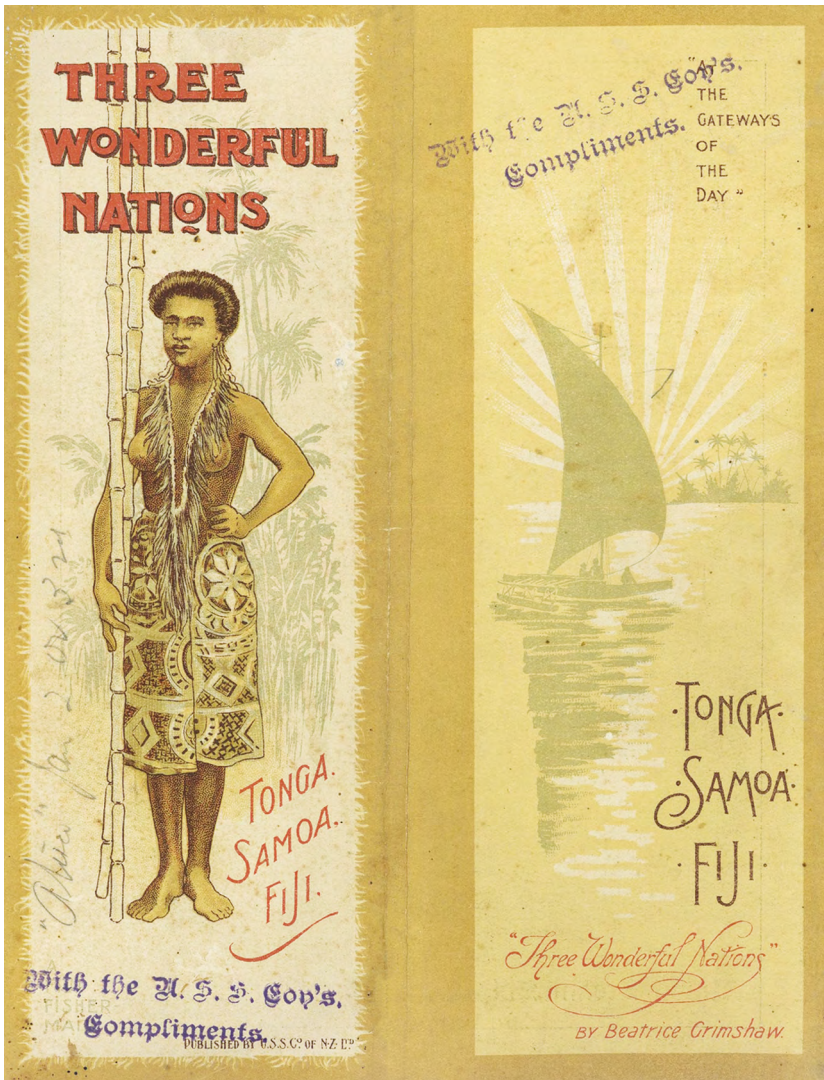
Despite the sluggish growth of tourism in the Pacific in the early twentieth century, BP and USSCo. are notable for their tourist publications. These were widely circulated in Australia and New Zealand and contributed to the development of the travel writing genre in both countries. In the same year that BP created its first tourist trip, it published and distributed 5,000 copies of a *Queensland Handbook of Information*, which was designed to publicise BP's shipping services. This was followed by a booklet, *British New Guinea*, in 1886 and a quarterly magazine, *Picturesque Travel*, in 1911. This magazine series (later renamed *BP Magazine*) initially printed 20,000 copies and offered readers a mix of educational travel accounts, corporate promotions and exciting illustrations. The front covers of *BP Magazine* tended to feature more global destinations and general travel themes than Pacific content; however, some of the earliest copies of *Picturesque Travel* featured Pacific icons (see Figure 5). Similarly, USSCo. tried to publicise its tours, publishing its first Pacific travel guide in 1895 (*A Cruise in the Islands*) and a periodical (*The Red Funnel*) from 1905 to 1909. Like BP, USSCo.'s 'descriptive booklets' relied on travel writers to disguise promotions within stories that blended fact and fiction. These minor publications initially relied on amateur writers and volunteers to contribute short pieces to an issue. However, as the tourism industry became more profitable, these publications became more sophisticated and specialised, with journalists, academics and freelance writers being paid for favourable articles of travel. Shipping companies funded the publication of reference books, guidebooks, histories and travelogues about the Pacific, as USSCo. did in 1914 when it published Beatrice Grimshaw's *Tours to the South Sea Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji* (see Figure 6).



**Figure 5: Burns, Philp & Company Publication.**

Source: Front cover of Burns Philp & Company, Limited, *Picturesque Travel*, no. 3 (1913).





**Figure 6: Rear Cover of a Union Steamship Company Publication.**

Source: Beatrice Grimshaw, *Tours to the South Sea Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji* (Dunedin: Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, 1914).



**Figure 7: Translate Your Precious Holiday Moments into Pathescope Home Movies.**

Source: *BP Magazine* 8, no. 1 (December 1935).

As camera and printing technology improved, more exciting and colourful illustrations took precedence over written text in the 1920s and 1930s. Travel magazines encouraged the practice of photographing one's Pacific travels by printing advertisements for the latest camera technology (see Figure 7). The messages that popular images and illustrations conveyed revisited the same stereotypes that travel writing had used since Europeans were first in the Pacific—many of which are discussed throughout this book in further detail. Norman and Ngaire Douglas suggested four 'fundamentals' of cruise imagery that are useful for considering these representations within the context of a growing commercial tourism industry: romance, luxury, exotica and nostalgia.<sup>23</sup> In a Pacific Island context, romance was typically symbolised by the alluring (often scantily dressed) female, while Melanesian men adorned with weapons or unusual dress provided the exotic element. Both figures were usually situated against a backdrop of coconut palms, mountainous islands or sandy beaches. Notions of luxury were conveyed with images of cruise ships or interiors, with the contrast against natural surroundings

<sup>23</sup> Norman Douglas and Ngaire Douglas, *The Cruise Experience* (Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education, 2004), 156–74.

and supposedly primitive peoples used to amplify this message and invoke nostalgia. Images of children suggested a primitive innocence and playfulness. Promotional images about the Pacific could also be ambiguous and contradictory at times. In some company publications, cruising was marketed as superior to regular sea travel because it prioritised the interests of tourists and brought them to islands that lay outside the major trading routes, offering a more complete Pacific experience.<sup>24</sup> However, the idea of sailing in the Pacific was nostalgic and attractive, so it often appeared simultaneously alongside cruise ship images.

These early travel accounts and promotions may have presented the Pacific Islands as a region of endless opportunities and adventures, but the colonial reality was that travel was highly regulated and controlled. For travellers, this was most commonly expressed in their frustrations with quarantine and customs officials, who were either too slow or too strict. One visitor to Suva in 1911 wrote, 'The Doctor from the shore was very slow in making his appearance, and the steamer waited, drifting, in the harbor, much to the discontent of the passengers', and later complained about paying an 'Alien Tax' to land at Honolulu.<sup>25</sup> In 1916, George Taylor noted:

Everyone's nerves were all askew, and by the time the medical officer came along to inspect, with his ferrety little eyes piercing through fierce bushy eyebrows, seeming to look into one's soul, one felt as if he had all the ills in the big medical dictionary.<sup>26</sup>

Those with their own private vessels fared no better, with one sailor complaining in 1927 that the 'red tape in Tahiti is awful'.<sup>27</sup>

Access was also a challenge. As the size of ships increased dramatically in the 1920s and 1930s to accommodate more passengers, the choice of port was limited to islands that had sufficient harbours to accommodate them, which were deep enough or possessed docks large enough. The tight scheduling of ships and the costly nature of layovers necessitated the

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24 Steel, 'An Ocean of Leisure'. USSCo. also composed *Maoriland: Illustrated Handbook to New Zealand* (Melbourne: George Robertson & Co., 1884); *Trip to the South Sea Islands by Union Steam Ship Company's S.S. 'Waikare': July–August, 1898* (Dunedin: J. Wilkie & Co., 1898); and *The All-Red Route: The Scenic Route to London* (Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, n.d.). It also published Thomas Bracken, *The New Zealand Tourist* (Dunedin: Mackay, Bracken, 1879).

25 George Stanley Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections 'on the road'* (Sydney: Swift Print, 1911), 13, 24.

26 George Augustine Taylor, *There! A Pilgrimage of Pleasure* (Sydney: Building Limited, 1916), 42.

27 Albert William Pearse, *A Windjammer* (Prentice (Sydney: John Andrews & Co., 1927), 7.

development of infrastructure in the Islands that catered for large numbers of travellers—such as refuelling facilities, quarantine and customs officials, shipping branches, stores, hotels, banks, cars, roads and reliable communication. The port towns of Honolulu and Suva were strategically positioned at the crossroads of multiple trans-Pacific routes and were the largest and most developed port towns of their day, which explains why they featured in more travel accounts than any other Island stopover.

The development of organised tourism as a commercial operation in Hawai'i began in the late 1890s, coinciding with the end of the Hawaiian monarchy. A group of US-backed businessmen and sugar planters forced Queen Liliuokalani to abdicate in 1893, and by 1898, Hawai'i was formally annexed by the US. This marked the culmination of more than 70 years of American influence in the Island group since missionaries first arrived in the 1820s, during which time US business became firmly entrenched in Hawaiian society. After the abdication, it was these wealthy elites who supported efforts to promote Hawai'i as a tourism destination, with the Hawai'i Promotion Committee being formed in 1903 (later renamed the Hawai'i Visitors Bureau). As Christine Skwiot argued, tourism in Hawai'i was a tool for legitimising and strengthening American colonial authority; it was initially used to attract permanent white settlers to Hawai'i and, after World War I, to provide for and entrench privileged white people within Hawai'i.<sup>28</sup> The growth of tourism in the Islands did not occur without indigenous resistance, as Noenoe K Silva uncovered in her analysis of Hawaiian-language newspapers (though Australian travellers rarely noticed this local tension).<sup>29</sup>

Advertisements framed Hawai'i as an extension of the US and as a gateway to the Orient. The natural features of the islands were initially promoted over the people, with only occasional generic images of alluring native women in tropical scenes.<sup>30</sup> It was only later in the 1920s that the iconic image of the 'hula girl' appeared—and by the 1930s, it had become firmly entrenched. Live hula performances became a key attraction and were

28 Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 11; Christine Skwiot, 'Genealogies and Histories in Collision: Tourism and Colonial Contestations in Hawai'i, 1900–1930', in *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 200.

29 Noenoe K Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (London: Duke University Press, 2004), doi.org/10.1215/9780822386223.

30 Desmond, *Staging Tourism*, 6, 36. For more information regarding the beginnings of tourism in Hawai'i, see Dawn Duensing, *Hawai'i's Scenic Roads: Paving the Way for Tourism in the Island* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).



marketed to the growing number of tourists that flocked to Hawai'i in the 1930s. According to figures published in the first edition of the *Pacific Islands Yearbook* in 1932, Hawai'i received 44,452 tourists—almost half of whom stayed two days or more.<sup>31</sup> In traditional Hawaiian society, hula was one of several dances that performed important religious, social and political functions; however, many of these dances were suppressed to satisfy missionary sensibilities. Hula resurged again during King Kalakaua's reign in the late 1800s as a form of resistance and was then appropriated as a symbolic tourist attraction. Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman characterised this cultural dance as being 'dis-membered then re-membered'.<sup>32</sup> Scholars have since critiqued the complex meanings and adaptations of the hula, which has been variously invoked as an authentic cultural marker, as a form of resistance against colonial rule and as a symbol of 'Hawaiianness'.<sup>33</sup> The iconography of the hula, and promotional material in general, overlooked the racial complexities of Hawai'i, which can be most vividly evidenced by how Hollywood appropriated and circulated images of the hula girl.

Most Australian travellers were unaware or unconcerned with these complex cultural symbols and racial hierarchies in Hawai'i. Rather, it was the American culture and the pace of development that they noted most often. Australians admired Honolulu for its luxury and modernity and frequently identified the port town as being part of the US rather than the Pacific. In 1909, one Australian observed that Honolulu was 'fast becoming completely Americanised'; by 1937, another traveller remarked that it was 'a typical American city'.<sup>34</sup> The construction of luxury hotels, beginning with the Moana Hotel in 1901, and the subsequent development of Waikiki beach contributed to this view of Honolulu. As Skwiot noted, *haole* (white residents) offered the tourist an opportunity 'to act out their fantasies of royalty and empire' in luxury resorts, with the indigenous Hawaiian featured only as a hula girl or beach boy.<sup>35</sup> The account of George Stanley Littlejohn, an Australian businessman who visited Suva and Honolulu en route to the US in 1909, is typical of many Australian

31 Robert William Robson, ed., *The Pacific Islands Yearbook*. 1st ed. (Sydney: Pacific Publications Ltd, 1932), 102.

32 Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, 'Re-Membering the History of the Hawaiian Hula', in *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific*, ed. Jeannette Mageo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 187, doi.org/10.1515/9780824841874-011.

33 Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, ed., *The Hula: A Revised Edition* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, *Sacred Hula: The Historical hula ala apapa* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1998).

34 Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections 'on the road'*, 24; Baume, *I Lived These Years*, 168.

35 Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 11.

travellers. Aged 47, Littlejohn was an experienced traveller and, having visited both islands three years previously, could make comparisons on the progress of development. He observed that, in Honolulu:

Great improvements effected in the wharfage accommodation within the last five years, coal elevators have been erected, and large vessels can get good berths with plenty of wharf space and plenty of water under the keel ... There is a good service of electric cars, electric light, and a telephone system. The streets are well cared for, and there is an adequate police corps ... building is progressing rapidly ... the hotels are excellent.<sup>36</sup>

Although travellers frequently admired Honolulu for its modern development, this sentiment came at the expense of Hawai'i's other Pacific qualities, including its local scenery, agriculture and indigenous inhabitants, who were often ignored in travel accounts. Very rarely did travellers identify the problems with the rapidly growing tourism industry in the Pacific Islands. Eric Baume, a traveller who visited Pago Pago in American Samoa, remarked that, like Hawai'i, Pago Pago had 'also trodden the Coney-phoney path'.<sup>37</sup>

The scale of the tourism industry in Suva was much smaller than that in Hawai'i, and historians have written much less about it.<sup>38</sup> In the same way that foreign businesses lobbied for Hawaiian tourism, the Fiji Visitors Bureau was established in 1923 by a group of businessmen known collectively as the White Settlement League. Its purpose was to encourage foreign investment and settlement in Fiji. Advertisements drew on similar stereotypes as those for Hawai'i (with generic scenery and alluring women), and efforts were made to construct adequate hotels and facilities for accommodating luxury liners. Indigenous Fijians were staged to pose for photographs at the wharf, but the bodily display never reached the same extent as the heavily commercialised hula in Hawai'i did.

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<sup>36</sup> Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections 'on the road'*, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Baume, *I Lived These Years*, 44.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the Fiji Visitors Bureau, see RJ Scott, *The Development of Tourism in Fiji since 1923* (Suva: Fiji Visitors Bureau, 1970) and Nicholas Halter, 'Tourists Fraternising in Fiji in the 1930s', *Journal of Tourism History* 12, vol. 1 (2020): 27–47, doi.org/10.1080/1755182x.2019.1682688.

The annual colonial reports of Fiji provide some insight into the gradual development of tourism in the Pacific Islands. In Fiji, visitors increased from an estimated 3,000 in 1926 to 5,001 by 1938.<sup>39</sup> In 1926, the report proudly attributed the growth of tourism in Fiji to:

Increased shipping facilities, the advertising which the Colony received at the Wembley and Dunedin exhibitions, the opening of a bowling green, and other increased facilities in Suva, and the issue of advertising matter by the shipping companies and the local tourist bureau.<sup>40</sup>

The reports also provided reasons for the fluctuations in tourist traffic. For example, in 1929, they recognised that tourism was ‘hampered by the lack of good road communications and hotel or rest-house accommodation away from Suva’ and that most Australians and New Zealanders travelled during the winter months.<sup>41</sup> These facts were well known by shipping companies who targeted Australian tours during the winter months. By 1937, the annual colonial reports’ statistics were more detailed; they recorded 11 vessels that brought 6,426 visitors who were specifically engaged on tourist cruises, 13,923 travellers who were passing through Suva on other boats, and 1,328 people who were staying a week or longer.<sup>42</sup>

Fiji was in much closer proximity to Australia than to Hawai‘i, and its British heritage meant that Australian travellers were more confident about conveying their final judgements. Compared to Hawai‘i, Littlejohn found Fiji poorly developed, with ‘plain roads’ and ‘no means of public conveyance other than a few hack carriages’.<sup>43</sup> Littlejohn was particularly scathing of the British rule in Fiji, arguing for an Australian or American takeover. Skwiot stated that such travel narratives ‘presented bad hotels, inadequate infrastructure, and poor public health as proof that the government in power was incapable of moral or material progress’.<sup>44</sup> Littlejohn’s disappointment starkly contrasts other opinions, such as those of William Allan, who

39 Great Britain Colonial Office, *Fiji: Annual General Report for the Year 1926* (London: H. M. S. O., 1927), 9; Great Britain Colonial Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Information, *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress on the People of Fiji*, 1938 (London: H. M. S. O., 1938), 31.

40 Great Britain Colonial Office, *Fiji: Annual General Report for the Year 1926*, 9–10.

41 Great Britain Colonial Office, *Fiji: Annual General Report for the Year 1929* (London: H. M. S. O., 1929), 9–10.

42 Great Britain Colonial Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Information, *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress on the People of Fiji*, 1937 (London: H. M. S. O., 1938), 33.

43 Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections ‘on the road’*, 13.

44 Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 3.

enjoyed taking a 'stroll' through the shopping area and was impressed that Suva had two picture houses, which he noted was 'better than Australia'.<sup>45</sup> This inconsistency suggests that first impressions of Suva also depended on individual expectations, on what specific comparisons were being made and on personal allegiances to colonial governments.

Although Suva was not as developed, its status as the British colonial centre of the Pacific, and as a major copra and sugar producer, required that it meet the demands of high shipping traffic levels. As a 1916 AUSN handbook detailed:

This wharf is soon to have a compeer in the great cement and rock structure, now in course of construction a short distance away. The cost is estimated at a quarter of a million.<sup>46</sup>

The handbook also advertised the convenience of 'palatial buildings', swimming baths, five hotels, 'several good boarding houses', a library, a museum, an Office of the Pacific Cable Board, New South Wales and New Zealand bank branches, a Chamber of Commerce, a hospital, two newspapers and 'several sporting and athletic clubs'. The most popular and well-known symbol of modernity in Suva was the Grand Pacific Hotel, which was constructed by USSCo. in 1914 to match the luxury and opulence that Hawaiian hotels promised. This hotel was described as 'Suva's Ritz' by Australian resident Betty Freeman, and it vastly improved on existing accommodation.<sup>47</sup> Beachcombers Edward Way Irwin and Ivan Goff described it as 'Suva's only hotel—the others were just pubs ... This was indeed an occasion for Suva's aristocracy. Hardly any half-breeds were there. Government officials, well-to-do planters, and leading storekeepers'.<sup>48</sup>

Few other Pacific Islands matched Suva and Hawai'i's pace of development in the early twentieth century. This pace partly depended on shipping companies' routes, such as USSCo.'s routes through Samoa, Tonga and Tahiti, which brought increasing numbers of passengers to those shores. It also depended on location and geography—with New Caledonia's proximity to Australia rendering travel quick and affordable—and deep harbours that facilitated the berthing of larger ships. Security and local

45 William Allan, *Homeward Bound, from Australia to Scotland: Impressions by the Way* (Helensburgh: Helensburgh and Gareloch Times, 1915), 24.

46 William Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated: A Handbook of Picturesque Travel and General Information for Passengers by Steamers of the Australasian United Steam Navigation Co. Ltd* (Brisbane: Robert McGregor & Coy Printers, 1916), 174, 177.

47 Betty Freeman, *Fiji—Memory Hold the Door* (Balgowlah: B. Freeman, 1996), 57.

48 Edward Way Irwin and Ivan Goff, *No Longer Innocent* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 97.

governance were important for encouraging or discouraging further travel. It was common for visitors to make observations regarding the local police, prisons, crime and the effectiveness of local governance. The location of certain 'attractions' was influential in luring more visitors. These attractions were distinctive natural or historical sites and required easy access. Journalist Julian Thomas alluded to this in his description of one of the New Hebrides groups: 'They have not, on Tanna, visitors sufficient to make it pay as a show place, a la Vesuvius'.<sup>49</sup>

Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island are prime examples of how important these factors are, as Australians considered both Islands ideal tourist destinations. Both Islands benefited from their close proximity to the Australian coast and from their status as Australian territories. Alan John Villiers described Lord Howe Island as the 'Tourists' Paradise', particularly for 'holiday-makers from New South Wales'.<sup>50</sup> M Kathleen Woodburn, a traveller en route to the New Hebrides, also remarked when she passed by that visitors 'still felt within the pale of civilisation'.<sup>51</sup> In Norfolk Island, tourist handbooks sold the benefits of its 'tropical charm with the calm reasonableness of the temperate zones', as well as its natural scenery and isolation.<sup>52</sup> The main tourist attraction for Norfolk Island was its convict and Pitcairn Islander heritage. Of course, this was a sanitised version of a brutal past, with visitors searching for local ruins of prisons and hoping to meet an old Pitcairner. In 1886, one traveller described how 'an atmosphere of tears, and sighs, and curses hung around these pens', and over 50 years later, another traveller described the island as 'subdued by the aura of misery'.<sup>53</sup> The absence of Pacific Islanders on both Islands, except for those training at the Melanesian Mission station, did not damage the Islands' tourist appeal. Both were scenic stopovers en route to other Pacific Islands, where cross-cultural encounters were expected. Further development of Australian tourism in these Islands was hampered by their small resident populations; their limited economic resources; the difficulty of landing due to reefs and the absence of suitable harbours; and the steamship routes themselves, which determined whether visitors could stay a few hours or whether they had to wait a month for a returning boat.<sup>54</sup>

49 Thomas, *Cannibals and Convicts*, 281.

50 Alan John Villiers, *Cruise of the Conrad: A Journal of a Voyage Around the World, Undertaken and Carried Out in the Ship Joseph Conrad, 212 tons, in the years 1934, 1935 and 1936 by way of Good Hope, the South Seas, the East Indies and Cape Horn* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937), 270.

51 M Kathleen Woodburn, *Backwash of Empire* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1944), 23.

52 'The Charm of Norfolk Island', *The Pacific Islands Yearbook*, 1st ed, ed. Robert William Robson, (Sydney: Pacific Publications Ltd, 1932), 129.

53 Thomas, *Cannibals and Convicts*, 35; Woodburn, *Backwash of Empire*, 32.

54 Robson, *The Pacific Islands Yearbook*, 124.

## Onboard Ship

Part of the popularity of steamship travel was the companies' offer of services that were safe, reliable, comfortable and affordable. Coffee reflected on this in his numerous trans-Pacific voyages:

For the most part, the service has been comfortable and safe, and as fast as the remuneration warranted ... the rates were reasonable, and most of the time the seas were smooth—indeed, enjoyably so.<sup>55</sup>

Although steamship cruising did not reach its peak until the interwar period, by the 1880s and 1890s, steamships had begun to challenge the belief that sea travel was dangerous, boring and uncomfortable. For the first time, sea travel could be undertaken as a leisure activity rather than as a necessity, and large corporations saw the value of tourism as a separate venture rather than one to be tacked onto trade and cargo operations.<sup>56</sup> BP's magazine, *Picturesque Travel*, marketed its travel to the 'change-seeking tourist', or to those seeking a 'healthful holiday' away from the colder climates.<sup>57</sup>

An example of this is AUSN's 1916 handbook (see Figure 8), which provided 'Picturesque Travel and General Information' to 'those who desire rapidity of transit with high-class comfort'.<sup>58</sup> Like BP's and USSCo.'s publications, AUSN's illustrated handbook emphasised modern conveniences and luxury onboard ship, for 'a very moderate expense'. Its passenger ship, *Levuka*, was 'specially designed for this service'—it was 'lighted with electricity throughout' and catered for 100 first-class passengers and 50 second-class passengers, with '4000 cubic feet of refrigerated space'. Existing photographs showcase the luxurious interiors of the drawing rooms, smoking rooms and dining rooms, as well as passengers lying on deck chairs. The handbook was careful to militate against preconceptions of monotony, claiming 'at no time is the vessel more than a few days out of sight of land'.<sup>59</sup> It also suggested specific activities that passengers could do ashore—offering connecting services with the inter-island vessel, *Amra*, motor launches and motor cars, and providing detailed timings and costs. Ironically, the steamship's ability to collapse distance meant that it had become more closely connected to land than sail ships.<sup>60</sup> Described by historians as the 'Golden Age' of travel,

55 Coffee, *Forty Years on the Pacific*, 5.

56 Steel, 'An Ocean of Leisure'.

57 Burns, Philp & Company, Limited, *Picturesque Travel*, no. 1 (1911), 50.

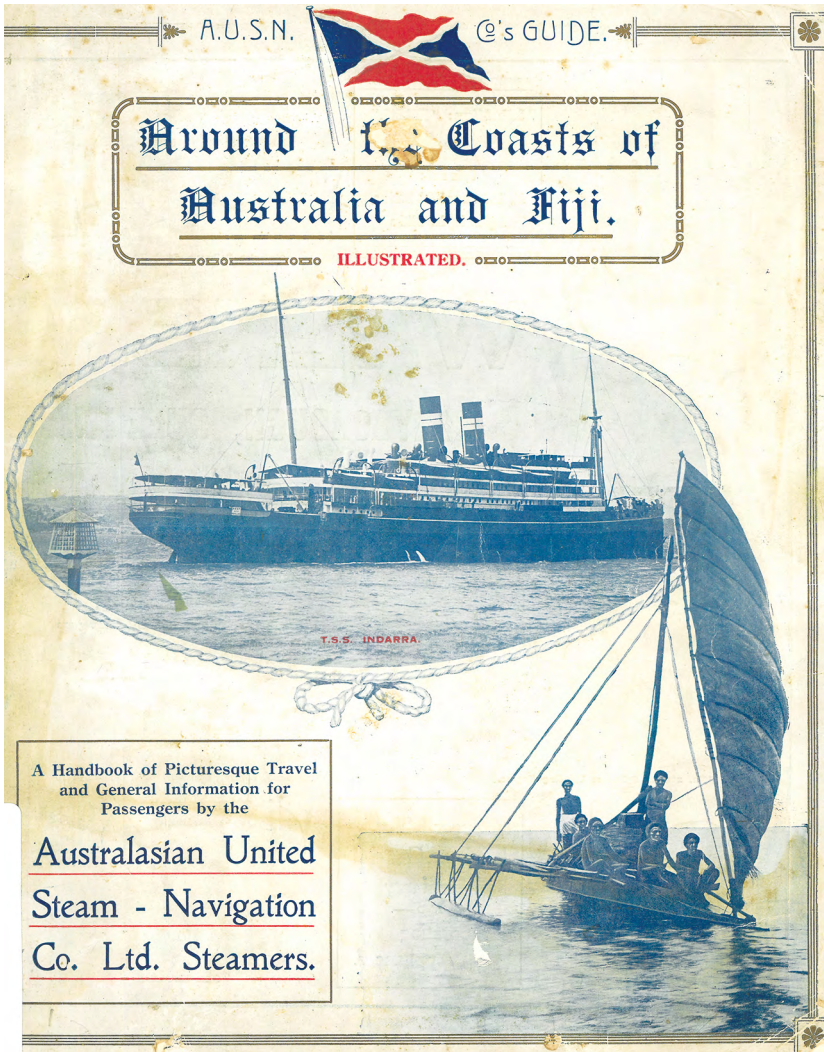
58 Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated*, 3.

59 Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated*, 14, 161.

60 Steel, *Oceania under Steam*, 16.



the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the growth of publications emphasising the spaciousness, opulence and speed of travel.<sup>61</sup> By this time, AUSN and smaller companies were replaced by much larger liners owned by P&O and the Oceanic Steamship Company.



**Figure 8: Australasian United Steam Navigation Co. Travel Guide.**

Source: Front cover of William Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated* (Brisbane: Robert McGregor & Co. Printers, 1916).

61 Douglas and Douglas, *The Cruise Experience*, 66.

Steamships changed the rhythms of mobility in the Pacific, shaping individual experiences of travel and arrival. As sociologist John Urry argued, rapid transportation can transform how passengers comprehend landscapes, as well as create new public spaces such as docks and restrict social activities to a specified timetable.<sup>62</sup> Young travel companions Irwin and Goff were excited to place themselves at the mercy of the machine:

She was dead to time, remorselessly to time, ruthless and efficient. What knowledge, what organization, what perfection of machinery was required to bring that mass of steel to Suva wharf, to a pin-point in an ocean, arriving at the scheduled second! Pilot, captain, deckhands, greasers—all at their jobs. On shore, clerks, stevedores, carriers, customs men ... It was all a huge machine of brains and flesh and steel, adjusted to the penny and the second. Into that machine, blindly, we must toss ourselves.<sup>63</sup>

The modern conveniences of the steamship were frequently contrasted to the primitivity of Islanders. Pictorially, the contrast of traditional canoes and steamships were common (see Figures 5 and 8). Steamships were objects of national and imperial pride, and one of the defining images of modernity.<sup>64</sup> They embodied the values of progressive Europe, with luxury interiors catering to wealthy travellers by the late nineteenth century. The emphasis on modern comfort and safety assured travellers that they would have a familiar refuge in a savage and exotic land. Of course, not all promises made in advertisements were fulfilled. Some customers, like Littlejohn, were impressed: ‘This steamer is practically a floating hotel. There are many conveniences on board, including a barber’s shop ... and a laundry.’<sup>65</sup> Others, like writer Alan Durward Mickle, who travelled aboard the *Amra* in 1908, discovered:

On the shipping plan in the office the two-berth cabin looked quite spacious, but shipping plans can be very deceptive, and this one was. We found that there was a space of about nine inches between the parallel bunks and that the bunks were extremely narrow ... the first night on board was not exactly peaceful.<sup>66</sup>

62 John Urry, *Consuming Places* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 131.

63 Irwin and Goff, *No Longer Innocent*, 114.

64 Steel, *Oceania under Steam*, 26.

65 Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections 'on the road'*, 18.

66 Alan Durward Mickle, *Of Many Things* (Sydney: Australian Publishing Co., 1941), 180–1.



Travelling through the Pacific by ship entailed close-quartered living for extended periods. Aboard the sailing ships that explored the Pacific, 'The essence of shipboard life was boundary maintenance', argued Greg Dening, which was no different to the cruise liners of the twentieth century.<sup>67</sup> Steamship passengers entered a microcosm of Western society onboard, with its own traditions, social etiquette and physical areas that were demarcated according to the fare paid. However, travel writing about the Pacific Islands reveals that travel was not only a luxury reserved for the wealthy. Although most Australian travellers belonged to the middle or upper classes, travel could be achieved via cheaper berths aboard sailing and cargo ships, as well as by working aboard vessels. In fact, travellers from the Australian colonies in the 1880s and 1890s were as likely to be opportunists seeking a better life in the nearby Islands as they were to be wealthy travellers. As larger iron hulls allowed for more room below deck, companies could offer two fares; by the interwar period, another fare was introduced between first and third class to serve a growing middle class. First-class passengers enjoyed grand saloons, while steerage class varied between small cabins or sleeping berths. Earlier steamships were hot and cramped, and passengers struggled in the tropical heat. Some steamships also catered specifically for female travellers by employing stewardesses and segregating certain areas on the ships. Crew members, many of whom were Islanders, were also segregated. Elinor Mordaunt, a 51-year-old Australian woman visiting New Caledonia in 1923, travelled aboard the *El Kantara* with 20 first-class passengers, an unspecified number in second class, cargo, French soldiers and an international crew that included a 'colored steward called Chocolat'.<sup>68</sup> This final comment was typical of the observations that attributed simplistic and racist generalisations to Pacific Island labourers.

Several travellers described these social distinctions onboard and the gradual breakdown in conventions during travel. Irwin and Goff were eager to escape the 'cage of conventions' at home in Perth and described their adventures as beachcombers and stowaways in *No Longer Innocent* (1934). When they were caught sneaking aboard a USSCo. ship to Honolulu, they described their new-found fame among the passengers:

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67 Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 158.

68 Mordaunt, *The Venture Book*, 11–14.

We bore no stigma. We were, in fact, celebrities. Passengers ventured from the dim splendours of the first and second class to view the stowaways and to take photographs to thrill their friends at home. Among the steerage passengers our prestige was enormous.<sup>69</sup>

They offered one example of a woman who visited them from first class, and who was persuaded to travel steerage next time because she considered the people 'more interesting'. She continued, adding that 'third-class passengers aren't just holiday-makers or whisky-drinking business men. They're more human. They're poor people, and struggling, and courageous.'<sup>70</sup>

For some travellers, this mixing of people was an attraction. Thomas Allan McKay was a self-proclaimed 'plain British–Australian business man, wearing no political party labels, disowning all class prejudice', who gladly recalled how:

On shipboard especially, thrown pell-mell into contact, one meets, to the confusion of many preconceived ideas, all sorts and conditions of men. They range from red-rag revolutionaries to artistically crusted Tories; from people whose mental horizons are rimmed by racehorses and film stars, to intellectuals copiously crammed with 'perilous stuff' that must out.<sup>71</sup>

Freeman also recalled how first-class travel was an opportunity to 'actually get to know' the famous and the successful.<sup>72</sup> For other travellers, certain class distinctions remained uncrossed: European refugees and Chinese immigrants travelling in steerage were 'reserved' and 'messed by themselves'.<sup>73</sup> For Eric Muspratt, who faced a sea voyage home after having worked for six months overseeing a copra plantation, steamships created an 'atmosphere of petty snobbery', and steamer passengers 'seemed to be offensively smart and smug and sleek-looking in their well-laundered white ducks'.<sup>74</sup> He blamed the missionaries and government officials for 'this constant sense of social distinctions'.

69 Irwin and Goff, *No Longer Innocent*, 134–5.

70 Irwin and Goff, *No Longer Innocent*, 135.

71 Thomas Allan McKay, *Seeing the World Twice 1926–1935* (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1936), vii–viii.

72 Freeman, *Fiji—Memory Hold the Door*, 77.

73 Freeman, *Fiji—Memory Hold the Door*, 78; Sydney Walter Powell, *Adventures of a Wanderer* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), 132.

74 Eric Muspratt, *My South Sea Island* (London: Martin Hopkinson Ltd, 1931), 21.

The liminality of sea travel—or ‘cruise culture’, as George M Foster describes it<sup>75</sup>—was the result of the confined spaces onboard, the nature of travel as a time of transition and uncertainty, and the shared interests of many travellers. These interests included a desire for leisure, the search for self-education and improvement, or a pilgrimage ‘home’ to Europe. As William Ramsay Smith, a traveller, noted in 1924, ‘There must be something about shipboard life that changes one’s ordinary standards regarding socially permissible or individual duty, or the practice of shore etiquette’.<sup>76</sup> Group activities also generated a sense of *communitas* onboard—or, as one traveller observed, passengers became ‘a happy family’.<sup>77</sup> Such activities included deck games, common dining, reading and smoking rooms, lectures, regulated patterns of meal times and sightseeing departures. Deck games comprised ‘racing, jumping, quoit-throwing, bull-board, drafts, chess, &c. Nearly £50 were subscribed and distributed in prizes during the voyage to America. Several games were specially arranged for ladies’.<sup>78</sup> This sense of community was even more acute in the smaller confines of yachts, as expressed by Ralph Stock at the conclusion of his voyage: ‘Already, we were changed to each other’s eye’.<sup>79</sup>

The most popular and widely practised communal ritual onboard cruise ships was reserved for crossing the equator, and it relegated all passengers to an equal social status of ‘landlubbers’ and ‘polliwogs’ (those who had never crossed the equator). Based on a seafaring tradition that began as a religious offering and then gradually became an initiation rite, crew members dressed as King Neptune and his court attendants.<sup>80</sup> Charles Henry Matters, a traveller, described the sight of Neptune and his wife: ‘Enthroned in royal state, and mounted on a car, the sailors in line wheel them round and round the deck’.<sup>81</sup> Based on the notion that those who refused to pay Neptune a bribe of silver must be punished, Matters added that:

75 George M Foster, ‘South Seas Cruise: A Case Study of a Short-Lived Society’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 13, no. 2 (1986): 215–38.

76 William Ramsay Smith, *In Southern Seas: Wanderings of a Naturalist* (London: John Murray, 1924), 8.

77 Alfred Joseph, *A Bendigonian Abroad: Being Sketches of Travel Made During a Ten Months Tour Through Europe and America* (Melbourne: Reardon & Mitchell, n.d.), 249.

78 Charles Henry Matters, *From Golden Gate to Golden Horn, and Many Other World Wide Wanderings: Or 50,000 Miles of Travel over Sea and Land* (Adelaide: Vardon & Pritchard, 1892), 13.

79 Ralph Stock, *The Cruise of the Dream Ship* (London: William Heinemann, 1921), 238.

80 Keith P Richardson, ‘Polliwogs and Shellbacks: An Analysis of the Equator Crossing Ritual’, *Western Folklore* 36, no. 2 (1977): 155, doi.org/10.2307/1498967.

81 Matters, *From Golden Gate to Golden Horn*, 13.

Several victims are selected. In quick time, with great pomp and ceremony, they are lathered and shaved in comic style, and suddenly doused in a salt-water pond, formed by a sail tied up at four corners.

This was an event of horseplay and fancy dress that became more elaborate as shipping companies sought to attract more passengers. It was also a convenient excuse to break the monotony of travel and appease any conflicts aboard.

Another important activity onboard centred on reading, writing and cultural discussion. Shipping companies emphasised the benefits of travel for education and self-development, which resonated with the European tradition of the grand tour. Consequently, Australians were avid readers prior to the journey, with guidebooks providing recommended reading lists for prospective travellers. Many ships were equipped with libraries that were well stocked with canonical Pacific literature. Woodburn noted how there was an adequate library even on the small, no-frills boat, *Morinda*, with Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall's trilogy of the HMS *Bounty* mutiny being the most popular title. In the library, the books 'worked overtime, having the advantage of local colour'.<sup>82</sup> Published travel accounts often provided their own reading recommendations, and it was common for authors to compare their own first impressions to those of previous writers. The books that were read onboard allowed travellers to process their journeys, shaping their expectations and equipping them with familiar literary tropes on which they could rely. Writing was also an important activity for passing the time, and for gaining a sense of progress at sea.<sup>83</sup> Diaries and letters served as both aide-memoires and as records to be sent home and shared among family and friends. Travellers would also discuss their experiences of travel with one another, and ships would sometimes organise lectures. In his *Notes of Travel* (1894), JC Hickson mentioned listening to the Reverend George Brown onboard as the ship returned to Auckland.<sup>84</sup>

82 Woodburn, *Backwash of Empire*, 14–15.

83 Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 102.

84 JC Hickson, *Notes of Travel: From Pacific to Atlantic, with Description of the World's Fair at Chicago; Also Travels by Sea and Land round the World* (Parramatta: Fuller's Lightning Printing Works, 1894), 4.

Journeys and destinations could both play a major role in a traveller's expectations and impressions. For those transiting the Pacific from Australia to Europe, the Islands were described in little detail and were sidelined in favour of European settings. These travellers were almost in equal number to those for whom the Pacific Islands was their main destination. Pacific Island travellers were attracted to the Islands because of the isolation, the difficulty of access and a sense of the unknown and adventure, with their texts emphasising these characteristics accordingly. The most common complaints onboard ships were seasickness and bad weather, which could heighten an individual's experience when landing onshore. Wilfred Burchett, an experienced traveller and journalist, recollected a bout of terrible seasickness and vividly described smells such as the 'rancid smell of rotting copra' and the 'tantalising fragrance' of Tahiti; he likened his arrival on land to 'scurvy-ridden sailors from whaling fleets of old', with his experience of weariness and impatience shared by many others.<sup>85</sup> When taken to the extreme—such as in the case of Fred Rebell, who sailed by himself from Sydney to San Francisco—the experience of sickness and danger while travelling could stimulate a religious epiphany.<sup>86</sup> Reactions to the Islands could also be shaped by the direction of the journey, as Joseph explained:

It may easily be understood that passengers who are returning home are far more difficult to satisfy than those who are leaving Australia on their holiday trip. The latter are full of anticipation and expectancy.<sup>87</sup>

Of course, the other passengers onboard could be important in a personal journey. Baume's case is an extreme but demonstrative example. Travelling with his parents to San Francisco, Baume recalled:

The spectacle—amazing to my eleven-year-old eyes—of a missionary making violent physical love to one of the Rarotongan natives brought aboard the ship for the two days' run from Rarotonga to Tahiti.<sup>88</sup>

85 Wilfred Burchett, *Passport: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1969), 101, 105.

86 Fred Rebell, *Escape to the Sea: The Adventures of Fred Rebell, who Sailed Single Handed in an Open Boat 9,000 Miles across the Pacific in Search of Happiness* (London: J. Murray, 1939).

87 Joseph, *A Bendigonian Abroad*, 249. See also Prue Ahrens, Lamont Lindstrom and Fiona Paisley, *Across the World with the Johnsons: Visual Culture and American Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2013), 37.

88 Baume, *I Lived These Years*, 34.

By mentioning it in his autobiography, it is clear that this event left an impression on him, and Baume's attitude to the Islands was marked by his dismay at the corruption of natural beauty by foreign influences. Mordaunt's experience of witnessing tension and conflict between crew members aboard small vessels was typical of Australian yachting narratives:

These men have, indeed, been so long at sea that, apart from the usual taciturnity of sailors, they are acutely on one another's nerves, can scarcely bear the sight of one another.<sup>89</sup>

Sometimes, a traveller's first encounter with a Pacific Islander would occur onboard a ship, particularly on smaller sailing boats and traders but also occasionally on larger cruise vessels. For some travellers, especially before the 1900s, the stereotypes of lazy, incompetent or dangerous Islanders were confirmed. One Australian traveller, Richard Cheeseman, observed:

His crew were composed of white officers and colored seamen, these latter continually deserting, so others have to be taken on wherever opportunity offers. They are good working fellows when well officered, but useless otherwise.<sup>90</sup>

Of all accounts, those of traders—specifically labour traders—offer the most detailed descriptions of Islander crews. 'The *force majeure* of circumstances was overcoming all my prejudices', remarked Thomas while aboard a recruiting ship in the New Hebrides in 1883.<sup>91</sup> The use of individual names in travel writing, as opposed to generic terms like 'native' or 'Tommy the Tongan', suggests that travellers sometimes had close and intimate personal contact onboard ship. Some Australians, like Joseph Hadfield Grundy, even made lifelong friends; he maintained an 18-year-long friendship with a 13-year-old boy from Suva named Tim.<sup>92</sup> These encounters were different from others because they occurred in a safer, more familiar environment than the beach, and because they shaped attitudes and expectations before the travellers had even arrived.

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89 Mordaunt, *The Venture Book*, 131.

90 Richard Cheeseman, *The South Sea Islands: Notes of a Trip* (Brighton: publisher unknown, 1901), 2.

91 Thomas, *Cannibals and Convicts*, 164.

92 Joseph Hadfield Grundy, *A Month in New Zealand; A Trip to Fiji, Tonga and Samoa* (Adelaide: Hunkin, Ellis & King, 1931), 7.

## First Impressions

The moment of first arrival was a significant event for many travellers, and it was commonly described in greater detail than the rest of the journey. As Mary Louise Pratt argued, 'Arrival scenes are a convention of almost every variety of travel writing and serve as particularly potent sites for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation'.<sup>93</sup> This was a powerful and much-anticipated moment for travellers, when imagination met reality. Island arrivals were particularly potent, as the crossing from water, to sand and to land prompted shipboard visitors to 'explore and metaphorise the psychologies of arrival and departure more explicitly' than in continental settings.<sup>94</sup> Some aspects of the arrival experience resembled European exploration literature—travellers reported a spirit of friendship almost immediately, betraying a familiar 'European desire for amicable relations' and an assumption of indigenous consent, according to Vanessa Smith.<sup>95</sup> However, the arrival procedures for steamships in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were significantly different from the beach crossings of explorers, missionaries and traders that preceded them. Travellers bypassed the 'in-between spaces' of the beach, a concept that Greg Denning has explored in depth, and moved directly from ship to port.<sup>96</sup> The chaos and confusion of the classic Polynesian arrival scene, in which Islanders paddled from the shore and swarmed ships, was replaced by a controlled and regulated process. The predictability of the steamship movement ensured that the experience of incomprehension when arriving at the harbour was not present.<sup>97</sup> This meant that Australian travellers did not describe the Islanders' bewilderment for all things 'civilised', nor did they observe a European fascination with all things 'native'. Rather, visitors focused on verifying their expectations and legitimising their experiences.

First arrival in the Pacific commenced with a period of observation rather than engagement, with the slow approach of the ship allowing passengers time to appraise the scene before encountering any inhabitants. As William

93 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 77.

94 Vanessa Smith, 'Pitcairn's "Guilty Stock": The Island as Breeding Ground', in *Islands in History and Representation*, ed. Vanessa Smith and Rod Edmond (New York: Routledge, 2003), 116.

95 Vanessa Smith, *Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.

96 Denning, *Islands and Beaches*, 159.

97 Denning, *Islands and Beaches*, 159. See also Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 35.

John Stephens remarked, 'Landing in Suva ... is an adventure in itself. Long before we reached the harbor we began to see the islands'.<sup>98</sup> Although travellers unanimously agreed that the Islands possessed an 'indescribable beauty and charm', they nonetheless tried their best to describe the scenery in detail, focusing on vivid colours, pleasant fragrances and abundant vegetation that implied mystery, potential and natural perfection.<sup>99</sup> With a closer inspection of these islands, evidence of colonial settlement came into view. For example, Allan wrote:

The dawn was quickly merging into daylight, and in the gathering brightness the coast line was losing much of its quondam vagueness. The brilliant green of the prolific tropical vegetation was assuming a richer tint, and the saw-edged configuration of the mountains, which slant upwards from the city ... was becoming more plainly outlined ... The city rose in irregular tiers from the water front, and the partiality for red and ochre, so much in evidence at Auckland, was found here also.<sup>100</sup>

Eric Leed's history of travel termed the first step in the arrival procedure as 'identification'—a step in which the traveller identified the place and the place identified the traveller.<sup>101</sup> Travellers would occasionally be aware that they were being watched, as was the case for Woodburn in the New Hebrides in 1944, when she wrote of 'the somewhat uncomfortably fly-under-the-microscope-ish conviction accompanying that feeling [of being watched]'.<sup>102</sup>

The visual consumption of the Islands may be evidence of a 'tourist gaze', one driven by literature and corporate promotions that encouraged an 'anticipation, especially through day-dreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures'.<sup>103</sup> However, the prolific use of the term 'picturesque' more clearly highlights the increasing conformity of travellers in the Pacific. This label was indiscriminately applied to all aspects of the Pacific Islands—not only to the natural scenery but also to the people, artificial constructions, objects and even sounds and personal expressions. The 'picturesque' was universally accepted as conforming with 'standard pictorial representations of beauty' and was 'immediately compatible with all one's

98 William John Stephens, *Samoan Holidays* (Bendigo: Cambridge Press, 1935), 13.

99 John J Gay, *Through Other Lands* (Sydney: Edwards, Dunlop, 1931), 3.

100 Allan, *Homeward Bound*, 22.

101 Leed, *The Mind of The Traveler*, 85.

102 Woodburn, *Backwash of Empire*, 64.

103 Urry, *Consuming Places*, 132.



fond preconceptions', according to Malcolm Andrews.<sup>104</sup> Originating from the vocabulary of mid-eighteenth-century tourists travelling to the English countryside, the term developed as travellers appraised a scene according to the conventions of landscape painting and classical notions of beauty. The term's popularity was associated with the democratisation of travel and the rise of popular international tourism from the 1840s onwards.<sup>105</sup> Just as these tourists observed locations through the frame of a painting or a Claude glass, so too did travellers of the twentieth century when they observed the Pacific view of the Islands within specific frames (of the painting, of the camera lens or even of the ship itself). In his travel account, meteorologist Clement Lindley Wragge frequently referred to the scenery as a 'panorama' and as a 'tableau of tropic beauty', later exclaiming, 'What a picture for an artist does the wharf present!'<sup>106</sup>

Travellers to the Pacific Islands remained bound by European artistic conventions. Like those who idealised English rural landscapes, travellers to the Islands continued to use 'picturesque' to aestheticise nature and the natural human figure.<sup>107</sup> In chasing this ideal, the search for the picturesque usually involved a selective modification or improvement. In some cases, the realities of industrial development at the wharves were ignored in favour of conventional descriptions of natural scenery and vegetation. In other cases, features that were inconsistent with romantic ideals (e.g. Indian labourers or European convicts) were labelled 'unpicturesque'.<sup>108</sup>

Based on this artistic convention, travellers responded more positively to volcanic islands than to coral atolls. Volcanic islands offered scenery that was comparable to celebrated locations in Europe, and thus aligned with classical notions of aesthetic beauty. The dense, green and 'luxuriant' vegetation, as well as the 'rugged grandeur of its mountain peaks', were features that travellers identified and admired.<sup>109</sup> Aletta Lewis, a traveller, described this aesthetic preference as 'a consuming thirst for green'.<sup>110</sup>

104 Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1989), vii.

105 Urry, *Consuming Places*, 175.

106 Clement Lindley Wragge, *The Romance of the South Seas* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), 128, 165.

107 Smith, *Imagining the Pacific*, 64.

108 For example, see Robert Brummitt, *A Winter Holiday in Fiji* (Sydney: Methodist Book Depots, 1914), 45; Richard Reynell Bellamy, *Mixed Bliss in Melanesia* (London: John Long, 1934), 18.

109 Pearse, *A Windjammer* 'Prentice, 141.

110 Aletta Lewis, *They Call Them Savages* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1938), 6.

Wragge recalled Scotland when he visited Tahiti, noting that ‘the frowning mountains, wreathing clouds along the steeps, and the gurgling burn of the Fautaua, all remind one of the Land of Burns’.<sup>111</sup> In comparison, coral atolls were small, low, flat and less fertile. Sydney Walter Powell observed, ‘We called at several atolls, which do not need description, since all atolls are of the same character’.<sup>112</sup>

Mountains (and volcanoes) also offered promises of the unknown, of danger and of potential wealth. As one guidebook described, ‘The purple hills ... seem to speak of a mysterious life hidden in their vastnesses’.<sup>113</sup> Imposing mountain ranges and the potentially savage peoples that they contained conveyed to travellers a quality of greatness, power, chaos and monstrosity. Atolls and reefs presented their own dangers to foreign travellers—yet it was the mountains that inspired the ‘picturesque’ and the ‘sublime’. Mordaunt’s experience of navigating dangerous reefs was monotonous and marked only by atolls that were ‘overhung by a thick cloud of mosquitoes’; in contrast, the first sight of Tahiti prompted her to ‘tremble with excitement’.<sup>114</sup>

Coming ashore, travellers of the twentieth century encountered Islanders at the wharf rather than at the beach. This experience of contact was different from that of previous European explorers and traders, who rowed ashore in smaller, exposed boats to Islands whose settlements or people may not have been visible from the shoreline. Their accounts are marked by apprehension, as they carefully looked for signs of welcome or hostility. The beach landing was still used for Australian travellers who strayed from the main Islands or tourist routes, but the reception was usually more predictable and safer. The modern wharf was a new and vibrant public area at major steamship destinations, with ‘Steamer Day’ being a major event for Island residents as much as it was for the new arrivals. The crowds created a festive atmosphere for visitors, full of exotic sights, sounds and smells. Similar trends in observation can be found in various Australian accounts of Asia.<sup>115</sup> For example, Aletta Lewis observed: ‘It was a happy intimate scene. Every one and everything

111 Wragge, *The Romance of the South Seas*, 232.

112 Sydney Walter Powell, ‘Each to His Taste’, Papers of Sydney Powell [circa 1920–1950], MS10012 (Canberra: National Library of Australia), 258.

113 Robson, *The Pacific Islands Yearbook*, 70.

114 Mordaunt, *The Venture Book*, 59.

115 Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours*, 21.

seemed to belong in the circle of the sheltering arms [the mountains].<sup>116</sup> An AUSN shipping guide described how 'the mixture of races is noticed on every side as one passes to the end of the wharf'.<sup>117</sup> Powell was struck by the 'brightness, lightness and cleanness' of dresses, while Allan was entertained by the 'curiously dressed, mahogany skinned Fijian wharf lumpers'; others described the white 'ducks' of European residents and the distinctive uniforms of indigenous police.<sup>118</sup>

The industrial nature of working wharves sometimes dampened travellers' expectations of arrival. Walter Gill, an overseer, recalled his disappointment in the 1910s when he did not see a single Fijian at Lautoka, only an 'iron and steel behemoth' that was the wharf and 'the dark phallus of a tall chimney'.<sup>119</sup> M Lloyd was disappointed by the 'very dirty wharfs and black labor' at Honolulu, and Powell was repelled by the settlement at Rarotonga because it was 'so prim, so British'.<sup>120</sup> Disembarking the ship could also be another source of disappointment, as local tour guides and opportunists took advantage of the new visitors. In Suva, Littlejohn described the 'crowds of evil-smelling men offering at high prices rubbishy mats, spears, cocoanuts, shells, coral, and fruit'.<sup>121</sup> However, such disdain for local people reflected his own racial views rather than reality. Receiving advice from onboard the ship, Ivan and Goff refused to have their bags handled by labourers at the wharf, instead sprinting away with their luggage and earning the scorn of the residents: 'All united in a strenuous jeer of disapproval ... Even a group of palm-trees that had nodded a welcome to us as we entered Suva Bay seemed suddenly aloof'.<sup>122</sup>

Beyond the wharf, travellers wandered the town—and their evaluations can serve as judgements regarding the effectiveness of colonial rule. Visually pleasing architecture, neat and clean streets, and sculpted gardens impressed, while ramshackle and disorderly dwellings, poor roads and disagreeable people reflected poorly. However, the final judgement was reserved for the view from above, as travellers climbed to higher ground. Handbooks and travel guides directed travellers to specific lookouts,

116 Lewis, *They Call Them Savages*, 6.

117 Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated*, 174.

118 Powell, *Adventures of a Wanderer*, 133; Allan, *Homeward Bound*, 22; Muspratt, *My South Sea Island*, 255; Gay, *Through Other Lands*, 4.

119 Walter Gill, *Turn North-East at the Tombstone* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1970), 24.

120 M Lloyd, *Wanderings in the Old World and the New* (Adelaide: Vardon & Pritchard, 1901), 6; Powell, *Adventures of a Wanderer*, 132.

121 Littlejohn, *Notes and Reflections 'on the road'*, 15.

122 Irwin and Goff, *No Longer Innocent*, 39.

promising 'magnificent views' and 'unforgettable' scenes, while presenting pictures of these panoramas as evidence.<sup>123</sup> Climbing bestowed the visitor the power to possess and evaluate the scene by becoming the 'monarch of all I survey', as phrased by Pratt.<sup>124</sup> The colonial gaze from above—and the subsequent naming, mapping, writing and knowing of the Island—expressed aesthetic control and ownership.<sup>125</sup> By allowing the traveller to observe and inscribe the Islands as miniature, this gaze also contributed to the nostalgic romanticisation of the Islands.<sup>126</sup>

Due to the constraints of shipping services, passengers had limited time to explore the surrounding areas, with both island economies and shipping companies responding by offering day trip packages and guides. AUSN's 1916 handbook was one of the earliest travel guides to formalise a set of routes and sights in Fiji that were already well used by visitors. It offered a selection of day trips by boat and car that would be 'very picturesque, and ... full of interest to tourists', complete with details of costs, timings, possible hotels and transportation.<sup>127</sup> Subsequent publications chart the development of specific tourist sites and attractions in the Pacific Islands. These attractions originated from the collective travel patterns of Island visitors, with their accounts acting as markers that identified specific sites to subsequent travellers. As these sites were 'named', 'framed' and 'elevated' (a process termed 'site sacralisation' by sociologist Dean MacCannell), their status as tourist attractions became cemented and were reproduced in photographs, prints, guidebooks and shipping advertisements.<sup>128</sup> Tourist sites in the Pacific Islands included natural features, colonial settlements and historic locations or remains.

Natural formations were picturesque locations for picnics, as well as popular for their ability to generate a sense of wonder and awe among travellers. These formations included hilltop lookouts, volcanoes, waterfalls, caves, rivers, lakes, lagoons and reefs. Specifically, travellers frequented Pali Pass in Honolulu, Flagstaff Hill in Suva, the Rewa river in Fiji, the Mapu'a 'a Vaea blowholes of Tonga and the Papase'ea sliding

123 For example, see Robson, *The Pacific Islands Yearbook*, 70; Allen, *Stewart's Handbook of the Pacific Islands*, 85.

124 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 200.

125 Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Empire Islands: Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 15.

126 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 66, doi.org/10.1215/9780822378563.

127 Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated*, 186.

128 MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 41–5.

rocks of Samoa. Although easy access was important, some natural formations were attractive because they were relatively inaccessible, such as a journey up a river or ascending a volcano, which offered a sense of adventure, mystery and, afterwards, achievement. The 'Swallows' and 'Mariners' underwater caves in Tonga were popular attractions. Their sense of mystery was expressed by artist, Arnold Safroni-Middleton, who described the caves:

Where the tourist doubtless enters to take a snap-shot of Nature's transcendent beauty of coral, flowers and ferns, little dreaming of the secret they held for the guile of men years ago.<sup>129</sup>

Colonial constructions were also important for assisting visitors in accessing nature, such as glass-bottomed boats and an aquarium in Hawai'i, the development of Waikiki beach, or the Botanical Gardens of Fiji. Although many Islands contained impressive natural formations, their isolation and lack of development were barriers to tourism. This entailed judgements from popular handbooks that warned, for example, 'To the ordinary tourist or globe-trotter the [Solomon Islands] Protectorate offers few attractions'.<sup>130</sup>

Structures of colonial settlement also attracted foreign visitors because of their familiarity and their curious local adaptations. The reputation of certain luxurious and opulent hotels rendered them popular attractions, especially the Moana and the Royal Hawaiian Hotels in Honolulu and the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva. They were popular rest stops and refuges after a long day's travel, even for non-residents. Travellers visited government buildings, museums, public squares and marketplaces, of which the Coconut Square in New Caledonia was particularly entertaining. Churches and mission stations were also popular, as travellers admired the exotic architecture of chapels and enjoyed observing Pacific Islanders in an environment that was safe and controlled. Travellers were interested in local industry, visiting sugar mills, plantations, pearling stations and trading stores, usually under the guidance and protection of a European resident.

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129 Arnold Safroni-Middleton, *Wine-Dark Seas and Tropic Skies: Reminiscences and a Romance of the South Seas* (London: Grant Richards, 1918), 137.

130 Allen, *Stewart's Handbook of the Pacific Islands*, 9.

Historic sites in the Pacific Islands were perhaps one of the earliest attractions for foreigners. The graves of martyred missionaries and 'brave' explorers were significant markers in the Islands that reminded European visitors of the turbulent history of first contact. Along with other ruins of abandoned dwellings, derelict prisons and shipwrecks, these images of decay were valued for their historical worth. Freeman's observation of an abandoned church in Fiji highlighted this: 'These hallowed ruins in a picturesque setting amongst palms and bures were evidence of religious fervour and grandiose plans thwarted by hurricanes and hard times'.<sup>131</sup> Some indigenous ruins were also popular. The sites of the Tongan trilithon and royal tombs were considered evidence of an ancient and superior civilisation, which highlighted a general European fascination with royalty. Many tourists prized the chance to meet living kings and queens of the Pacific Islands. Joseph tried to visit the Hawaiian queen, but was refused, and Henley observed that the Tongan queen shrinks from 'inquisitive passengers, sometimes of the globe-trotting American type, who, from mere motives of curiosity, wish to interview her on the monthly steamer day'.<sup>132</sup> Alleged sacrificial sites were also highly desired—the Fijian island of Bau being especially popular and well known, and described as the 'cannibal capital of the Pacific'. For Australian travellers, the Island was only distinguished by some graves and a sacrificial stone; however, their travel accounts described, in detail, an imagined scene of barbarity and horror.<sup>133</sup>

Australian fascination with these ruins can also be explained by the attraction of the 'sublime', which, like the term 'picturesque', originated in earlier accounts of travel in Europe. Distinct from the beautiful, the sublime was terrifying, reckless, powerful and vast. As described earlier, mountains symbolised this greatness and potential danger. Ruins were also prized as evidence of these past horrors.<sup>134</sup> Richard White has demonstrated a similar fascination with sites that have been made famous by convicts and bushrangers, motivated by a 'vulgar curiosity' and a subversive interest in the darker aspects of history that authorities were trying to suppress.<sup>135</sup>

131 Freeman, *Fiji—Memory Hold the Door*, 81.

132 Joseph, *A Bendigonian Abroad*, 253; Thomas Henley, *A Pacific Cruise: Musings and Opinions on Island Problems* (Sydney: John Sands, 1930), 40.

133 Lees, *Around the Coasts of Australia and Fiji Illustrated*, 182.

134 Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 43–4.

135 Richard White, 'The Subversive Tourist: How Tourism Re-Wrote Australian History' (Harold White Fellow Presentation, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 28 February 2012).

Robert Louis Stevenson's home in Samoa was a major attraction to tourists passing through the Pacific. In 1907, Grimshaw wrote that 'Apia and Stevenson's home have been written about and described by almost every tourist who ever passed through on the way to Sydney'.<sup>136</sup> Stevenson, who had settled in Samoa in 1889, was considered an authority on the Pacific, and his books were frequently quoted in Australian travel accounts. A select number of travel writers boasted of having met him, including Coffee, Muspratt and Safroni-Middleton. After his death in 1894, he was buried on Mount Vaea, which overlooked the village of Vailima. Both his house and his grave became well-known attractions, despite the difficult mountain climb required to reach them (the route uphill took roughly an hour). Travel accounts reveal that Stevenson was an inspirational writer, traveller and idealist. Rather than being criticised, Stevenson was admired for choosing to live as an exile in the Pacific Islands (as he was often described), and his internal struggle was romanticised. Visiting the tomb was described as a pilgrimage by many travellers, who revered both the grave and the experience of travel as sacred.<sup>137</sup> Stephens's detailed description of his visit to Vailima focused on the challenging climb and the view itself, rather than on Stevenson's grave. He wrote:

The view is delightful; on either side we see the winding trail up the hillside, the vast pinnacles of sculptural rock, the most stupendous scenes of nature, its overpowering grandeur and its inexpressible beauty ... Among the green hills and rich woods the memories which the peaceful country scenes call up are not of this world, or of its thoughts and hopes.<sup>138</sup>

The appeal of Vailima at the time was distinct from that of any other attraction that was based on the life of a famous European visitor. This was due to Stevenson having resided there permanently, as well as due to his literary fame. At other sites (e.g. Mariner's Cave in Tonga and Point Venus in Tahiti), the initial contact that marked them as historically important was momentary. Although the mutineers from the HMS *Bounty* resided in the Pacific, their home on Pitcairn Island was too remote to attract the same interest as Stevenson's home.

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136 Beatrice Grimshaw, *In the Strange South Seas* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1907), 303.

137 Harriet Winifred Ponder, *An Idler in the Islands* (Sydney: Cornstalk Publishing, 1924), 86; Henley, *A Pacific Cruise*, 78–9.

138 Stephens, *Samoa Holidays*, 64.

Conspicuous in its absence was the role of Pacific Islanders as a tourist attraction. Travellers did not often engage with Islanders face to face; the few times that they did, they had short interactions with taxi drivers, baggage handlers, waiters and housekeepers. Rarely were visitors left alone without the supervision of a European resident or guide. As John Wear Burton, a missionary, observed in Fiji in 1910:

At present, Fiji is but little known to the tourist world; and when visitors do come, it is difficult and expensive to get beyond the European towns. Each year, however, is taking away these reproaches. The colony is gradually becoming known by reason of the 'All Red' [shipping] route.<sup>139</sup>

Travel advertisements and guidebooks encouraged visits to local villages, yet the observations made in individual travel accounts were usually glimpses from a motor car or from the porch of a resident's home. Australian travellers occasionally commented on the Islanders who worked as guides, though they were reported as being desperate or unreliable.<sup>140</sup> The village domain and its people rarely crossed into the town space, except at wharves and in local markets, where tourists could purchase curios, pose with a decorated warrior or watch a dance performance. Amateur video footage from 1927 depicted tourists standing next to a Fijian male at Suva wharf who was dressed as a warrior and brandishing a club.<sup>141</sup> Islanders in these instances were considered an attraction in a vague, non-individualised way, and travellers were usually careful to maintain space between themselves and the 'other'. Intermixing was thus limited and generally frowned upon. Pacific Islanders were equally cautious of transgressing the racial and cultural boundaries that were policed in the colonial-controlled urban centres. Intermixing was easier further away in the villages, as shown in Figure 9. This figure is an unusual photograph taken in 1935 of two Australian children in Samoan cultural dress.

139 John Wear Burton, *The Fiji of To-Day* (London: C.H. Kelly, 1910), 34.

140 Rebell, *Escape to the Sea*, 85; J Mayne Anderson, *What a Tourist Sees in the New Hebrides* (Sydney: W.C. Penfold & Co., 1915), 96.

141 [*Pacific Islands Leg of Boat Trip to U.S.; Sydney to Los Angeles by Boat*].



## AUSTRALIAN SAMOANS.

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Australian by birth and Samoan in dress, two grandchildren of the author, Dorothy and Jack. Dorothy is arrayed in a bride's dress, made and presented to her by the girls of the Avoka School at Faleula. It is composed of tapa, or native cloth, and ornamented with hardened red



berries. She is crowned with a head-dress of human hair, taken from a Samoan chief's daughter from Salani, in the southern portion of the island. Jack is robed faa Samoa, and holds in his hands one of the many native weapons, which are not now used on their enemies, but are only displayed on ceremonial occasions.

**Figure 9: Australian Samoans.**

Source: Stephens, *Samoan Holidays*.

Fiji was a notable exception to this trend, as travellers frequently commented on visiting a local village. These village visits were so popular that they became increasingly structured and prearranged. Stock's experience of 'A Day with a South Sea Prince' (as he titled his chapter in 1913) was typical of travellers visiting Fiji at the time. Stock described visiting Bau Island and being hosted by a local chief, after which he swam, ate and participated in a kava ceremony. Stock was impressed by the well-educated chief, emphasising 'a mingled atmosphere of past and present, barbarism and culture, truly bewildering in its contrasts'. Like other travellers, Stock valued his visit to the village because it allowed him to witness what he imagined to be 'the real life of the Fijian people, lying hidden, but not dead, beneath the—as yet—thin veneer of civilization'.<sup>142</sup>

There are several factors that might explain why Fijian villages became popular attractions for Australian travellers. Debates about depopulation in the early twentieth century led many Australians to believe that certain races would become extinct in the Pacific, and government policies in Fiji at the time that were designed to ensure the protection of the indigenous Fijian population may have inadvertently encouraged the belief that Fiji was an exception to the rule. The success of these village visits may have also been due to Fiji's location on the major trans-Pacific routes and the economic benefits of good road access and tourism promotion that was encouraged by the local bureau and shipping companies. Additionally, the structure of Fijian villages as large, concentrated settlements (compared to other Islands, whose villages were more spread out) made accessibility and control much easier. Perhaps a deeper power dynamic underscored the popularity of the village, with Australians ultimately enjoying the reassurance of their white superiority abroad. This claim closely resembles a trend that Sobocinska identified in her study of Australian travellers to Asia. Australians at home may have felt inferior to the British, but in the Asia-Pacific region, they were considered Europeans and enjoyed a new-found status.<sup>143</sup>

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142 Ralph Stock, *The Confessions of a Tenderfoot: Being a True and Unvarnished Account of His World-Wanderings* (London: Grant Richards Ltd, 1913), 164, 169.

143 Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours*, 21.

## Representing the Tourist

The expansion of steamship companies, promotions and infrastructure, as well as the creation of a particular set of routes and attractions, highlight the growth of a tourism industry. However, did Australians consider themselves to be tourists? How did they represent themselves? Australian travel writing challenges the notion that authors can be conveniently labelled as either 'tourist' or 'traveller'. This distinction emerged in the late eighteenth century, with the tourist becoming associated with conventional sightseeing and the traveller being regarded as superior for avoiding the 'beaten track'.<sup>144</sup> The works of Dean MacCannell and John Urry, who pioneered sociological studies of tourism, are often applied to reinforce this simplistic dichotomy; however, the dichotomy can be problematic when applied to the historical context of the Pacific Islands.<sup>145</sup> Compared to the well-developed tourism industries of Europe or North America, on which initial theories were based, tourism in the Pacific Islands was still in its infancy by the mid-twentieth century, and the supposed characteristics of the tourist were not always evident. MacCannell characterised the tourist as someone who searched for universal truths and authentic expressions of the world; however, this authentic–inauthentic dualism can be problematic in a Pacific context, especially when considering that travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exhibited little concern for discovering an 'authentic' Pacific culture. The diversity of the Pacific Islands was not reflected in the generic stereotypes of European imaginings, which signified the scarcity of the sites possessing the attraction that MacCannell had identified in his theory of site sacralisation. Those few sites that most Australians recognised, such as Stevenson's tomb or Pitcairn Island, were valued as relics of European colonialism rather than as objects that represented a specific 'islandness'. Travellers could better understand and define colonial sites rather than indigenous spaces due to their familiarity. Indeed, Justine Greenwood and Richard White suggested that travel writing relies on the tension between 'sameness and difference'.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*. For example, see also G Bell Brand, 'Off the Beaten Track', *BP Magazine* 1, no. 2 (1934): 69–71.

<sup>145</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 1. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 137.

<sup>146</sup> Justine Greenwood and Richard White, 'Australia: The World Different and the Same', in *Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), 404–14.

For Urry, the tourist gaze was focused on the different and the unusual, rather than on the authentic. This may better explain the motives of Australian tourists. Urry situated tourists within the context of modernity and the democratisation of travel, which were represented by a growing middle class who could travel for leisure and who believed that it was necessary for self-improvement. However, it is important to note that it was not simply the educated middle classes who established a pattern of touristic consumption in Australia. Unlike Europe, the Pacific broadly attracted numerous classes and travellers. Urry's distinction between 'romantic' and 'collective' gazes is more applicable in a Pacific Island context, though it still risks simplifying travellers according to a clear binary. The romantic gaze was characterised by solitude and 'a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze', while the collective gaze relied on the social atmosphere that was created by the collective members.<sup>147</sup> Although the concept of being a lone explorer in the Pacific was popular among travellers, solitude was not always preferable or possible, depending on the island destination. Additionally, unless one owned his or her own boat, it was difficult to travel unimpeded by the movements of the collective. Even on larger Islands, travellers who were eager to avoid the well-travelled path were unlikely to stray far beyond the urban centres or the coastlines. It was not until much later in the twentieth century that the paths of tourists and travellers diverged.

Instead, Australian travellers sought to use the 'tourist' as a figure from which they could distinguish themselves. Very few Australian travellers identified themselves as tourists, as it was a status that opposed the romantic and heroic notions of a Pacific explorer. Travel writers were conscious of the literary context in which they wrote; what mattered to readers and critics was the work's 'authenticity', a judgement that was based on 'their knowledge and assumptions about the writer and their familiarity with the locality being described'.<sup>148</sup> Since few Australian readers were knowledgeable about the Pacific Islands, how the writer presented him or herself was crucial. Jonathan Lamb expressed this in terms of self-preservation:

The popularity of books of travels, growing to greater heights as the century advanced, must be explained, then, not in terms the truth they produced (for they were broadly regarded as lies) but in terms of their potent dramatization of the feelings incident to the preservation of the self.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 137.

<sup>148</sup> Bones, 'Travel Writers and Traveling Writers in Australasia', 80.

<sup>149</sup> Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas*, 6.

For Australian travel writers, the figure of the tourist was a convenient character to which they could compare themselves to claim legitimacy. As John J Gay wrote in his introduction:

This is a story of the world and its people, written by an Australian journalist and business man, while wandering leisurely over land and sea. It is not the fevered chronicle of the typical globe-trotter who ... with smug complacency inflicts upon long-suffering humanity a medley of crude impressions, banal platitudes and 'cheap' criticisms mainly directed against his own country.<sup>150</sup>

Criticisms were variously directed at American, British and Australian tourists, or at steamship passengers in general. Tourists were disliked because they followed the routes prescribed by shipping companies. Paul McGuire warned travellers to Fiji that:

One should avoid that pilgrim's progress favoured by the Indian taxi-drivers for tourists up past the hospital and by the asylum to the cemetery ... the Fijian deserves to be seen in his own land.<sup>151</sup>

Tourists were also shunned for travelling en masse. Safroni-Middleton described them as 'swells from the Australian cities', while Alan John Marshall recalled with hyperbole that when 'some seventeen hundred tourists vomited on to the beach' at Espiritu Santo (in the New Hebrides), the noise 'caused the natives to flee in terror to the hills'.<sup>152</sup>

Tourists were frequently identified with consumption, as Lewis identified:

They had gone ashore in noisy gangs to buy things and see things and take things with their kodaks—in short to do Samoa in the way passengers do places at which their ships so obligingly and, thank God, so temporarily put them down. I did not want to be one of them any longer.<sup>153</sup>

'Armed with guide-books and cameras and the totally unnecessary puggaree that the traveling Briton loves to deck himself withal', tourists were rejected for their reckless consumerism.<sup>154</sup> This included being identified

150 Gay, *Through Other Lands*.

151 McGuire, *Westward the Course*, 66.

152 Alan John Marshall, *The Black Musketeers: The Work and Adventures of a Scientist on a South Sea Island at War and in Peace* (London: William Heinemann, 1937), 128, 258.

153 Lewis, *They Call Them Savages*, 7.

154 Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 24.

with the qualities of sloth, greed and arrogance. Mordaunt described one tourist boat that was 'fattened with Philistines', and Marshall described in detail a 'tourist invasion' that:

Mistook the Residency for a sort of a club and immediately took charge, consuming the bewildered D. O.'s [district officer's] beer and wines with a speed that amazed even that worthy as he wandered about in a daze trying to guard his possessions.<sup>155</sup>

Freeman observed similar qualities in the American tourists that arrived in Suva:

During this prohibition era in the United States, Suva was the first 'wet' port of call on the voyage south. Following visits to local pubs, American tourists bedecked in souvenir necklaces of shells and seeds regularly made spectacles of themselves. Tipping generously, they fell out of taxis, lipstick and hats awry and tripped up steps. Their loud voices, broad accents, two-tone shoes, horned-rimmed spectacles, bobby socks, scarlet lips and finger-nails shocked and astonished all races. At Suva fancy dress parties, the prize for the most original costume now went to the 'American Tourist'.<sup>156</sup>

Her comments should be read in the context in which she lived—as an Australian resident in Suva, whose father worked for the sugar refinery. Freeman was proud to emphasise Australia's British heritage and to maintain certain cultural values abroad.

In addition to excessively consuming alcohol and food, tourists were identified by their desire for souvenirs or 'curios'. Collecting curios was an important part of most travel experiences, serving a legitimising purpose when the tourists returned home. Souvenirs also display the 'romance of the contraband' and 'allow the tourist to appropriate, consume, and thereby "tame" the cultural other', as argued by Susan Stewart.<sup>157</sup> Residents were aware of the demand for souvenirs, as Alfred William Hill warned readers in 1927 to 'remember that the native Indian shopkeepers and hawkers are keenly alive to the gullibility of the tourist'.<sup>158</sup> Island residents were opportunistic and responded to these new demands,

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155 Mordaunt, *The Venture Book*, 116; Marshall, *The Black Musketeers*, 258.

156 Freeman, *Fiji—Memory Hold the Door*, 57–8.

157 Stewart, *On Longing*, 135, 146.

158 Alfred William Hill, *A Cruise among Former Cannibal Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa: A Glimpse at the Countries, People, Customs and Legends* (Adelaide: W.K. Thomas & Co., 1927), 11.

evidencing a process that MacCannell termed 'staged authenticity'.<sup>159</sup> Islanders became familiar with posing for photographs by the 1900s, and travellers described numerous items that were for sale—ranging from fans and skirts to weapons, 'cannibal forks' and human bones. These items changed over time in response to these visitors; 'Thus the tourist aesthetic ensures that the object is continually exoticised and estranged'.<sup>160</sup>

Stereotypes of the Pacific Islander as being childlike, innocent and gullible were proven false when tourists were forced to bargain with shrewd sellers. One traveller, J Mayne Anderson, advised that 'the tourist on the look out for curios had better remain at home, and make his selection from a city dealer'.<sup>161</sup> Some lamented that tourists were corrupting the natural primitivity of the Islanders—such as Julian Thomas, who predicted as early as 1888 that the Tannese descendants may:

Be a race of guides, cheats, and liars, who will peddle to the personally conducted tourists of the period all the bones they can scrape together, as those of white men consumed inwardly by their cannibal ancestors.<sup>162</sup>

Alternatively, these instances can be regarded as evidence of Islander agency and European gullibility, as British government official Hugh Hastings Romilly did in 1886:

Ignorance of native languages prevents these travellers from collecting information from native sources, and is often the cause of their mistakes. More than one 'old hand' has told me that the sight of the note-book in the Globe-trotter's hand prompted him to draw on his imagination to a rather immoral extent, and caused him to supply ready-made facts which would astonish no one so much as the natives themselves.<sup>163</sup>

His comments confirm that Islanders had responded to the demands of visitors well before the tourist masses of the twentieth century had arrived to 'corrupt' them.

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<sup>159</sup> MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 98–9.

<sup>160</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, 150.

<sup>161</sup> Anderson, *What a Tourist Sees in the New Hebrides*, 97.

<sup>162</sup> Thomas, *Cannibals and Convicts*, 281.

<sup>163</sup> Hugh Hastings Romilly, *The Western Pacific and New Guinea: Notes on the Natives, Christian and Cannibal, with Some Account of the Old Labour Trade* (London: J. Murray, 1886), 4.

As travel to the Pacific Islands became increasingly structured, commodified and standardised in the 1920s and 1930s, criticisms of the effects of tourism intensified and more Australians searched for alternative paths and more remote destinations. Despite their best attempts to distinguish themselves from common tourists, Australian travel writers repeated common descriptions and tropes; their texts also contributed to the popularisation of routes and locations that were once prized because they existed off the beaten track. Similarly, criticisms of colonial rule overlooked the role that colonialism played in facilitating Australian travel. The steamship itself was an important new mode of transportation for Australians, as well as a symbol of the modern industrialisation that was so rapidly transforming the Pacific Islands. This colonial reality conflicted with the idealised explorer image of the Pacific traveller, as well as that of the Pacific as an unexplored region awaiting discovery.

Australian travel accounts reveal that steamships were not simply a mode of transport that brought an increasing number of Australians to the Pacific Islands from the 1880s onwards. Rather, they played a crucial role in the growth of Australian travel writing and the popularity of Pacific tourism. Steamship companies promoted a powerful new image of the Pacific that specifically catered for the leisurely tourist, an image that filtered into Australian travel writing over time. Steamship companies, crews and passengers also shaped the experience of travel from the point of departure to the moment of initial arrival at the Islands. Steamships became temporary homes and refuges for travellers during a period of heightened emotion, uncertainty and acclimatisation. These liminal spaces influenced how Australians represented the Islands and affected how they positioned and re-positioned themselves. This is evident in their travel accounts, which dedicated more pages and space to documenting their expectations and first impressions than to any other part of the journey or aspect of the Islands. Although travel writers tried to present themselves as lone explorers, they often followed in the footsteps of others and relied on familiar tropes and themes to describe the foreign and the unknown.



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