

## Tweed Heads Capacity Building Forum 7-8 December 2013

#### **Current Australian South Sea Islander Surnames**

This list contains over 160 surnames and is not complete. The list largely excludes Australian South Sea Islander families in Torres Strait (due to lack of research). Some variations in spelling of names have been included, so the actual number would be less. Any corrections and additions are very welcome.

Ahwong, Ambertal, Andrew, Andrews, Appo, Armstrong, Arrow, Auda, Backo, Baggow, Bandler, Banu, Barrett, Bicky, Bickey, Bikwai (Byquar), Boah, Bobongie, Boykin, Bozier, Budby, Budd, Bunn, Carter, Cassidy, Chadburn, Choolburra, Christian, Coakley, Cole, Choppy, Corowa, Darby, Darr (Darr-Melid), Davis, Deshong, Dudley, Edmunds, Enares, Enfantie (Sirriarkock), Fatnowna, Feukwandie, Geesu, Geia, Gela, George, Giblett, Gorman, Henaway, Heron, Hodges, Itong, Ivy, Johnson, Kanak, Keevers, Kia, Kinch, Lammon, Lampton, Kemp, Kissier, Kiwatt, Leo, Kohler, Lui, Macken, Mabo, Mackeleo, Malamoo, Malayta, Manaway, Maninga, Mann, Marlla (Marrler), Matthews, Maycock, McCarthy, Mehow, Miller, Mezzin, Minniecon, Mooney, Moreton, Morseu, Moss, Motto, Mount, Mussing (Mussington), Mye, Namok, Noter, Oba, Obah, Pakoa, Parter, Payne, Pelayo, Penola, Percy, Poid, Power, Quakawoot, Quero, Reid, Reys, Robe, Rode, Rowies, Sabbo (Sabbo-Toga), Sandow, Satani, Saukuru, Sauney, Savaige, Saylor, Schaper, Sheppard, Simonsen, Simpson, Sippie, Skinner, Slockee, Smallwood, Solomon, Sutherland, Swali, Tallis, Talonga, Tambo, Tammorah, Tamock, Tanna, Tapim, Tarrella, Tarryango, Tass, Tattow, Terare, Terrere Thomas, Toar, Toas, Togo, Tolonga, Tammorah, Tomarra, Tomarie, Tonga, Trevy, Upkett, Vice, Vickery, Viti, Willie, Watego, Warcon, Ware, Wass-Miller, Williams, Wogas, Womald, Wright, Wymarra, Yasso, Yasserie, Yatta, Youse.

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#### Australian South Sea Islander Oral Testimony, 1974-1980

Between 1974 and 1980, while tutors and later PhD students at James Cook University and the Australian National University, Patricia Mercer and I recorded 87 cassette tapes with 75 Australian South Sea Islanders at Mackay, Bowen, Ayr and Home Hill, Palm Island, Ingham and Hervey Bay. Some were interviewed several times. There are supplemented by a further 9 tapes recorded at Mackay, Rockhampton, Tweed Heads, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Ayr and Home Hill by Matt Peacock from the ABC for a three-part radio programme *The Forgotten People* in 1978. The tapes are supplemented by a few others with Europeans associated with the Islanders. The Islander tapes are held as part of the Black Oral History Collection at James Cook University and in the 1990s were converted to CDs for preservation.

This collection is unique and extremely valuable for preserving cultural traditions and identity in the community. The interviews were recorded in the 1970s mainly with the children and grandchildren of the first generation. The interviewees represent all major Australian South Sea Islander families. Participants were aged between their 30s and 99; most were 50 to 70 year old. There is a huge literature on the Islanders, but most of it written from European documents. The extensive collection of oral testimony is an essential part of Australian South Sea Islander history in that it enables access to the memories of a generation now largely gone. It provides an historical window back to the 1860s and 1870s and is a source of pride for the community.

The original arrangement with the Moore/Mercer tapes was that access would be granted for research and for use by the direct families. The Peacock tapes were given to me (rather than be destroyed at the ABC) and I gave them to James Cook University; I also have a set on CDs. Recently, several Islander families have obtained their own copies of these recordings with their forebears. Now, with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first South Sea Islanders in Queensland, it is time to ensure that these recordings are preserved in public collections and if possible transcribed for use by the families.

The present-day community wishes to have the collection made more widely available and views the interviews as an essential part of reclamation of Islander identity.

**Those Interviewed:** Tom Ambertal; George Andrews; Gladys Andrews; Belle Backo; Blue Backo; Ishmael Backo; Melba Backo; Faith Bandler; Dennis Bobongie; Flo Bobongie; Henry Bobongie; Sam Bobongie; Vivian Bunn; Louisa Cassidy; Renie Cassidy; Malcolm Cole; Trixie Cole; Adelaine Corowa; Alf Corowa; Arthur Corowa; Eva Corowa; Olive Darr; Percy Darr; Annie Davis; Emily May Enares; Christian Fatnowna; Joan Fatnowna; Minnie Fatnowna; Noel Fatnowna; Norman Fatnowna; Valroy Fatnowna; Ada Geesau; Esther Henaway; Jessie Heron; Ishmael Itea (visitor form Solomons); Mrs

Kinch; Rhoda Lamon; Lisa Labanca Lampton; Simon Leo; Phyllis Macken; Shireen Malamoo; Gloria Malayta; Phlip Malayta; Ada Marlla; Winnie Miller; Des Moonie; Gracie Motto; Sid Oba, Eddie Parter; Heather Pelayo; Bill Quakawoot; Mira Quakawoot; Henry Stevens Quaytucker; George Reid; Tom Rode; Andrew Satani; Noah Sabbo-Toga; Mary Swali; Charlie Tallis; Richard Talonga; Cecilia Tarryango; Winnie Tass; Bill Thomas; Ivy Thomas; Blanch Toas; Philip Tonga; Joe Viti; Sandy Viti; Leslie Willie; Jessie Willie; Les Womald; Caroline Yasso; Eddie Yasso; Ester May Yasso; Jessie Yatta

At the time, two copies of each cassette were made: a master copy and a copy for Trish and Clive. Each participant was asked if they wanted a copy of their tape and these were supplied if requested. Some requested copies but most did not. We also borrowed and copied some photos. On each occasion we returned copies of the photos and the originals to the owners. The tapes form part of the Black Oral History Collection at James Cook University. Assess to them has always been through James Cook University by asking permission of either Trish or Clive. No one has ever been refused access, but we made an undertaking to the original interviewees that there would not be open access. There is sensitive family information on many of the tapes. Originally they were stored in the History Department, then in the History and Politics Department and latterly in the School of Arts and Social Sciences. In the mid-1990s the Department of History and Politics copied the original cassette tapes onto CDs to preserve them. I had my own set copied in Brisbane at much the same time.

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#### **Australian South Sea Islanders Chronology**

1790s: Once New South Wales was established, so too was a food trade in salted pork to Tahiti.

Pacific or South Sea Islanders began to arrive in Australia, to Sydney and Hobart, as

boats' crews.

1788-1820s: The Pacific frontier was the most important economic element of British colonialism in

Australia.

1847: First 226 indentured ASSI from the Loyalty Islands (now included in New Caledonia) and

New Hebrides (Vanuatu) brought to Eden in NSW by entrepreneur Bob Boyd. The whole

venture was a disaster.

1840s-1850s: Some SSI made their way to Sydney as boats' crews. There were a few working on the

docks in Sydney.

1860: The first Pacific Islanders are brought to work in the bêche-de-mer industry at Lizard

Island in North Queensland.

1863: The first 67 South Sea Islanders arrived in Brisbane to work on Robert Towns' cotton

plantation, Townsvale, on the Logan River. There were the first of 62,000 contracted labourers brought in a variety of circumstances from kidnapping to voluntary enlistment to work in the Queensland pastoral, maritime and sugar industries, 1863-1904. Quite large numbers came more than once and the overall number of individuals is thought to have been around 50,000. Ninety-five per cent were males aged in their teens to mid-

thirties.

1863-1870: All ASSI labourers to Queensland were from the Loyalty Islands (now part of New

Caledonia) and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu)

1868: The Polynesian Labourers Act was passed by Queensland Parliament to regulate the

labour trade.

1869: The Queensland Government created a Select Committee on the operation of the

Polynesian Labourers Act.

1871: London Missionary Society missionaries arrived in Torres Strait.

1871: The first Solomon Islanders entered the Queensland labour trade.

1872: The Torres Strait Islands were annexed to Queensland (with a further extension in

1879).

1872: Britain passed the *Pacific Islander Protection Act* as an attempt to govern the labour

trade to Queensland and Fiji.

1875: Britain annexed Fiji.

Britain passed an amendment to the *Pacific Islander Protection Act* as a further attempt to govern the labour trade to Queensland and Fiji. This enabled the establishment of the

Western Pacific High Commission.

1875: The Western Pacific High Commission (based in Fiji) was established by Britain with

jurisdiction over British subjects on specified Pacific Islands.

1880: The Queensland Government passed the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act*, the first major

legislative revision since 1868.

1882: The Anglican Selwyn Mission was begun by Mary Robinson at Mackay.

1882-1884: Queensland labour recruiting was extended into the archipelagoes east of New Guinea.

1883: Queensland attempted to annex South-east New Guinea.

1884: Britain annexed South-east New Guinea as a Protectorate.

The Queensland Government passed an amendment to the 1880 Act to limit the employment of ASSI to tropical agriculture but created an exemption category known as Ticket Holders who had arrived before September 1879 and were exempt from all further special legislation. There were 835 in 1884, 716 in 1892, 704 in 1901 and 691 in

1906.

1884 - 1885: The Queensland Government established a Royal Commission into Recruitment of

Labour in New Guinea and Adjacent Islands.

1885: Queensland ceased labour recruiting in the archipelagoes east of New Guinea and

henceforth recruited only from islands now included in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

Queensland signaled the end of the labour trade by 1890.

Queensland introduced an amendment to the 1880 Act to begin the Pacific Islanders'

Fund, partly to distribute the wages of deceased ASSI.

1886: The Queensland Kanaka Mission was begun in Bundaberg by the Young family (more

informally the mission began in 1882).

1888: Britain and France established a joint naval administration in the New Hebrides.

1892: Queensland Premier Griffith announced the extension of the labour trade "for a definite

but limited period of, say ten years".

1893: Britain annexed the British Solomon Islands Protectorate; further expanded in 1899.

1901: There were 9,327 ASSI in Australia, spread from Torres Strait to the Tweed District in Northern NSW. The new Commonwealth Government of Australia legislated for a 'White Australia Policy', including the Pacific Islanders Act which ordered the deportation of all ASSI.

The Pacific Islanders' Association was formed in Mackay to argue against deportation and to achieve better conditions for ASSI.

1903: Between 1903 and 1906 eight petitions were presented to the Queensland and Commonwealth governments on behalf of ASSI due to be deported. In March, two hundred ASSI from Rockhampton petitioned the Governor of Queensland.

In September, 3,000 ASSI signed a petition to King Edward VII.

The Commonwealth Government introduced the Sugar Bounty Act to subsidize sugar produced only with white labour.

1905: The Governor of Fiji agreed to take Queensland Islander deportees.

Prime Minister Watson visited Rockhampton and received a petition.

1906: A Queensland Royal Commission into the Sugar Industry recommended certain categories of ASSI be allowed to remain in Australia.

The Pacific Islanders' Association was revived and wrote to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State. 200 Islanders attended a meeting to plan tactics at the Royal Commission.

In September H.D. Tonga and J. Bomassy went to Melbourne to meet Prime Minister Deakin.

In October 1906 the Pacific Islanders Act was amended.

The QKM, Anglican and Presbyterian Missions to ASSI were closed. The QKM moved to the Solomon Islands and became the South Sea Evangelical Mission (later Church).

1907: 427 ASSI left to work in Fiji. Along with the existing labour recruits there they form the base of the present-day Solomoni community.

1907-1908: Except for the exempted categories, all remaining ASSI were deported. Around 2,000 remained and form the nucleus of the present-day ASSI community.

1908:

Britain and France established the New Hebrides Condominium. The Pacific Islanders Branch of the Queensland Immigration Department was closed.

Amongst the ASSSI who remained, there were 150 farmers in the Mackay district. The trend had been since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to lease small plots of land on steep hill sides, shunned by Europeans, to the Islanders for cane growing.

1913:

Queensland's Sugar Cultivation Act required non-Europeans to apply for certificates of exemption in order to be employed in any capacity in sugar growing. They were forced to take a reading and writing test with 50 words in any language as directed by the Inspector before they were allowed to grow or cultivate sugar cane in Queensland.

1919-1921: Queensland's Arbitration Court ruled that no 'coloured' labour could be employed on cane farms, except where the farm was owned by a countryman, and in 1921 the Court granted preference in employment to members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU). The effect of the 1900s-1910s occupational restrictions was to relegate ASSI, notably the original immigrant generation, to the more menial poorly paid and itinerant farm work.

1920s: Banks refused to lend money to ASSI, leaving them increasingly insecure given increasing mechanization in the sugar industry.

> In the 1920s and 1930s most of the ASSI followed prominent Islanders into the Assemblies of God and Seventh-day Adventist Churches. In Rockhampton several families remained Anglican.

1930s: By the late 1930s only a handful of Islander farms remained.

> Elderly ASSI were paid an 'Indigence Allowance' in the 1930s, that was converted to an Old Age Pension in 1942 once the restriction on non-Europeans receiving the pension was removed.

1940s-1950s: After the war occupational restrictions were lifted, however, the increasing mechanization of the harvesting process in the sugar industry meant that jobs as canecutters and field labourers disappeared and ASSI men were forced to find work labouring or blue collar work, often less well paid, in the sugar mills, on the railways, or in the new coal towns in central Queensland. In the non-sugar areas, they engaged in cash-crop farming, in tropical fruit production (such as banana growing in northern NSW), or in seasonal employment in the meatworks in Rockhampton, Mackay and Bowen.

University of Queensland history postgraduate student Peter Tan interviewed 19 ASSI, including some of the original immigrant generation. He did not complete his research or publish his findings.

1960:

1963: Alex Daniel Solomon, from Guadalcanal Island, died at Mackay in 1963, the second last of the original immigrants there.

1964: Ohnonee (Thomas Robbins) died at Mackay, the last of the original immigrant generation in that district.

Linguist Tom Dutton recorded interviews with Peter Santo and Tom Lammon, two of the last survivors of the original immigrant generation in North Queensland. These interviews were published in 1980. Tom Lammon died on 11 August 1965 and Peter Santo died on 27 March 1966, said to have been 105 years old.

1965: The Queensland Government removed legislative restrictions imposed on non-Europeans, principally through the *Aliens Act* of 1965, which repealed legislation such as the *Sugar Cultivation Act* of 1913.

Peter Corris, then a PhD student at the Australian National University, interviewed descendants of ASSSI in Solomon Islands, Fiji and Australia. None of his interviews have survived.

George Dan (also known as George Melekula) died in Cairns, thought to have been the last of the original immigrant generation. (The death may have occurred early in 1968.)

1972: The Australian South Sea Islanders United Council was established by Robert and Phyllis Corowa. By 1974 there were branches in several areas of NSW and Queensland.

1973-1981: Between 1973 and 1981 Clive Moore and Patricia Mercer, PhD students at James Cook University and the Australian National University, recorded more than 100 tapes with ASSSI.

1975: Papua New Guinea becomes an independent nation.

The first national ASSIUC conference was held in Mackay in May. Delegates attended from Ayr, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville, Gladstone, Nambour, Bowen, Tweed Heads, Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra.

Prompted by an ASSIUC delegation, in August 1975 the Commonwealth Government established an Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) to investigate ASSI claims of disadvantage.

The Queensland Government under Premier Bjelke-Petersen appointed Noel Fatnowna as Special Commissioner for Pacific Islanders and recognized ASSI as a "distinct ethnic group". Noel Fatnowna held this position until 1984 when the Commission replaced by an Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the functions of which excluded ASSI.

1977: Faith Bandler published *Wacvie*.

1967:

1976:

The Interdepartmental Committee Report was published in July 1977. It concluded that "Their socioeconomic status and conditions have generally been below those of the white community thus giving the group the appearance of being a deprived coloured community." Thirty-seven per cent of those surveyed lived below the poverty line (as defined by the Federal Commission of Inquiry into Poverty). The comparative figure for the total Australian community was 12.5 per cent.

1978: Solomon Islands became an independent nation.

1979:

1970s:

The Forgotten People, three hours of ABC Radio programs of interviews with ASSI, produced by Matthew Peacock, were put to air, and published as a book, The Forgotten People: A History of the Australian South Sea Island Community, edited by Clive Moore, in 1979.

By the late 1970s ASSIUC ceased as a political force, beset by internal rivalries and splits, although in name ASSIUC continued to operate until the 1990s.

1980: Vanuatu becomes an independent nation.

Faith Bandler and Len Fox published Marani in Australia.

1984: Faith Bandler published *Welou: My Brother*.

1988: The Queensland Government gave ASSI full access to the programs of the Department of Community Services, which primarily catered for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Thomas Lowah published Ebed Mer (My Life).

1989: Beset by internal rivalries and splits, ASSIUC ceased to operate.

Noel Fatnowna published *Fragments of a Lost Heritage*.

Faith Bandler published *Turning the Tide: A Personal History of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*.

1991: Evatt Foundation released a report on ASSI.

1992: The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission published *The Call for Recognition* on ASSI.

Mabel Edmund published No Regrets.

1994: The Commonwealth Government recognized ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic group.

1995: ASSI historical exhibition toured in Australia and the Pacific.

1995: NSW Premier Bob Carr sent a memorandum to his departments asking that they

support inclusion of ASSI as a special needs group.

1996: Nasuven Enares began the ASSI Secretariat, located initially in Sydney.

Jacqui Wright and Francis Wimbis published *The Secret: A Story of Slavery in Australia*.

Mabel Edmund published Hello, Johnny!

Australian South Sea Islanders – Storian blong olgeta we oli bin go katem sugarken long

Ostrelia, by the Australian National Maritme Museum.

Clive Moore, Max Quanchi and Sharon Bennett published two books of curriculum materials in collaboration with the ASSI community: Australian South Sea Islanders: A Curriculum Resource for Primary Schools, and Australian South Sea Islanders: A Curriculum Resource for Secondary Schools, Brisbane: Australian Agency for International Development, in association with the Department of Education,

Queensland, 1997.

1997:

2000: The Queensland Government recognized ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic community.

Cristine Andrew and Penny Cook edited, Fields of Sorrow: An Oral History of Descendants of the South Sea Islanders (Kanakas).

2001 Refined White – Centenary of Federation Project

A touring exhibition and secondary school resource which examines the struggle that governments and the sugar industry had in meeting the demands of the White Australia policy and its social impact on Australia's the South Sea Islander people. The project celebrated the culture and contribution of the Australian South Sea Islander people. Australian Sugar Industry Museum, This exhibition toured 12 national, state and regional venues in ACT, Queensland and NSW, 2001–2004

2002: "Across the Coral Sea: Loyalty Islanders in Queensland" exhibition.

A photographic exhibition based on historical images from the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland which portray the way in which South Sea Islanders arrived, lived and worked in Queensland in the nineteenth century.

Marilyn Lake published Faith: Faith Bandler, Gently Activist.

Terese Fatnowna published *Faith of Our Fathers: A journey of Three Fatnownas, 1866-1999.* 

2011: "My Island Homes", Exhibition, Floating Lands Festival 2011 Butter Factory Arts Centre, Cooroy, Sunshine Coast Regional Council

2012: Cedric Andrew Andrew, born at Sandy Creek outside of Mackay in 1911, died on 16 October 2012. He was then the oldest ASSI in Australia. In 1931 he married Marva Rutha Malasum with whom he had seven children. His grandparents, Charles Querro and Lucy Zimmie were kidnapped from Ambae (Oba) Island in Vanuatu.

The Wantok 2012 conference held in Bundaberg. ASSI (Port Jackson) Branch elected as the National Interim Committee main coordinators Emelda Davis and Danny Togo.

Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore opened 2012—20 Years on since The Call for Recognition dinner for the ASSI.PJ.

2013: The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first ASSI in August 1863 was commemorated in various places in Queensland and New South Wales in various forms, from formal dinners to exhibitions and booklets.

Joskeleigh: Homeward bound, Joskeleigh Museum

Exhibitions as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

Echoes ASSI 150, The Centre Beaudesert

The Australian South Sea Islanders, State Library of Queensland

Journeys to Sugaropolis, City of Gold Coast

Two islands, one home, the story of belonging, Artspace Mackay

Sugar, Queensland Art Gallery

Journey blong yumi: Australian South Sea Islander 150, Logan Art Gallery

Key Events as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

Weaving the Way, Multicultural Art Centre

Memories of a Forgotten People, Cultural Precinct, Brisbane

This is Our Story, Commemorative Walk, Harvest Point Christian Outreach Centre,

Beaudesert

Publications as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

Journeys to Sugaropolis, City of Gold Coast
ASSI 150 SEQ Newsletters August 2012 - November 2013, ASSI 150 SEQ Committee
ASSI 150 Website, ASSI 150 SEQ Committee <a href="http://www.assi150.com.au">http://www.assi150.com.au</a>
ASSI Blog, State Library Queensland <a href="http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/">http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/</a>

A Commemoration Ceremony was held in Port Vila on 28<sup>th</sup> July in remembrance of the anniversary of the first ni-Vanuatu to go to Queensland, hosted by the Vanuatu Government. The PM called for an apology for descendants.

The New South Wales Government recognized ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic group. The motion was put by the Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. There were seven recommendations.

Sydney University partnered with the ASSI.PJ to deliver 'Human Rights for a Forgotten People' symposium in recognition of 150 years for ASSIs in Queensland.

A digital media campaign focused on historical awareness of the atrocities faced by SSI/ASSI was produced by the ASSI.PJ in recognition of 150 years for Queensland.

The Commonwealth approved significant funding under the 'Community Cohesion' grants initiative to capacity build in ASSI communities, to the value of \$50,000.

In November the Wantok 2013 conference was held at the Queensland State Library in Brisbane to nominate a national representative secretariat and board.

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