

# Placing Pitcairn Island Placenames Historically: Professor A. S. C. Ross, Albert W. Moverley, Henry E. Maude, and *The Pitcairnese Language*

Joshua Nash  
Aarhus University

## Abstract

This article documents a crucial element in the historiography of research into Pitcairn, the Pitcairn Island language. It considers the work of British linguist Professor Alan Strode Campbell Ross (1907-1980), Pitcairn Island's first non-islander school teacher Albert Wadkins Moverley (1908-1953), and the founder of the discipline of Pacific history Henry Evans Maude (1906-2006) on the edited 1964 work *The Pitcairnese Language*, the key volume about the history and linguistics of the Pitcairn Island language. Maude's gazetteer of Pitcairn Island placenames is evaluated with reference to the contribution it makes to *The Pitcairnese Language*. Ross's correspondence, especially that with Maude, and how the data collected by Moverley, who lived on the island between 1949-1951 and who became Ross's Ph.D student, is summarized and assessed in terms of how it contributed to *The Pitcairnese Language*, especially the section on Pitcairn Island placenaming (toponymy). In summary, Ross's statement in his preface to *The Pitcairnese Language* that "any account of a language is better than no account at all" is appraised in terms of a historiography of research into the Pitcairn Island language.

## Researching the Pitcairn Island Language: Ross, Maude, and Moverley

In this article I examine how accessing archival documents can assist historians and other scholars in piecing together historical and personal processes involved in publishing Pacific history a long way from the physical Pacific. It considers how these very processes are still valid and pertinent for advancing contemporary findings and making data like toponymic (placenames) information more readily available to a greater readership. The first section deals with the nature of the movement of an obscure archival document relating to Pitcairn Island placenames history and how it became used as a key aspect of published Pacific history. The second section deals with correspondence surrounding how this document eventually became part of the small canon of Pitcairn Island history and linguistics. This article extends and complements work into the historiography of research into the language of Pitcairn Island, and to an extent the language of Norfolk Island, which until recently has been largely unwritten.<sup>1</sup>

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\* During 2013 it was a pleasure to dedicate my research energies as the Bill Cowan Barr Smith Library Fellow to analysing material in the Maude Papers at the University of Adelaide relevant to a project dealing with the languages of Pitcairn Island, Norfolk Island, and Palmerston Island. This paper forms part of the research I conducted during my fellowship at the Barr Smith Library. I gratefully acknowledge the financial resources of the Cowan family and the personnel at the Library. My thanks to Adrian Young for providing me with digital copies of items from the archive LAdd, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> See Adrian Young, "Mutiny's Bounty: Pitcairn Islanders and the Making of a Natural laboratory on the Edge of Britain's Pacific Empire," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Princeton University, 2016, for a detailed

The Pitcairn Island language, Pitcairn, has had many names throughout its history. Although the glossonyms “Pitkern” and possibly even “Pitcairnese” have been used, I use “Pitcairn” to refer to any linguistic, toponymic, and historical treatments and documentation of the language spoken by the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers and their Polynesian counterparts. “Pitcairn toponymy” and “Pitcairn toponyms” refer to all the placenames on Pitcairn, namely English, Pitcairn, and Polynesian (mainly Tahitian) forms.

A vital element of the historiography of the Pitcairn Island language is the editorial work of British linguist Professor Alan Strode Campbell Ross (1903-1980) and Albert Wadkins Moverley (1908-1953) in the production of the edited volume *The Pitcairnese Language*.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the involvement of Henry Evans Maude (1906-2006), founder of the discipline of Pacific history, is critical to deciphering how *The Pitcairnese Language* came about and how Pitcairn Island toponymy (placenames) is key to the linguistics of the volume. It is argued that these three scholars’ Pitcairn Island work, which span different locations and dissimilar times, illustrate not only how disparate and varied threads of documentation can lead to satisfactory outcomes, but also show how editing, uniting, and publishing scholarship from differing sources can lead to effective products which by their very existence bridge and remediate some of the strains and difficulties involved in researching across large geographical distances.

The following quote embodies Ross’s interest in the Pitcairn Island language:

Pitcairnese is, of course, of considerable intrinsic interest, to specialists in Polynesian and English dialects alike. But there are two things which confer on it an especial distinction in the General Linguistic field. First, the Island was uninhabited when the Settlers arrived; one can thus witness the actual birth of a language and follow its history through to the present day. The same kind of thing could perhaps be done for other small and isolated communities—only it has not been. Secondly, the pristineness of Pitcairnese place-names. In my Salamanca lecture [...] I introduced the concept of the *pristine* place-name, that is, a place-name of whose act of creation we are cognisant. Most of the world’s place-names are, of course, non-pristine. Thus, in respect of the two matters just mentioned, Pitcairnese philology may be said to be almost unique. (1964: 12-13)

In his Clayton Memorial Lecture “The Pitcairnese Language” Ross writes about the history of his collaboration with his by then late Ph.D student Albert Wadkins Moverley:

My own connection with Pitcairnese is the following. Some ten years ago I noticed, in *The Times*, that the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific [Henry Maude] had visited Pitcairn; he said that the inhabitants spoke a form of English but that much of what they said was incomprehensible to him; he gave me a specimen sentence which was incomprehensible to me also. I wrote to him and he kindly put me in touch with the then schoolmaster on the island, A. W. Moverley. I found that the latter was extremely interested in Pitcairnese and had made large linguistics collections. He came to Birmingham, with a scholarship from the University, so that, working under my direction, he might submit a Ph.D thesis on

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account of a history of research on and about Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island.

<sup>2</sup> The full reference for this volume is: A.S.C. Ross and Albert W. Moverley, eds. *The Pitcairnese Language with contributions by E. Schubert, H. E. and Alaric Maude, E.H. Flint and A.C. Gimson* (1964: André Deutsch).

<sup>3</sup> This lecture was published as A.S.C. Ross “Notes on some 'pristine' place-names of Pitcairn Island.” In *Fifth International Congress of Toponymy and Anthroponymy: Proceedings and Transactions (Acta Salmanticensia: Filosofia y Letras, xI: 1-2.)*, eds. M. Cortés, A.G. Blanco & A. Tovar, 333-337 (1958: Salamanca).

the subject. It is very sad to record that, after a year's hard work in Birmingham, he died very suddenly in the autumn of 1953. He had worked so hard, both on the island and in Birmingham that, at the time of his death, his thesis was very far advanced. It had always been our intention that we should publish a joint work on Pitcairnese which should consist, essentially, of his thesis, elaborated on the General-Linguistic and Tahitian sides by myself. Aided by grants from the University of Birmingham and the French Government, I therefore went to Paris to try to learn to talk Tahitian from the Tahitian colony living there. I thought that, despite Moverley's death, our joint project should still be adhered to. The book is now almost ready for press and is to be published by Messrs. André Deutsch in 1962. (1960/1961: 30-31)

Despite Ross's posited date, the edited volume *The Pitcairnese Language* accredited to both Ross and Moverley, with strangely only Ross's name appearing on the dust cover, was published in 1964 by the self-made eclectic publisher André Deutsch. Moverley was stationed on Pitcairn Island as a New Zealand Government Instructor from July 1949–July 1951, after which time he travelled to England to undertake his doctoral research. Thus, by the time Ross and Moverley's collected work was published, Moverley's data was more than a decade old.

Now to Maude's interest. Since its purchase by the University of Adelaide, Australia in 1972, the bulk of Maude's personal papers known as the Maude Papers, in the Pacific Collection at the Barr Smith Library, have been and continue to be an indispensable collection of materials for any Pacific scholar, as the number of papers which have utilized these resources attests.<sup>4</sup> Sources in the Maude Papers cover a wide range of disciplines and topics relevant to Pacific historians, anthropologists, and linguists. It is one of the few collections in Australia with a significant number of manuscripts on Pitcairn Island. Henry "Harry" Maude was involved in colonial administration work on Pitcairn Island between 1940-1945, during which time he collected data of interest to historians and linguists working on the Pitcairn Island language.

According to Woodburn's listing, the Pitcairn Island papers relate to "administrative visits by H.E. Maude, principally to establish regulations but also to effect the foundation of a postal service and improve the local wireless service. 1940-41 and 1944, with extensive background and related papers covering 1904-45."<sup>5</sup> Despite the administrative focus of his incumbency on Pitcairn Island, Maude's general interest and panache for all things relevant to Pacific history extended into what would later become a topic of some linguistic attraction to the contact languages of the South Pacific – a history of Pitcairn Island toponymy.

As the unpublished document, erroneously entitled "Gazeteer [sic] of Pitcairn Island" (hereafter the Gazetteer), attests, Maude set himself the continuous, persistent, and incremental task of documenting placenames in English and Pitcairn. The result of this obviously consistent and laborious work in Maude's own meticulous, yet difficult to read, pencilled hand is the Gazetteer.<sup>6</sup> This valuable document provides one of the first unofficial primers of what has since

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<sup>4</sup> For details of the history and status of the Maude Papers, see Susan Woodburn, "Journeys through Pacific History, A Guide to the Pacific Islands Library and the Papers of H.E. and H.C. Maude," the University of Adelaide, 1995; Susan Woodburn, "The Pacific Collection, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide" *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 26(4) (1995), 281-283; and Doug Munro & Geoffrey Gray (2013): "We Haven't Abandoned the Project," *The Journal of Pacific History*, 48:1, 63-77.

<sup>5</sup> Woodburn, *Journeys*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> The full reference for this document is H.E. Maude, ca. 1940, "Gazeteer [sic] of Pitcairn Island," The Maude Papers, Pacific Collection, Barr Smith Library, The University of Adelaide, located in "A Pitcairn Island" section, part 1 series M553, located in Box 1, year unknown, page numbers as listed.

been a topic of significance for Pacific toponymy – pristine toponymy. This is a term Ross used to describe toponyms in locations that were linguistically pristine prior to inhabitation: “A place-name is pristine if, and only if, we are cognisant of the actual act of its creation. Most of the world’s place-names are thus non-pristine.”<sup>7</sup> Ross writes:

What is the value, if any, of Pitcairnese toponymy to other toponymies? I think that these pristine names have a very definite value. The nature of this value may well be appreciated by a toponymist imagining himself trying to solve these Pitcairnese place-names ab initio, without any of the local information so carefully gathered by Moverley. It is not to be supposed that he would make much progress. But it must be remembered that we are, in fact, trying to solve many – perhaps most – toponymies in just this kind of way.<sup>8</sup>

It is necessary to note this list of more than 400 placenames published under the section title “APPENDIX: THE PLACE-NAMES OF PITCAIRN ISLAND” in *The Pitcairnese Language*, pp. 170-188. The fact the placename list is titled “Appendix,” hereafter “the Appendix,” and appears sandwiched between “Chapter III - On the history of the Pitcairnese language” compiled and written by Ross using Moverley’s primary Pitcairn Island data collected in the late 1940s–early 1950s and “Chapter IV - The language of Norfolk Island,” written by Elwyn H. Flint, an Australian phonetician who had conducted fieldwork on Norfolk Island in the mid 1950s, instead of being placed at the end of the volume is atypical. I assume Ross’s reasoning was that his Chapter III deals with many Pitcairn grammatical issues which bear similarity and relevance to Pitcairn toponyms. The Pitcairn placename corpus is the first publication dealing in detail not only with Pitcairn toponymy, but with any (island) contact language toponymy, or what I have elsewhere labelled *creole toponymy*. This is not an insignificant occurrence, especially because of the general neglect the linguistic study of Pitcairn as a whole has experienced within contact linguistics and as an element of research into Pacific Englishes.

In assessing the nature, value, and accuracy of Maude’s Pitcairn Island toponymic work and how it came to be published in Ross and Moverley’s much later edited work, it is necessary first to account for exactly what the Gazetteer is physically and what elements of this earlier document came to be published almost 20 years later. Maude’s Gazetteer is composed in a lined, school exercise book with no cover with the title page “Maude, H.E. Gazetteer [sic] of Pitcairn Island.”<sup>9</sup> The document is handwritten in thin, often almost smudged, pencil, which, along with the oxidizing of the now browning paper, makes for a difficult read. Maude’s extremely small yet precise cursive does not pose an easy task for the reader. In time certain rules of Maude’s hand come to the fore which lend themselves eventually to decipherable scrutiny. Information is provided on the right side of the spread double page, with the use of the left side of the double spread being for addenda and notes, of which there are only a few. Page numbers are marked in the top right-hand corner, with a single double spread comprising one page. Letters corresponding to the initial letter of the placename list, e.g., A for placenames beginning with “A” – e.g., “Adamstown,” appear below and to the left of page numbers. There are 38 (double

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<sup>7</sup> Ross, Notes, 333; cf. opening quote.

<sup>8</sup> Ross, Notes, 337.

<sup>9</sup> Maude misspelled the word “gazetteer.” This exercise book appears as a common school exercise book which I presume in all likelihood, even in the 1940s, would have had at least a thin cardboard cover. There is no physical evidence in the archive box in the Papers of there ever being a cover to the Gazetteer.

spread) pages, with five addended yet unnumbered pages, consisting mainly of additional placenames and notes and references to the preceding list.

It appears the Gazetteer was intended to be cumulative. But it is unknown whether Maude would have considered this document complete. Because there is no archival evidence in Ross's archives in Birmingham of Ross having received this version of the Gazetteer, I can only assume this is the version Ross used in compiling the Appendix. Using sticky tape and pins, Maude has adhered additional notes, typically small pieces of paper in strategic positions, to provide further information, presumably as it came to hand over time. Most of these addenda are still intact and correctly placed. In order to maintain alphabetical order even as more information became available and filled up the pages so as not to disturb the logical presentation, references are included to point to later sections. The first example appears at the bottom of page 1 in the "A" placenames – the data for "Aunt Rachel's Coconuts, Down." "Down" is a preposition which is often included in the Pitcairn language and Pitcairn placenames to indicate either or both spatial location and topography. Maude, Ross, and Moverley astutely include this grammatical and topographical information. Neither author creates a separate placename entry for what in this case could be individual entries for "Aunt Rachel's Coconuts" and "Down Aunt Rachel's Coconuts." This pattern is confirmed in Ross and Moverley: "Hence the frequent appearance here of two similar forms of the same place-name: observe the notation (*Down those*) *Big Stones* which means *Down those Big Stones* or *Big Stones* (in the alphabetication the bracketed part is not taken account of)."<sup>10</sup>

The space limitation leads Maude to write "continued on page 29," where a new "A" list begins. There are nine instances of such references to later page numbers for the same letter. An example of an entry is: *Aute: The name given to the whole north-eastern corner of the island, from Johnny's Tunina to Christians Cave. The region is a wild and unfrequented one, cut up into steep ridges and valleys leading from the Goat-House Peak and Gannet's Ridge to the sea.*<sup>11</sup> Most entries are comprehensive in that they give a general location of the named place, information about the nature of the topography in the location, and any relevant content regarding the events or people associated with the naming of the place. Maude's capturing of historical substance is impressive and survives as an anthroponymic, toponymic, and geographical-historical memoir.

Having described the physical and intellectual nature and organisation of the Gazetteer, I now consider its historical placement and import to the larger study of what Ross continually referred to as "Pitcairnese philology." The Gazetteer is an obscure and inaccessible unpublished work, which came to be published in part in the Appendix in Ross and Moverley's *The Pitcairnese Language*. It is the topic of another paper to assess how much of Maude's work was published in the Appendix and thus to ascertain the amount of Maude's toponymic work which has been left unpublished. Collaterally, any comparison between the Gazetteer and that which is published in Ross and Moverley's volume should reveal similarities and differences in Maude's and Moverley's respective methods to documenting the historical toponymy of Pitcairn as presented by Ross. With respect to these approaches, I now consider the following questions. How are tensions and harmonies relating to methods and dissemination of information revealed in the correspondence relating to Pitcairn Island toponymy between Maude and Ross and Ross and other interested parties during the nascent publication stages of *The Pitcairnese Language*? What are the similarities and differences in Maude's and Moverley's methods of documenting Pitcairn toponymy?

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<sup>10</sup> *The Pitcairnese Language*, 170, fn 3

<sup>11</sup> Maude, the Gazetteer, Section A, 1.

### ***The Pitcairnese Language and Pitcairn Island Toponymy***

As the editor of the 1964 volume, Ross must have undertaken his editorial work and made decisions regarding inclusions and exclusions. While comparing the two toponymic inventories of Maude and Moverley and their respective and combined contributions to Pitcairn Island historical linguistics in their entirety is beyond the intent of this article, in the remaining space I assess what variance between the unpublished and published works at hand does to continuing historical work into Pitcairn Island toponymy. There are obvious discrepancies between Maude's Gazetteer and that which has been published by Ross and Moverley. The following description begins "APPENDIX: THE PLACE-NAMES OF PITCAIRN ISLAND"<sup>12</sup>:

"This Appendix is based upon two lists, or gazetteers, of Pitcairnese place-names, one made by Moverley, the other by H.E. Maude. Neither collection makes use of phonetic notation, and I [Ross] only do so when a word, occurring in or as a place-name, appears in it in the *Glossary*; such entries serve here as cross references thereto."

Ross's initial work on Pitcairn Island toponymy, published as his "Salamanca lecture," was integral to the circumstances which brought about international public and scholastic discussion of Pitcairn Island toponymy and broader interest in the Pitcairn language. The influence of the development of global interest in Pitcairn Island toponyms as part of its linguistic and cultural history and the importance of Pitcairn Island toponymy to discussions of Pacific history in the 1950s and 1960s should not be undervalued. Even today, five kilometre square Pitcairn Island is famed for having over 500 placenames. Many of these are combinations of event-based, factual, humorous, and memorable names. As one Norfolk Island informant who had been to Pitcairn Island intimated to me during fieldwork on Norfolk in 2008: "Every five metres you walk on Pitcairn Island there is a different place that has been named."

It appears Ross distributed his 1958 manuscript "Notes on some 'pristine' place-names of Pitcairn Island," which generated some curiosity. In a letter dated 24 January 1958, Alan Wotherspoon writes to Ross: "I have been back one year in New Zealand after having taught for two years on Pitcairn Island [1956-1958]. I was the fourth of our N.Z., the first being that admirably efficient man, Mr Bert [Albert] Moverley. Recently in our local paper, the N.Z. "HERALD", I noticed that you had had reprinted, a paper on, "SOME PRISTINE PLACE-NAMES OF PITCAIRN ISLAND". Would there be any chance of obtaining one of those papers?"<sup>13</sup> In return for this favour, Wotherspoon offers to Ross to be a source of information and contacts with people on Pitcairn Island, along with the offer of Pitcairn Island stamps and a complete set of the paper *Pitcairn Pilhi*, which began in 1956 and had a run of 18 months. F. Percival Ward, from Carlingford, New South Wales, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and

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<sup>12</sup> There are two footnotes here, listed as superscript "1,2" after "... PITCAIRN ISLAND". Footnote "1" states: "Extracts from Moverley's List were published as a joint article by the two of us (p. 8, note 4). The article Ross is referring to is Ross, A.S.C. 1958. Notes on some 'pristine' place-names of Pitcairn Island. In *Fifth International Congress of Toponymy and Anthroponymy: Proceedings and Transactions (Acta Salmanticensia: Filosofia y Letras, xI: 1-2)*, eds. M. Cortés, A.G. Blanco & A. Tovar, 333-337, Salamanca: Acta Salmanticensia. Footnote "2" states: "The place-names *Pitcairn*, *Tahiti*, *Old* [da :t], and [dʌbən] 'Pitcairn Island' are not discussed here; they appear in the *Glossary* [212-269]."

<sup>13</sup> Letter from A. Wotherspoon to Ross, 24 January 1959, Item LAdd/1556, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

missionary who spent six years on Pitcairn Island<sup>14</sup>, wrote to Ross on 3 December 1958 after learning of the presentation of a paper to the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, based on notes made by the late Moverley.

Although the relationship between F. Percival Ward and Moverley is of interest more to the missionary and educational research on Pitcairn rather than any linguistic history, some points are still worth making. Ward had several incumbencies as Pitcairn's school teacher: 1938–1944, 1947 (along with Clarence Young and Bert Christian, and 1948 (<http://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/education.shtml> accessed 31 October 2018), before Moverley and his family arrived on the island on 21 July 1948.<sup>15</sup> Moverley was to be Pitcairn's first government appointed schoolteacher:

Most previous teachers had been islanders themselves or missionary teachers of the Seventh-day Adventist faith... Teacher Moverley's arrival at Pitcairn brings to head a contentious matter that has been sputtering between the British administration of Pitcairn and the Australian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for a number of months. Irregularities in the Adventist-operated Pitcairn school lead to a decision by the government to take over its direction. It is the only time the Adventists have lost control of one of their schools in the Pacific Ocean. Upon his arrival, Moverley, an atheist, throws all the school's religious books into the sea. He tells the island's Adventist pastor Frederick Ward, "There is no room for two suns on this island." On his [Moverley's] departure in 1949, he vows to "get all the Adventists off the island."<sup>16</sup>

Based on this obvious ecclesiastical difference of opinion and Moverley's animosity towards religion, it is surprising Ward showed any interest in any work related to his former colleague.

Percival Ward offered Ross a copy of a booklet he and his wife wrote about the island entitled *Come Ashore!*<sup>17</sup> and wondered if it would be possible to obtain a copy of Ross's paper. He suggested Ross contact a Mr Maude, former administrator of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, who was preparing a history of the Pacific Islands, and was working on a monogram on the place names of Pitcairn Island.<sup>18</sup> Establishing this connection led to a fruitful collaboration between both H.E. and Alaric Maude.<sup>19</sup> The first correspondence from Maude to Ross is dated 23 February 1959. Maude thanks Ross for sending him a copy of his paper "Some 'pristine' place-names of Pitcairn Island." Maude remarks that he had planned a paper on these names himself: "This is a particular break for me, as I was preparing on these names myself and now need continue no longer." Maude offers corrections for "Big Sullie's Road" and "White Cow Pen" and asks for advance publication notice of Ross's book. Maude encloses a piece he has written

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<sup>14</sup> F. Percival Ward, *F. Percival Ward, after six years' residence as missionary, tells: a brief story of Pitcairn Island* (Warburton, Vic.: Signs Publishing Company, 1945).

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Ford, *Pitcairn Island as a port of call: A record 1790-2010 (second edition)* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2012), 164.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>17</sup> F. Percival & Myrtle L. Ward, *Come Ashore!: A Peep at Pitcairn Island*, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria, n.d.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from F. Percival Ward to Ross, 3 December 1958, Item LAdd/1555, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

<sup>19</sup> Ward was on Pitcairn at the same time as Maude during Maude's first stint (1938–1944) as school teacher.

himself about Pitcairn Island placenames and asks if Ross has seen Sanders's MA thesis of 1953.<sup>20</sup>

In *The Pitcairnese Language*, Ross does not refer to Sanders's thesis. Although Sanders's work is relevant to a study of Pitcairn toponymy, and because Ross does not refer to it *The Pitcairnese Language*, nor is Sanders acknowledged in the Preface, it can be presumed Ross never received a copy of this work nor did he correspond with Sanders. It is reasonable to assume the "planned paper" and "a piece he has written himself about Pitcairn placenames" would have been based on data from the Gazetteer. It is intriguing that Maude's data, collected in the early 1940s, had by 1959 not been published.

In the second item from Maude to Ross dated 12 May 1959<sup>21</sup> the sender imparts he would be happy to write a specific section of Ross's book dealing with Pitcairn Island history and will set to work on it early if Ross can let him know how long it should be. He would also be happy to do section 11 but proposes that this section be written by Roy Sanders instead. He asks that if Ross could send him Moverley's collection of genealogical material, he could also prepare sub-section 122, giving the history and genealogies of the settlers. Unfortunately, however, he informs Ross that he knows nobody who speaks Tahitian where he is, and although there are plenty in Sydney, none of them can be described as scholars.

Maude maintained what eventually became an effective and ultimately rewarding correspondence with Ross. In two letters Maude wrote to Ross dated 19<sup>22</sup> and 28 October 1961, Maude in the latter included a copy of the Gazetteer for Ross to compare with Moverley's work. Like Maude's corrections in his 23 February 1959 letter, in the 19 October 1961 letter Maude begins to show more apprehension about the reliability and accuracy of Moverley's placename list: "I have been rather disconcerted to find that Moverley's place-names and mine are almost completely different and I think that as a consequence the only thing is to send you a copy of my Gazetteer to compare."<sup>23</sup>

The two documents of Pitcairn Island placenames Ross then had in his possession – Moverley's and Maude's – were used to compile the placename "Appendix" on pages 170-188 in *The Pitcairnese Language*.<sup>24</sup> Maude noted some significant differences which were most likely the result of Moverley's methodology: "I have not managed to compare the two [place name lists] in detail as yet, for fear lest it distract too much from the task of completing my own history, but from a preliminary look through it would seem they hardly overlap. This is rather surprising, but my entries were compiled on the spot, as I walked over every inch of the island, while I fancy that Moverley's were done at home by questioning the Islanders."<sup>25</sup> While there will most often be some fluidity in any list of collected placenames based on the context of the who, what, or when of the collection of the names, there appears to be significant differences in

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from Maude to Ross, 23 February 1959, Item LAdd/1558, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Maude to Ross, 12 May 1959, Item LAdd/1559, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Maude to Ross, 19 October 1961, Item LAdd/1619, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. This paragraph appears on the second page of this letter.

<sup>24</sup> In addition to the maps mentioned in the letter from Maude to Ross, 28 October 1961, Item LAdd/1620, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham, and because of the obvious relevance of this document to the general linguistic, toponymic, and cultural work Ross was undertaking with reference to Pitcairn, it is in all likelihood possible that Ross may have received a copy of Roy Sanders (1953) "Our island being a study of Pitcairn community in transition." MA thesis, Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Maude to Ross, 28 October 1961.



the two lists. I suspect this was due primarily to the different social circles in which the two men must have moved. Ross himself seems to support this hunch in the Preface to *The Pitcairnese Language*:

A.W. often told me of the long, happy evenings which he and his wife enjoyed with them [Pitcairn Islanders Hyacinth Mae Clark and Floyd McCoy], discussing the Island language, and of the great painstakingness and patience always shown by the two Islanders. One of the favourite recreations seems to have been the turning of English nursery-rhymes into Pitcairnese (the versions have fortunately been preserved, though they are not printed in this book), a light-hearted pastime which lost nothing because of the serious linguistic enquiry which underlay it.<sup>26</sup>

I suspect Maude would not be as generous as Ross emerges here. In his 28 October 1961 letter, Maude is rather unabashed in his questioning of Moverley's toponymic data, which possibly makes him question the reliability of the remainder of Moverley's linguistic documentation. I plan to deal with some of these matters when considering the history and ontology of the *The Pitcairnese Language* as a historical document in future work, but two brief vignettes of Ross apropos of his late student signal a question about the capacity of Moverley as a linguist, and the validity of his glossary and tape recording with a young Pitcairn girl in New Zealand. Ross answers his own question, which is posed as follows: "It is upon these two things [glossary and text] that the Pitcairnese of the present book rests. And any philologist is bound to raise the question: Is it wise to base such a work on so little evidence? The answer to this question is twofold: first, it is possible to demonstrate that, in general, A.W.'s material is accurate and trustworthy; secondly, what is the alternative?" Despite this conjecture, and indeed the opinions of Maude regarding the by then late Moverley, Ross's opinion of his late Ph.D student at this time, some three years before *The Pitcairnese Language* was published, is overwhelmingly positive. This fact is important, because it gives credence to the reliability of the data Ross had at his disposal which led to the eventual publication of *The Pitcairnese Language*.

The sentiment of Moverley's hard work with the Pitcairn Islanders is confirmed by Jane Moverley, his widow, in a letter to Ross dated 2 October 1960. She answers Ross's questions regarding, among other things, the authorship of *The Pitcairnese Language* and how this should be presented in the actual publication: "I am in complete agreement that the book should appear, as you suggest, with just your two names on the title page. You will, of course, be acknowledging many other collaborators, and I would be deeply grateful if you could work in, as impressively as possible, the names of 'Hyacinth May Clark' and 'Floyd McCoy' as the islanders who went to great length to give Albert every possible assistance when he was doing the spade-work."<sup>27</sup>

Maude continues in his 28 October 1961 letter by enclosing maps he had acquired from Roy Sanders's (1953) MA thesis, most surely some of the first ever documentation of Pitcairn

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<sup>26</sup> *The Pitcairnese Language*, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Jane Moverley to Ross, 2 October 1960, Item LAdd/1577, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham. There is a discrepancy between Ross's spelling "Mae" (see earlier quotation) and Jane Moverley's spelling "May." Both spellings occur in digital and online documents associated with Hyacinth May Clark née Coffin, but Jane Moverley's spelling seems to be correct. *The Pitcairn Miscellany* of August 2014, p. 8 states: "Roy Palmer Clark was born on 2 October 1893 at 1616, Turk Street, San Francisco. At an early age he worked in Los Angeles, then went with his father, Lincoln, to Pitcairn Island via Tahiti in July 1909. On Pitcairn, Roy married Hyacinth May Coffin, who remained his wife for 57 years until May's death in 1974."

Island toponyms.<sup>28</sup> Considering how detailed these maps are graphically and historically (Figure 1), it appears strange that Sanders's work is not referred to anywhere in *The Pitcairnese Language* or elsewhere in Ross's writings. Maude asks Ross to send back Sanders's maps when Ross is finished with them and continues, "The Gazetteer is a spare, so you can throw away when of no further use."<sup>29</sup> Sanders was the schoolteacher who followed Moverley in 1951. His incumbency spanned 1951–1954. Maude believes Sanders's thesis, maps, and placename research supports his own toponymic and cultural work; Pitcairn Island was indeed a study of an island community in transition. Sanders's work was most probably informed by or at least benefited from the initial ground work in Maude's Gazetteer and the use of a more "on the spot" and place-embedded method to documenting culture, language, and toponymy.

It is not known whether Sanders knew of Maude's Gazetteer. No acknowledgment of Maude's name, Pitcairn Island work, or input into Sanders's thinking regarding "A study of Pitcairn community in transition" appears in the preface to Sanders's (1953) MA thesis, nor is there any reference to Maude in the reference list to this document. Of great interest are the similarities between the toponym categories used by Ross in the "Appendix" and those used by Sanders. Because there does not appear to be any physical evidence of Moverley's placename data in the Birmingham archive, it is uncertain what categories he used, if any, to categorize his placename data. I present the similarities between Ross's categories and Sanders's maps in the same order as they appear in the "Appendix": Physical and Geographical; Anthroponymous/Personal; Historical; Ichthyological and Ornithological/Botanical and Zoological; Botanical (there is no separate Sanders map for "botanical" place names); Obscure/Place names of unknown origin. Where there is no separate category for roads or paths in the "Appendix," Sanders includes a map "Roads." That Sanders's and Moverley's paths crossed on Pitcairn Island in 1951 may have ignited Sanders's spark in placenames, a fire which had obviously already been burning as one of Moverley's fields of interest since his arrival on Pitcairn Island in 1948.

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<sup>28</sup> Roy Sanders (1953). See fn 24. The maps and their titles appear in Sanders's thesis on the following pages: "Roads" (p. 4), "Historical Place Names" (p. 8), "Personal Place Names" (p. 13), "Places of Unknown Origin" (p. 21), "Botanical and Zoological Place Names" (p. 54), and "Physical and Geographical Place Names" (p. 72).

<sup>29</sup> There appears to be no sign of the Ross copy of Maude's Gazetteer nor Sanders's maps in the archives LAdd archives, Finding No. US29, Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham.



who have since worked on the language of Norfolk Island. This paper has shown how archival research in the Maude Papers at the University of Adelaide and an analysis of the correspondence, which led to the production of *The Pitcairnese Language* and its existence as a document and which spans international borders, triangulates the three key authors in the work.

Because of the dearth of reliable documentation on the Pitcairn Island language, especially during its early stages and even up to now, documents like Maude's Gazetteer, Sanders's maps, and Ross's responsibly published editorial work are extremely valuable for historical linguistic research into the Pitcairn Island language and Pitcairn Island itself. They have most certainly helped the development of subsequent documents, including the formative archaeological and anthropological research and later report by Peter Gathercole of the University of Otago<sup>30</sup> and the well-known and comprehensive yet unofficial map of more than 500 terrestrial and offshore placenames compiled by former Pitcairn Island resident Dave Evans.<sup>31</sup>

In conclusion, it is worth noting some more general features of Pitcairn Island historical linguistics. Scholarly yet unpublished work like Maude's can well enhance the impress of, for example, the work of linguist and non-Pitcairn visitor Ross and his by then late graduate student and Pitcairn Island visitor and teacher Moverley. I quote at length pertinent and illustrative extracts from the Preface to *The Pitcairnese Language* to demonstrate how history, toponymy, and research priorities for working on Pitcairn and conducting primary research in situ were laid out well more than half a century ago. But Ross's clarion calls today remain largely unfulfilled:

A.W.'s [Moverley] raw material consisted of two things: a Pitcairnese glossary written down in a very broad phonetic notation and a tape-recording of a dialogue between himself and a young Pitcairnese girl<sup>32</sup> .... It is upon these two things that the Pitcairnese of the present book rests. And any philologist is here bound to raise the question: Is it wise to base such a work on so little evidence? The answer to the question is twofold: first, it is possible to demonstrate that, in general, A.W.'s material is accurate and trustworthy<sup>33</sup>; secondly, what is the alternative?

...

I now turn to the second point. What is the alternative? There is, admittedly, a very obvious theoretical alternative, that is, that a philologist should spend some time on Pitcairn confirming and adding to A.W.'s material and, above all, taking

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<sup>30</sup> Gathercole, P. 1964. "Preliminary report on archaeological fieldwork on Pitcairn Island, January-March, 1964." Manuscript. Hocken Library, Dunedin.

<sup>31</sup> Evans, D. 2005. Pitcairn Island (map). The author.

<sup>32</sup> It must be noted this is the only Pitcairn language text ever to be published. Several other Pitcairn texts appear in Anders Källgård's unpublished study entitled "'Aklen Gwen Bu'u You's Head [We (the Pitcairn Islanders) are going to bump or bash your head]: A study of Pitcairnese with special reference to vocabulary'" (University of Göteborg, 1989). Even when the text in *The Pitcairnese Language* was published, it was more than a decade old and it was not what could be considered a "natural conversation." The text entitled "Chapter II – The Pitcairnese Text," by A.C. Gimson, the linguist who transliterated the text into International Phonetic Alphabet script, has an introductory paragraph: "This text is from a tape-recording made by Moverley in Wellington in 1951. It is a dialogue between himself (M[overley]) and a young Pitcairnese girl (P), aged about fifteen, who had recently arrived in New Zealand for the first time. The conversation was designed by Moverley as one that might have taken place upon the Island" (Ross and Moverley, *The Pitcairnese Language*, 121).

<sup>33</sup> I strongly suspect Ross expresses his apprehension here because although he was impressed with his student Moverley's progress in his doctoral studies on Pitcairn based on data he had collected on Pitcairn and in New Zealand, at the time of collecting this data Moverley had undertaken no formal linguistic training. While Moverley, a non-linguist, had lived on Pitcairn, Ross never travelled to the island.

down more texts. Such a procedure would certainly be effective as far as the present day language is concerned. This language may, however, not be the same as that of A.W.'s day; it is now more than ten years since he left the Island, and it is to be supposed that the ever-increasing influence of Standard English must have had at least some destructive influence on the language of such a small community as that of Pitcairn. This destructive influence will certainly have been enhanced by the common present day Pitcairn habit of emigrating to New Zealand and then, in many cases, returning to the Island.

Further, any body making a grant of the substantial proportions necessary for such a venture would undoubtedly require that the philologist be specially chosen for the task. A suitable philologist would be hard indeed to find; ideally, he would be a member of the Survey of English dialects who knew Tahitian really well...

If some shuttling between New Zealand and Panama were indeed required before our theoretical philologist got onto or off the Island, the expense of the journey might well be more than any "Arts" body, even an American one, would be likely to consider.

Thus the possibility of any serious linguistic work on the Island in the foreseeable future does seem rather remote, though more tape-recorded text is probably to be expected. Under the circumstances, then, it is, I think, correct to proceed solely on the basis of the material which A.W. collected so assiduously and so carefully...

Also, it is to be emphasised that, since the few jottings of earlier writers on Pitcairnese and Norfolkese are of little value, the present work is the first account of these languages.

In the last analysis, any account of a language is better than no account at all.<sup>34</sup>

Reconsidering Maude's now more than 70-year-old document from the Maude Papers in the Pacific Collection at the Barr Smith Library at the University of Adelaide certainly helps any accounting and stocktaking of the present state of Pitcairn Island language historical linguistics. My argument has emphasised the pivotal role of writing historiographies and the methodologies used in accessing obscure documents in specific archives relating to documenting the history of languages and placenames in Pacific island (contact) languages. Writing about Pitcairn Island placenaming history and identifying the players who have brought about such a history illustrate the complexities involved in not only historically reconstructing published linguistic documents in terms of their unpublished constituents, but also the relevance of both unpublished and published sources to such endeavours.

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<sup>34</sup> Ross, *The Pitcairnese Language*, 9-10.