



Exploring connections: Reviewing aspects of Te Papa's historical South African Collection

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Abstract

Te Papa Museum's International History Collection comprises about 6,000 collection items, around 1,000 of which are associated with South Africa. This article provides a brief overview of the development of the collection. The authors also present a small study of the collection, focusing on provenance details of acquisitions, objects and key historical events. The article traces important historical connections between South Africa and New Zealand in the 19th century to contextualise the objects held in Te Papa's collection. It introduces the 2021 project undertaken to increase public awareness of Te Papa's South Africa collection. Five significant donors and their contribution to the museum are explored, as well as a further two objects of unknown provenance to direct future aims of building international institutional relationships.

Keywords

South Africa, Te Papa Museum, collection survey, acquisitions, provenance

Introduction

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) was first established as the Colonial Museum in 1865. In that early period, under the directorship of geologist James Hector (1834–1907), the Museum focused on geological collections and regularly corresponded with overseas institutions to exchange specimens and objects. In reflecting Aotearoa New Zealand's changing status to a Dominion in 1907, the Museum became known as the Dominion Museum. In 1972, the Museum merged with the National Art Gallery and changed its name to the National Museum. Following the success of the 1980s *Te Māori* exhibition in New York, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 established the Te Papa Museum. This significant change acknowledged the importance of Māori aspirations for cultural taonga, as well as the bicultural nature of the Museum (McCarthy 2011).

The International History Collection was once known as the Foreign Ethnology Collection and contained objects that would eventually become part of the separate

Taonga Māori and Pacific Cultures Collections. The International History Collection comprises about 6,000 collection items from places outside of Aotearoa New Zealand, including Australian Aboriginal Collections. This excludes Torres Strait Islander Collections, which are housed in the separate Pacific Cultures Collection. Of the 6,000-odd items, 1,193 relate to South Africa. These include 391 plant and animal specimens, 373 photographs, as well as a smaller number of philatelic objects and rare books. The largest subcategory is of 492 historical objects made up of medals, coins, clothing and accessories, tools and household implements, awards, posters, spears and shields.

In this collection survey, the authors focus on the South African Collections housed in the International History Collection, reviewing acquisition histories and provenance research. The aim is to contextualise the South African Collection within the broader context of Te Papa's history and relations between Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa. The authors draw on previous Te Papa collection surveys focusing on the Pacific

Cultures Collections, such as East Polynesia (Mallon and Hutton 2013), Niue (Akeli and Pasene 2011) and the Cook Islands (Hutton et al. 2010).

Current research aim

This project was first conceived as part of a Summer Research Scholarship in connection with Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka, spanning from November 2021 to February 2022. The project aims were threefold: to review acquisition documentation; to update biography data relating to the collections with a view towards producing blog pieces; and to document the process in a journal article. The project entailed researching the Museum's South African Collection, identifying available information about objects and supporting the amendment of the relevant records. This work involved identifying objects with missing information and using Te Papa's archives and external sources to help provide information for the records. However, resolving informational gaps was not possible with every object, due to the limitations of analogue record keeping. Many records were reviewed by identifying duplicates in Ke Emu, expanding upon these with new descriptive information and making more information visible in the Collections Online portal.

The aim of this project was to give focused attention to the historical South African Collection, with a key outcome being a series of blog posts featuring the research findings (Powell 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d). The intention was to increase the knowledge and awareness of the collection's complex history. While this article provides an overview of the South African Collection holdings within the International History Collections, the authors acknowledge related material in various other Te Papa collections (such as New Zealand Histories, Art and Natural History), which fell outside the scope of this research.

Prior research

Rosanne Livingstone concluded in 1998 that research into Te Papa's Foreign Ethnology Collections (as they were then known) had been limited, because "the collections were not systematically developed [so] they were small, diverse and unfocused and thus have limited research value" (p.19). South Africa has garnered especially limited attention, to date.

Previous small studies have been conducted on aspects of the Foreign Ethnology Collections, including Livingstone's (1998) examination of Native American and European Lithic Collections. Ryan Brown-Haysom (2011) conducted specific research on Te Papa's collection of African edged weapons. His survey consisted of verifying the origins of various objects — including several in the South African collection — and comprehensively documenting his findings.

Egypt has previously been a subject of attention on African objects, spearheaded by Ross O'Rourke, technical specialist and collections manager at the Museum from 1960 to 2012. O'Rourke (1996, 1998a, 1998b) developed a data bank of information in the 1990s on the mummified remains of Mehit-em-Wesekht. This was followed by further work in 2006. These documents are important contributions to understanding the broader context of the collections and the Museum's development.

(Re-)Framing the Collection

In the 21st century, increasing scrutiny has been brought to bear on cultural collections from indigenous communities that are housed outside of their places of origin. The question of restitution and return was brought to the fore in the Sarr-Savoy Report, commissioned by the President of France, which assessed French collections of illegitimately-acquired African artworks and provided recommendations for restitution (Sarr and Savoy 2018). However, in South Africa, earlier attempts at restitution had been made by museums, communities and academics, fuelling action for the international return of human remains. The work by Legassick and Rassool (2000) deepened the discourse on this complex issue by highlighting the role of museums as an arm of the empire and its complicity in the trade of human remains. In 2002, the successful return of human remains began with the return of Khoikhoi woman Sarah Baartman from France (Henderson 2014), later followed by the return of Khoisan couple Klass and Trooi Pienar from Austria in 2012 (Rasool 2015). More recently, Laura K Gibson's work demonstrates the importance of digital platforms to enable multivocal understandings and criticality around the structures of museum categorisations (2020). Such cases add leverage to the Sarr-Savoy Report that resonated globally, promoting conversations to better understand the obligations of museums, including Te Papa (Sarr and Savoy 2018). As an adjunct to these conversations, collection surveys provide an opportunity to consider how collections are formed and influenced and to consider the impact of their presence in far-flung institutions. The authors of this work aim to contribute to the reframing of the South African Collection through insights into the complex networks of colonial exchange and cross-cultural encounters.

Of note, the similarity of the objects of South African provenance across the various collections mentioned above — predominantly beadwork, spears, axes and assegai — suggests there was specific interest in collecting ethnographic items during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Ethnography is the study of a particular contemporary culture, often through fieldwork, to record and describe different groups of people. Artefacts were a way to present and demonstrate a particular culture. Ethnographic collections of this nature can be burdened by an inherently colonial framework when privileging

“tribal” affiliations and accentuating the details of typically white donors (Elliot Weinberg 2020, p.178). The items in Te Papa’s collection were partly determined by the interest of donors themselves, who gifted the Museum larger collections that happened to contain some South African items. Early collecting decisions of the Colonial and Dominion Museum were shaped almost exclusively by the director and Museum policy at a given time (Livingstone 1998, p. 19).

The focus on provenance research of the South African Collection was partly due to South Africa’s colonial ties with Great Britain. Another factor behind this research is South Africa’s ongoing relationship with Aotearoa New Zealand, which has been characterised by colonial conflict, by protest around South Africa’s Apartheid politics and by rugby.

Brief history and geography of South Africa

South Africa, located at the southern tip of the African continent, has a population of around 56 million and is organised into nine provinces: Limpopo (5.8 m), Mpumalanga (4.3 m), Gauteng (13.4 m), North West (3.7 m), Free State (2.8 m), Eastern Cape (7 m), Northern Cape (1.2 m), Western Cape (6.3 m) and KwaZulu-Natal (11.1 m). Uniquely, the independent Kingdom of Lesotho (population 2 m) is located within South Africa, bordering KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Free State Provinces (stats SA n.d.). As well as a land mass of around 1.2 million km², South Africa has a water area of around 4,600 km². While it borders Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana and Lesotho, South Africa’s coastline runs a length of 2,798 km. With a terrain of plateau, bushveld and highveld hills, its mineral resources include gold, coal, uranium, diamonds, platinum, copper and natural gas. The South African landscape is a habitat for animals, such as the lion, buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, leopard and springbok. In addition, it has some of the richest biodiversity in the world. Eleven official languages are spoken in South Africa, with the most prevalent being Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans and English. In recent times, there has been a movement centred on Khoisan revivalism of culture and identity in the post-Apartheid period (Veracini and Verbuyst 2020).

Historically, prior to sustained European colonial settlement from the 1700s, South Africa had several cultural groups who had mobilised across the landscape at least since the 7th century. These included the Khoisan group, a collective term for combined Khoikhoi and San groups of largely nomadic agriculturalists. Encounters between Portuguese traders and Khoisan had taken place in the 15th century, followed by more frequent exchange in the late 18th century (Veracini and Verbuyst 2020). However, by the 17th century, encounters with incoming

European settlers would result in significant change for the Khoisan who were defeated and decimated in the wars (Veracini and Verbuyst 2022, p. 64), greatly impacting on the environment (Thompson 2001). Other cultural groups included the Xhosa-speaking peoples, a nomadic patrilineal group connected to the Nguni-language group, with a population of around 40,000 by the 1800s (Peires 1982). Organised into homesteads led by an umninimzi (senior male), the Xhosa settled land between the valley areas and established gardens of vegetables. Members had gendered roles and responsibilities, with emphasis on the importance of cattle farming for dietary and cultural needs. Today, many of the Xhosa-speaking peoples (totalling around 7 m) reside in the Eastern Cape province. Similarly, the Zulu-speaking group (who also had Nguni language connections) raised cattle and small crops for farming. Today, Zulu-speaking peoples (totalling around 9 m) largely inhabit the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

After about 50 years of visiting the Cape of Good Hope during trade visits to India, in 1652, the Dutch East India Company (est. 1602) established a refreshment station under the command of Administrator Jan Van Riebeeck. From this initial station, European settlement followed soon after, with a focus on providing provisions and support to passing ships. From the late 17th century, interactions and tensions between the Dutch farmers (Boers) and the local groups increased, exacerbated by the presence of British settlers. The next section draws on the connection between the British Empire and its far-flung outpost of New Zealand and on its links to South Africa.

New Zealand–South African relations

From the 1770s, relations between the Xhosa, Khoikhoi and settlers had extended into a complex web of interactions (Lester 2001, p. 12). With the expansion of the British Empire in the early 19th century, as part of the slave trade network in West Africa, Britain had acquired Sierra Leone in 1802. The first wave of British migrants made their way to the Cape of Good Hope in the late 1790s. By 1815, Britain had annexed the Cape as a colony and did the same with Natal in 1843. Throughout the expanding British settlement over the following almost 100 years, significant wars were waged against local groups, including the AmaZulu in 1879 (Laband 2014). The Zulu Kingdom was considered an obstacle to the confederation of British colonies and the annexed Boer Republics and the ensuing Anglo-Zulu War was a series of bloody battles that ultimately resulted in British victory. Such confrontations contributed to the acquisition of collections within museum institutions (Coombes 2005; Longair 2015). Collecting trophies was not encouraged during the 19th century, but regardless, was rife (Elliot Weinberg 2020, p.174). Interest in African people and their culture also culminated in live exhibits which could capitalise on the political landscape; Farini’s Friendly

Zulus troupe, displayed in 1879, took advantage of public interest in the Anglo-Zulu War (Qureshi 2011, p.73).

The South African War was a conflict between Britain and the Boer South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State, lasting from 1899 to 1902. Almost 60 years beforehand, Britain had annexed New Zealand, via the signing of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and had faced frontier land wars with several Māori tribes (Belich 1996). As part of the British Empire, New Zealand was eager to participate, with almost 7,000 soldiers enlisting over a two-and-a-half-year period. Histories outlining New Zealand's participation in the war have articulated different perspectives by soldiers and women (Crawford and McGibbon 2003) with more recent histories highlighting Māori responses to the war (Robson 2021). Furthermore, as New Zealand's first major engagement with South Africa, unsurprisingly, soldiers were keen to represent their souvenir collections in various museums (Robson 2021, pp. 124, 168).

Many contributions have been made to the South African Collection and, though this article focuses on the International History Collection, it is important to recognise objects and specimens relating to South Africa outside of our scope. Te Papa holds contemporary collections which link Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa based on sporting and political tensions. This is especially evident with protest material from the 1981 rugby Springbok Tour, which became the fulcrum for opposition to the South African government's Apartheid system. Natural History specimens include mammalian skeletal remains, drawings and taxidermy of reptiles, crustacea and birds and 91 plant specimens. Pieces of art and photography capture moments of New Zealand–South African relations.

By 1911, the population of South African-born peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand numbered about 1,000 and, by 1986, was 2,685 (Walrond 2015). More rapid migration took place in the 1990s, following the elections which saw South Africa's first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, leading the African National Congress political party. Studies on South African migration and settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand recognise the different push and pull factors, such as job opportunities, which have influenced population movement (Philipp and Ho 2010; Winbush and Selby 2015). The 2013 New Zealand census recorded about 55,000 people who identified as being of South African heritage. Although beyond the scope of this paper, potential connections with communities can further enhance the context of the collections and provide opportunities for further collaboration.

The South African Collection

This article specifically focuses on the research into the South African Collection within the International History Collection. The article highlights five key donations and their additions to the collection in order of acquisition,

some of which have already been featured in blogs written for the original project (Powell 2022c, 2022d). Specifically collecting South African objects has not been a priority of the Museum. Accordingly, acquisitions have typically come from individuals, donated as part of larger collections of material with more of an Aotearoa New Zealand or Pacific focus. Some were purchased, but this has been typically as part of auctions and only occasionally from individuals.

This research looks at the objects from Johannes Carl Andersen, Alexander Turnbull and Lady Sarah Kinsey and May Moore's donation of Sir Joseph Kinsey's collection. Kinsey and Seddon have been profiled already in the original blogs (Powell 2022c, 2022d), but the acquisitions are discussed in further depth here. It also examines donations of collections from other institutions, such as Wellington College's donation of Richard John Spotswood Seddon's collection and the acquisition of the Wellcome Collection. This article provides an opportunity to profile important donors who were not able to be included in the blogs, as well as objects which have more obscure histories. This does not encapsulate the whole of the collection, but profiles a selection of important donors, so there are opportunities for further work to be done in this collection.

Johannes Carl Andersen



Figure 1. Johannes (Carl) Andersen, New Zealand by W. Chapman Taylor. Te Papa (E.002177).

Johannes Carl Andersen (1873–1962; Fig. 1), born in Denmark, his family moved to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1874. A writer, Andersen became interested in Māori culture and myth as well as natural fauna and flora. He published several books over his lifetime, including *Māori life in Ao-tea* (1907), *Jubilee history of South Canterbury* (1916), *Bird-song and New Zealand song birds* (1926). He pursued a career as a librarian and was appointed the first librarian of the newly-established Alexander Turnbull Library in 1919. Andersen was involved with a number of publications, most famously *Transactions* — Aotearoa New Zealand's premier scientific journal of the time. He was a member of the Polynesian Society (established in 1892) and served as the co-editor of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, at the request of editor and ethnographer Elsdon Best, from 1925. Andersen

was significantly involved in the compiling of Māori songs, music and games with the Dominion Museum Ethnological Expeditions (Ngata et al. 2021, p. 52).

Andersen's collection was donated to the Dominion



Figure 2. Handkerchief, “Map of Transvaal”, maker unknown, circa 1900. Gift of Johannes C. Andersen, date unknown. 635 mm (width), 610 mm (height), 1 mm (depth). Te Papa (PC000026).

Museum in 1931. The item in his collection relating to South Africa was a memorabilia handkerchief depicting a map of the Transvaal Province (Fig. 2). The object has been labelled as a handkerchief, but given its size, it may perhaps be a kerchief. The Boer South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State were established as a result of Boer dissatisfaction with the British, following a wave of eastward migration in the 1830s and 1840s known as the Great Trek. The Province was legally dismantled in 1994, at the formal end of Apartheid. Details about the cloth's production are unknown, other than a manufacture date of around 1900. The map demarcates the South African Republic, Portuguese East Africa and the Orange Free State.

The handkerchief further features the framed likeness of President Stephen John Paul Kruger (1825–1904) and the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914). Kruger was President of the South African Republic from 1882 to 1900. Chamberlain was a British politician, said to be the key figure in causing and winning the South African War (also known as the Second Boer War, 1899–1902). This item represents a key moment in New Zealand, British and South African history and is a useful record of where political and geographical lines were once drawn.

Alexander Turnbull

Alexander Turnbull (1868–1918; Fig. 3) was a businessman and collector. He worked for his father's merchandising firm, W&G Turnbull and Company, until it sold in 1916. However, it was his avid collecting, which began at



Figure 3. Kinsey, William Henry Scott 1860–1931: Photograph of Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull. ca. 1900s. Ref: PA7-14-35. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

age 17, that he was most famous for. His collection focused primarily on Māori and Pacific artefacts, 500 of which were anonymously donated to the Dominion Museum in 1913. By the time of his death in 1918, Turnbull had amassed 55,000 items, including maps, paintings, books, coins and other material, making up Aotearoa New Zealand's largest private library. He donated this collection to the nation the same year, intending to create a reference library in Wellington (Barrowman 1995, p. 25). This would become the Alexander Turnbull Library. His collection was originally held in Turnbull's house on Bowen Street and Andersen acted as the first librarian. Today, the Alexander Turnbull Collection is housed in the National Library of New Zealand.

Of Turnbull's 1,107 objects in Te Papa's holdings, only two are attributed to South Africa. These are two assegai, which are a type of long spear, now generally associated with stereotypical Zulu warrior imagery and archetypes. The term “assegai” is attributed to throwing spears, though it is likely the spears were referred to as assegai by outside observers, rather than the makers or users. Dutch speakers were likely to have naturalised the word into English, but the term has become so synonymous with indigenous South African implements that it is often assumed to be a Zulu word (Scott-Macnab 2012, p.161). The term was used when accessioning these spears into Te Papa's collection. Assegai refers to ranged

weapons which are thrown and they have been compared to javelins in composition. This type of spear is just one of many types of spears constructed by Zulu craftspeople. Turnbull's pair are both made up of wooden shafts and steel tips. There are no further details beyond their attribution to South Africa; the assegai are not recorded as having been made or used by a particular group of people.

Richard John Spotswood Seddon



Figure 4. Morice, Charles George Frederick, 1868–1966. Photograph of Captain Richard Seddon and Captain Saxby. ca. 1900. Ref: PA1-q-162-50. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Richard John Spotswood Seddon (Fig. 4), the oldest son of Aotearoa New Zealand's longest-serving premier, Richard John Seddon, was born in 1881 (Auckland Museum, n.d.). The Seddon family lived in Kumara, on the west coast of the South Island, until 1895, when they moved to Wellington. Seddon attended Wellington College from 1896 to 1897. At age 19, he volunteered to serve in the South African War and, over his military career, achieved the rank of Captain. He was killed during World War I in 1918, at the age of 37. Captain Seddon collected many artefacts over his life and travels and the collection came into the care of his sister, Dame Elizabeth Gilmer née Seddon (1880–1960). She donated the collection to Wellington College in his memory in 1932 and it was placed in the school's College Memorial Hall. Captain Seddon's collection was

displayed along with other objects, making up Wellington College's Museum. The original College Memorial Hall was demolished in 1968 and a replacement hall was completed in 1973, but was unable to hold all the contents of the original building. Captain Seddon's collection was donated to the National Museum the same year.



Figure 5. Fighting axe — maker and date unknown, South Africa. Gift of Wellington College, 1973. 175 mm (width), 805 mm (length), 40 mm (depth). Te Papa (FE006440).

Included in Captain Seddon's collection was a fighting axe (Fig. 5), made by a blacksmith in South Africa. Produced in the early 20th century, it is likely Captain Seddon acquired it while fighting in the South African War. The axe is 80.5 cm long altogether, comprising a curved iron blade mounted on a long, polished wood handle. No further record of the axe's creation is available, so it cannot be attributed to a particular person or group. When donated to the Museum, the axe was classified as a war hatchet and axes like this would have been traditionally used during battle, though it remains unclear if this axe was made for that purpose or as a tourist souvenir. The style of axe is common across southern Africa; similar weapons were crafted by Zulu, Tswana, Ngoni, Sotho, Mangwato and Shona blacksmiths from across modern-day South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Brown-Haysom 2011). However, the specification of "fighting axe" stands out amongst Te Papa's collections, as other axes in Te Papa's holdings do not specify their intended use. In contemporary times, this style of axe is used in Zulu dance performances (Fischer and Zirngibl 1978, p. 98).

The Kinsey family

Sir Joseph Kinsey (Fig. 6) was an English businessman who married Sarah Ann Garrard in 1872. The couple had a daughter, May, in 1873 and the family immigrated to Christchurch, New Zealand in 1880. Sir Joseph founded a shipping company, Kinsey and Company and would go on to be involved in Christchurch's business community. It was through his shipping firm that Sir Joseph became involved in Robert Falcon Scott's and Ernest Shackleton's respective expeditions to Antarctica. This led to the Royal Geographical Society awarding him the Scott Medal in 1914 and to his knighthood in 1917.



Figure 6. Photograph of Sir Joseph Kinsey taken by Lady Sarah Kinsey. ca. 1910. Ref: PAColl-9460. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Sir Joseph’s daughter, May, would join her father on climbing expeditions, such as their journey to the Southern Alps in 1895. The Kinsey family was very involved in local causes: Lady Sarah was president of the Christchurch Juvenile Choir and Sir Joseph was involved in the Christchurch Committee for the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition in 1925. Upon Sir Joseph’s death in 1936, much of his collection was bequeathed to Alexander Turnbull Library, Robert McDougall Art Gallery and the Dominion Museum. The donation of this material was overseen by Lady Sarah and May.

The numerous pieces of Sir Joseph’s collection donated to the Museum included many domestic ceramic pieces, including ethnographic items from across Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Seven items from Sir Joseph’s collection are part of the South African Collection: a Zulu cowhide shield (Fig. 7), two 19th century necklaces made of seeds and fibres and four beaded pieces labelled as an armlet, collarette, tablet and sundry. The Zulu shield was produced in the early 20th century of dark and light brown cowhide; the maker of the shield is unknown. All four beaded pieces were made in the 20th century out of small glass beads.

Glass beads were commonly used to trade for items across various parts of the world and they proved popular when introduced into southern Africa. Missionaries based in South Africa used beads to gain resources and to open lines of communication and exchange. In some places



Figure 7. Shield — maker and date unknown, South Africa. Gift of Lady Kinsey and Mrs Moore, 1936. 450 mm (width), 868 mm (height), 45 mm (depth). Te Papa (GH012588).

within South Africa, the beads were then adopted into indigenous cultural practices. A complex system of bead language had developed by the late 1800s within the Zulu Kingdom, in which bead colours held particular meanings, which could be fluid, based on the colour and placement of other beads around it (Van Wyk 2003, p. 23). Women became the main producers of beaded clothing, which became markers of status and skill as well as community group identifiers. Expertise from colleagues at Iziko Museum has indicated the collarette from the Kinsey Collection (Fig. 8), pictured below, was unlikely to have been made for the curio market. The beading technique and style suggest it is Zulu in origin, though the bead colours are not typical of work from the Zulu Kingdom. The piece potentially came from the Drakensberg area, which borders present-day Lesotho, where cross-influences developed between Zulu and Sotho styles.



Figure 8. Collarette — maker unknown, 20th century, South Africa. Gift of Lady Kinsey and Mrs Moore, 1936. 15 mm (width), 380 mm (length). Te Papa. (FE002772/1).

The Wellcome Collection

Henry Wellcome (1853–1936; Fig. 9) was a pharmaceutical entrepreneur who co-founded Burroughs, Wellcome & Company in 1880. Amongst other drug advancements, the pharmaceutical company introduced the selling of medicine in pill form to England. After his passing, through his will, the Wellcome Trust was founded and remains one of the world's largest medical charities (Wellcome n.d.).

Wellcome was well travelled and he collected items related to medicine and healing. He would also send people on his behalf to procure items of interest. The sheer size of his collection meant not all of it could be displayed in his exhibitions. Upon his death, much of Wellcome's collection was dispersed across various museums, including the Dominion Museum (Wellcome Collection 2021). The Wellcome Collection Museum was established in London in 2007, housing and displaying the remainder of his collection.

Of the five key donors under discussion, the most material in the South African Collection has come from the Wellcome Collection. Unlike Andersen's and Captain Seddon's



Figure 9. Henry Solomon Wellcome. Photograph, 1913. Wellcome Collection.

donations — in which only one item from a large collection is from South Africa — the Wellcome Collection contains seventeen. It is a varied collection of objects, including beaded pieces, arrow shafts and full arrows, various axes, projectile points and an assegai. The beadwork includes four belts made using a range of colourful beads — the most prevalent colours being yellow, green, red and black. Like the beaded objects in the Kinsey Collection, these are all made of small glass beads held together by fibres and were constructed at some time in the early 20th century. The arrow shafts and intact arrows are made from cane (Fig. 10). The heads are metal and demonstrate different styles of fabrication. The axes and assegai prompt similar questions as Captain Seddon's fighting axe: were they tools that had been used and then collected or were they purposefully made for the tourist trade? The axes are small, hand-held implements with wooden handles bearing either steel or iron heads, constructed in the 19th century. The assegai, considered a stabbing spear, was made of wood, iron and leather and it is unclear exactly when it was produced.



Figure 10. Arrows — maker and date unknown, Africa. Gift of the Wellcome Collection, 1952. Top: 14 mm (width), 628 mm (length), 8 mm (depth). Bottom: 9 mm (width), 672 mm (length), 13 mm (depth). Te Papa (FE004351 & FE004352).

There are eight further objects in the Wellcome Collection labelled as Zulu. In dealing with objects of different cultures, it is important to ensure their attribution is accurate; with limited provenance, information accuracy becomes even more essential. This is particularly applicable to the South African Collection. Although objects in the Wellcome Collection were labelled as Zulu, verification of origin continues to be an important process in the collection survey.

Beyond biographies

The objects and biographies highlighted here amount to just a small fraction of the Museum's wider collection of South African objects, not all of which have a known provenance or contributor. The Museum's South African collection includes several items of interest from unknown creators and donors: a Zulu smoker's pipe (Fig. 11) and a hilt weapon and scabbard (Fig. 12). All that is known about these items is when they came into the collection. Though it has been mentioned that objects from South Africa were generally acquired passively as part of much larger donations, this was not always the case.

The pipe was purchased from an unknown source in 1912, but specialist knowledge has indicated this type of pipe was used exclusively by women. Though Te Papa's records attribute the pipe to Zulu origins, expertise suggests it has been mislabelled and the pipe is actually of Xhosa or Thembu origin. Zulu people did not use pipes for smoking tobacco, but instead ground tobacco into snuff and made a wide range of fine snuff containers and snuff spoons. This pipe would probably have been used for smoking tobacco by an older Xhosa-speaking woman. The shape of pipes like this was almost certainly based on Dutch clay pipes.

Other objects such as the hilt weapon and scabbard have a singular donor surname which is no longer traceable back to a specific person. The origins of the hilt weapon and scabbard and of their appearance in Aotearoa New Zealand are unknown. The extent of information on



Figure 11. Zulu smoker's pipe — maker unknown, 1900–1950, South Africa. Purchased 1912. 30 mm (width), 240 mm (length), 70 mm (depth). Te Papa (FE000403).

the hilt weapon and scabbard is that they were purchased by the Museum in 1947 from Mr Murray. Despite the acquisition record labelling it South African, colleagues at Iziko Museum suggest it most likely originates from an area to the north of South Africa, possibly present-day Zambia. The purchase also included several other items: a ladle, sansa or mbira (instrument) and a bowl and lid with a carved animal handle. It is likely that these items are also from north of the Limpopo River. It is not known why the Museum decided to purchase these items or who was specifically involved in their acquisition.



Figure 12. Hilt weapon and scabbard — maker unknown, 19th century, South Africa. Purchased 1947. 60 mm (width), 242 mm (length), 25 mm (depth). Te Papa (FE004919).

The lack of information on these objects does not make them any less important to the collection, but it highlights the difficulties of working with limited records. Ongoing work is needed to identify the objects' origins and ensure what is known about them is accurate. This is especially so in the case if there is no further information available about an object's acquisition history. This is where engagement with South African communities locally and on the African continent are most important. The expertise we have received so far from colleagues at Iziko Museum demonstrates the need for these international relationships between museums when engaging with collections with origins from outside Aotearoa New Zealand.

Project connections

This project extended beyond Te Papa and its collections and, by its very nature, beyond the scope of Aotearoa New Zealand itself. In dealing with the South African Collection, it was important to make connections across organisations, communities and other collections. This included corresponding with Wellington College (as a previous donor), contacting scholars on the African continent for object verification, engaging with local communities through the 2022 African Mother Tongue event (described below) and applying the project model – surveying under-researched collections – to other areas

of Te Papa's holdings. Many challenges arose from limited accession records, missing donor information or incomplete knowledge around older pieces in the collection. Many of these problems could not be solved by referring solely to Te Papa's archives and records. While there were some instances in which records were incomplete because information had been missed in the transition from physical records to digital, in some cases, the information may have never been available at all. This raises further questions around the purpose of collecting such objects when there is a lack of ethnographic information about them. Under what circumstances did the donor acquire the objects? Were they specifically part of the tourist trade? Gaining a fuller picture required consultation with external sources.

As discussed above, one of the challenges of the project included the records themselves, in terms of the circumstances of acquisition. This lack of information was a particular challenge with the Captain Seddon Collection. The chain of events, which saw the objects being held at Wellington College and then donated to the Museum in 1973, was unclear. A digitised copy of Wellington College's magazine *The Wellingtonian* revealed that he had left the school in 1897 and had been killed in action during World War I (*The Wellingtonian 1919* 2015). This still left many unanswered questions about the collection acquisition. Addressing these required reaching out to the archivist of Wellington College, Michael Pallin, who provided a wealth of knowledge about Captain Seddon's time at the school and the process of his collection being donated to the school's museum. Pallin shared images of Captain Seddon and explained the details around the building refurbishment that had led to the donation of Captain Seddon's collection to the National Museum. Pallin's archival work for the school and his knowledge enabled the record to be extended, painting a fuller picture of the acquisitions. Nonetheless, some questions — such as when and where Captain Seddon acquired the axe — may never be answered.

One major challenge for this project was that an immense number of objects were labelled as "Zulu", with no further information provided, such as whether they were made by a Zulu individual or originated from a particular community. Twenty objects were identified in the production details section with the label "Zulu" as their locality, without necessarily having been verified as such. This included objects, such as shields, arrows, smoking pipes, aprons, axes, spears and a knobkerrie. Information on accession records — particularly early 20th century ones — denoted items as Zulu without any further reference or location to determine if this were indeed the case. It was of the utmost importance to have the origins of these objects inspected and verified. In that regard, a contact made with Julia Charlton of the Wits Art Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa, has been invaluable, with her input being instrumental to the project. Several objects have been confirmed as accurately labelled Zulu, including the cowhide shield in the Kinsey Collection. This process is ongoing, as not every object

has been assessed; it is a task that requires a particular set of knowledge and a collective assessment by experts.

Inter-institutional connections have also been made with staff at Iziko Museums of South Africa. This contact was made through the previous South African High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ms Vuyiswa Tulelo and First Secretary, Mr Edgar Motsisi. We have begun to work with Executive Director Dr Bongani Ndhlovu, Director Collections and Digitisation Paul Tichmann and Dr Patricia Davison, an Emeritus Research Associate with the Museum. Their assistance in identifying objects in this article and for providing important cultural context has been invaluable. This initial work has been towards opening a dialogue between the two Museums and to begin to collaborate on larger projects. The work with Iziko Museum is ongoing and we expect to broaden this relationship further.



Figure 13. South African Ambassador Her Excellency Ms Vuyiswa Tulelo at the Te Papa Mother Tongue event, 17 February 2022, Te Papa.

In February 2022, the Museum hosted a *Te Papa After Dark: Mother Tongue* event, focused on showcasing music, dance and performance from Africa. The opportunity to feature some of the taonga collections as a digital display provided a broader audience for the project and a chance to establish new connections between communities and collections. A selection of pieces was displayed alongside the performances on the evening. The former South African Ambassador, Her Excellency Ms Vuyiswa Tulelo (Fig. 13), encouraged further collaboration between Te Papa and other cultural institutions on the African continent.

Conclusion

Overall, this project's focus on the South African Collection has brought to the forefront the critical work of provenance research to better understand the history of the objects, peoples and events. As briefly discussed, the main facet of the project were the posts published on Te Papa's blog to help boost knowledge about and awareness of the comparatively small collection. Public

engagement with these blogs sparked conversation, with one commentator sharing their own connection to South Africa. On *Highlighting Our South African Collection* (Powell 2022a), the commentator shared their own familial connection to the Cape Colony and asked whether any objects had been brought over with their family (Fig. 14). A comment such as this supports the need to improve awareness of the collection. There are tangible historical and modern connections between Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa for everyday people.



Several of my Ancestors were living at the Cape Colony before migrating to New Zealand ,along with Approx. 360 others .I wonder if any of those objects were taken to NZ with my Ancestors? It's not the only connection our family has with South Africa, a cousin Founded the SACP,which morphed into the ANC over time.

Figure 14. Comment from the Highlighting Our South African Collection Blog.

This work has been a small study into the South African Collection, which will hopefully be a precursor to more focused and in-depth research. Engagement with local communities has begun, which can be further expanded. In many ways, this collection research project has been shaped and formed by the information available and through the network of contacts developed over time. As a future approach for research into the International History Collections, the key steps are useful when considering subsequent projects. The key outcomes have been reviewing the catalogue, object and acquisition biographies and featuring in online and publication modes. This has further enhanced Te Papa's ability to better understand the complex histories associated with the taonga and the ongoing work required to capture this information in a centralised form. This collection survey has raised further questions about how Te Papa considers a sustained approach to in-depth research that has a longer horizon time. It is important to continue to engage with modern-day communities when approaching ethnographic collections to understand the culture value and significance attached to objects. Recontextualising ethnographic collections alongside communities is an important step towards decolonising museum practices.

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