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Methodist Schools in Suva in the Colonial Era

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Despite Methodism being the dominant Christian denomination in Fiji, there are not many Methodist schools in Suva, and in colonial times there were fewer still; several of the present schools are fairly recent foundations, like the John Wesley College in Raiwaqa, founded in 1996, with its associated primary school also a post-Independence school.¹ This essay concentrates on three colonial Suva Methodist schools: Dudley House School, Suva Methodist Boys' School and Ballantine School. There are very good reasons for the limited number of Methodist schools in Suva, and they lie in both the history of the way the Methodist mission worked and the history of Suva itself. As other contributors have noted, Suva grew as an administrative and commercial centre and in the first 50 years at least of its history had a relatively low iTaukei population. European administrators and Indo-Fijian merchants made up the bulk of the visible population, with iTaukei Fijians confined mostly to domestic, labouring and other manual tasks.

1 'History of John Wesley College', *Fiji Sun*, 9 November 2008, fijisun.com.fj/2008/11/09/history-of-john-wesley-college/. There were also a few short-lived Methodist schools in Suva, including Wesley School 'for children of mixed descent' operating in Butt Street from 1936 for a few years (*Missionary Review*, April 1938, 7–8). There does not seem to be direct connection between this school and the present John Wesley College.

The policy of Sir Arthur Gordon, the first British governor of the colony of Fiji, was protectionist. He believed, largely in response to the appalling death rate from measles in the epidemic of 1875,² that iTaukei should remain in their villages under their chiefs, and not be employed by Europeans in plantation or other work. As 'Atu Emberson-Bain has demonstrated, there were always more iTaukei employed outside their villages than official policy deemed proper, and many of them were in Suva. Methodists however tended to ignore them. In particular, there were few iTaukei children in Suva. It has been estimated that the population of Suva in 1901 was 4,600, of whom 1,073 were, in the nomenclature of the time, Europeans, 1,728 Indians and 701 Fijians; and that while the population grew to 24,000 by the 1940s, it remained predominantly Indian, though the reclamation work along the sea front from the Kings Wharf to Government House brought in Fijian labourers, as did work on the wharves.³

The Methodist mission, the providers of the first Western-style schools in Fiji, was initially based in the rural areas. The first centres set up by the Methodists were in or near the centres of chiefly power: Lakeba, Rewa, Vanuabalavu, Bau, Cuvu. This reflects the fact that, from the earliest days, Methodist missionaries found it essential to negotiate with local chiefs for protection, for permission to preach and to acquire resources for the mission. Chiefs discovered that having a missionary under their protection gave them access to literacy and to Western knowledge. Group conversion, with the chief and his people converting to Christianity together, was the early norm. Over time this interdependence between the Methodist mission and the iTaukei chiefly hierarchy became entrenched, with chiefs frequently taking roles as lay leaders and stewards, and in some cases taking ordination into the Methodist ministry.⁴

The first Christian presence in most iTaukei villages was the Methodist *vakavuvuli*, the teacher/pastor, whose responsibilities covered both evangelism and the promotion of literacy, seen by most missionaries as essential for growth in Christian knowledge and devotion through private reading of the Bible. Trained at a district circuit institution to be an evangelist rather than a schoolteacher, the *vakavuvuli*'s own secular

2 RA Derrick, '1875: Fiji's darkest hour – An account of the measles epidemic of 1875', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Fiji Society* 6, no. 1 (1955): 3–16.

3 James Sutherland Whitelaw, 'People, land and government in Suva, Fiji' (PhD thesis, The Australian National University, 1966), 50–60.

4 Andrew Thornley, 'Fijian Methodism 1874–1945: The emergence of a national church' (PhD thesis, The Australian National University, 1979), 72–98.

education was rudimentary: reading, writing, some elementary arithmetic and perhaps some geography or natural history alongside Biblical knowledge – all in Fijian language.⁵ Children were taught religion, reading, writing and singing for around two to three hours a day. These schools did mean that almost all iTaukei children, including girls, were literate, but they were strictly limited in the education they offered, with most children only completing Grade 2 or 3.⁶

Since most iTaukei children were living in the rural areas, setting up schools in Suva was not seen as a priority. The brightest boys were encouraged to move after Class 3 or 4 in a village school to one of the district circuit institutions, co-located with the district mission stations (i.e. where the European missionary lived) where the missionary trained evangelists and *vakavuvuli*. After its development from 1913 (when it moved from Navaloa in the Rewa delta), Davuilevu continued the training in theology, and gradually the Davuilevu campus gained a technical training school and a teacher training college (separate from the theological training), as well as a primary school offering schooling beyond Grade 4. Next door was Dilkusha, the educational centre for the Indian mission. While today we may think of Davuilevu and Dilkusha as being on the outskirts of Suva, with an easy journey between them, that has not always been the case. The road was in such poor shape that when John Burton, the general secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, visited in 1924 he stayed the night at Davuilevu rather than returning to Suva and making the journey again the next day.⁷ Certainly the Methodist mission did not think of Davuilevu or Dilkusha as being in Suva, and this essay does not look at their development.

Dudley House School

The first school run by the Methodists in Suva was a small school started in 1898 by Miss Hannah Dudley for the education of Indian girls, as part of her mission to the indentured labourers and their descendants, some

5 Thornley, 'Fijian Methodism', 228–30.

6 Clive Whitehead, *Education in Fiji: Policy, problems and progress in primary and secondary education 1939–1973* (Canberra: Development Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 1981), 26.

7 John Burton, 'Fiji 1924', 28–29 August 1924, in John Burton's papers, ML MSS 2899 Add-on 990, Mitchell Library (ML), Sydney. John Burton was missionary to the Indian community, based in Nausori from 1901 to 1911. He was later general secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society of Australia from 1924 to 1945, during which time he visited Fiji several times.

of whom lived in Suva by the 1910s.⁸ The first school, with 30 children, was held on the on verandah of the house where Hannah Dudley lodged. It then had a few temporary homes and in 1901 a schoolroom was built in Eden Street, Toorak, near the present Dudley Memorial Church. The school had varying fortunes over the first few years, since it was hard to get parental support from Indian parents for their daughters' education,⁹ and after Miss Dudley's departure from Fiji in 1912 there was no regular replacement teacher.¹⁰ Burton reported in 1924 that there was a Methodist girls' school in Suva, catering to a small number of both Indian and Fijian girls, under Miss Edwards and a 'good Indian assistant';¹¹ this school, a successor to Miss Dudley's school, was developed by Miss Maude Griffen into Dudley House School.

Miss Griffen, a trained New Zealand teacher, had worked for some years at Dilkusha before taking the job of principal at Dudley School in 1926.¹² It was under her leadership that the school developed a boarding hostel (1928) and began to train girls to be teachers, mainly through an apprenticeship scheme where students taught under supervision while undertaking studies under Griffen's tutelage after normal school hours. Writing in 1936, Griffen considered the importance of education for Indian girls, and her concern that they were not staying at school beyond Class 5.¹³ One of the reasons was the lack of women teachers to teach at girls' schools; parents were unwilling to let their daughters attend co-educational schools, or be taught by men. But the life of girls at home waiting to be married at around 13 was, Griffen felt, stultifying. Her solution to both problems was to develop a cadre of young female teachers, and she used an interesting argument to encourage parental consent:

8 Morven Sidal, *Hannah Dudley Hamari Maa: Honoured mother, educator and missionary to the indentured Indians of Fiji 1864–1931* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, 1997), 34–36. I use the terms 'Indian' and 'Fijian' in the historical sections of this essay as that was the general usage at the time.

9 A Harold Wood, *Overseas missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, vol. 3: *Fiji-Indian and Rotuma* (Melbourne: Aldersgate Press, 1978), 48.

10 Sidal, *Hannah Dudley Hamari Maa*, 103.

11 Burton 'Fiji 1924', 11 August 1924.

12 Wood, *Overseas missions*, vol. 3, 92, 104.

13 Letter from Miss Griffen to Mr Mayhew, September 1936, published as Appendix I to AI Mayhew, 'Report on education in Fiji', *Legislative Council Paper* no. 3 (1937): 21–22. In this publication the name is spelled 'Griffen', but Wood uses 'Griffin', as does the Methodist Centenary souvenir: Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia, *At the gateway of the day* (Suva: Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia, 1935). Here I use Griffen, as this is how it appears at the end of her own letter.

There needs to be encouragement of the parents to send and keep a girl at school. If the girl has at 12, 13 or 14 reached Class 7 she will herself make great efforts to stay. If she can then begin training with the prospect of being soon able to add even a probationer's salary to the family fund her parents will not hurry marriage.¹⁴



Figure 11.1: Miss Griffen and her students, 1935.

Source: From the Methodist Centenary souvenir *At the Gateway of the Day* (1935), 47.

¹⁴ Griffen to Mayhew, September 1936, 21.

Her arguments met with considerable success; by the time she retired in 1945, Griffen had trained 67 girls as teachers, enabling the expansion of schooling more widely for Indian girls.¹⁵ Though successful in its main aims, this rather ad hoc system did not meet with the approval of the more professionally focused Stephens Report,¹⁶ and was replaced by standardised teacher training at the new Nasinu Teachers' College in 1949.

Dudley School and others benefited from two separate but related trends within colonial education in Fiji. The first was the development of government funding for mission schools. Grants-in-aid (grants to mission or church schools without taking over control of them) spread gradually and rather informally to British colonies from around 1900. In 1916 a few of the larger Fiji mission schools began to receive government grants to help with their more advanced classes. These classes had to be inspected by government officials and reach a designated standard of education, including some study of the English language. Some Methodist missionaries had reservations about teaching English, believing that it was unnecessary for Christian development or rural life.¹⁷ But parents persistently demanded English education, so that their children (sons in particular) could access employment in the growing government and commercial sectors, and the Methodist Church had little choice but to provide more advanced education. Government financial support made it possible.¹⁸

Grants-in-aid were formalised as colonial policy with the 1925 memorandum 'Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa', which became standard practice in Africa and beyond, including the Pacific. The rationale behind this policy was twofold. The first argument was economic; it was recognised that growing colonial economies needed more skilled employees as clerks, technical and health workers, and in business, and that meant more students needed to be educated beyond the Class 3 level of the village schools. But it was cheaper and easier to

15 Wood, *Overseas missions*, vol. 3, 104.

16 FB Stephens, 'Report on education in Fiji', *Journal of the Fiji Legislative Council* no. 18 (1944): 25–26.

17 Cecil W Mann, *Education in Fiji* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1935), 35.

18 Christine Weir, 'Methodist childhoods: The education and formation of the young Methodist in Australia and Fiji, 1900–1950', in *Creating religious childhoods: Children, young people and Christianity in Anglo-world and British colonial contexts, 1800–1950*, ed. Hugh Morrison and Mary Clare Martin (London: Ashgate, 2019), 103–21.

partially fund already existing schools than to set up government schools. Secondly, British Colonial officials were preoccupied with fears of social disintegration on contact with modern 'civilization' and the consequent weakening of 'the sanctions of existing beliefs'. Christianity was seen as a useful way of establishing new religious ideas that might inculcate 'habits of self-discipline and loyalty to the community'.¹⁹ In practice, the policy meant that the Methodists could get government help to run their schools, provided they conformed to certain conditions about employing trained teachers and teaching English. The doubts of some missionaries about the need for English education were overcome. By the 1930s, Dudley House School was receiving the grant, enabling an expansion of the school with three new classrooms in 1938, with half the cost borne by the government.

The grant-in-aid system encouraged and enabled the Methodist mission to concentrate on education beyond the village school level, as village schools usually did not have enough advanced students or sufficiently qualified teachers to qualify for the grants. In 1931, in a move accelerated by the financial stress of the Depression, the Methodist mission handed over the majority of its village schools to village control, and instead concentrated its efforts on more advanced schools and teacher training.²⁰

Suva Methodist Boys' School

The Methodist shift to more advanced primary schools can be seen in the development of a new school in Toorak in 1919 for boys, many of whom who had completed Classes 1 to 3 at a village school and whose parents wanted them to continue education with a view to employment in the new jobs requiring English proficiency and more mathematics than the village schools could supply. From the beginning, this school had government assistance, to the tune of half the initial building costs of £1,000. It had an expatriate headmaster, first WM Norton then, from 1934, William Donnelly from New Zealand. This school took both Fijian and Indo-Fijian boys to Grade 8 and the Qualifying Examination. Religious education was incorporated into the regular program, which

19 'Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa', 1925, Cmd 2374, 5.

20 A Harold Wood, *Overseas missions of the Australian Methodist church*, vol. 2: *Fiji* (Melbourne: Aldersgate Press, 1978), 272–73.

also included English, mathematics, history, geography and industrial subjects such as woodwork. They also ran school gardens and sold the surplus produce, using the money raised to buy woodworking tools.²¹

Fijian parents, both iTaukei and Indo-Fijian, wanted English-medium education and were prepared to make considerable sacrifices of their children to access it. Suva Methodist Boys' School was a popular school, with an enrolment of 450 in 1938, and 582 in 1956.²² Tomasi Vakatora was one of those who went from Class 4 (the top class) at a village school in the Rewa delta to the Suva Methodist Boys School in Toorak in 1937. Like many such boys, he boarded with relatives in Suva; the school did not have a boarding house. The fees were 12 shillings a year, often beyond the means of a village family, but Vakatora found that after-school work was available helping to establish the school playing fields (now Furnivall Park), so boys were able to earn money for their own fees.²³ A boy who passed the Qualifying Examination at the end of Class 8 could apply for entry to the Central Medical School for training as a Native Medical Practitioner, go to Davuilevu to train as a teacher or as a minister, or gain employment in the public service or private sector, both small but growing by the 1930s. Suva Methodist Boys' School was seen by the Stephens Report of 1944 as marking a new trend in multiethnic education, which should be followed by other schools.²⁴

The Stephens Report, and later the 1956–1960 Educational Development Plan, marked a move in Fiji towards a stronger secondary school system. In postwar Fiji, schools like Suva Methodist Boys' School, which had been the apex of the educational system within Fiji with provision of education to Grade 8, were being supplemented by secondary schools, starting with Marist High School and Lelean Memorial School, which took students for a further two years' education. In 1955 the locally developed Fiji Junior Certificate replaced the Cambridge Junior Certificate, and this became the new qualifying standard for admittance to Nasinu Teachers' College, the medical school and the clerical branch of the civil service.²⁵ As a result, during the years 1950–1970 many schools were reorganised; a common pattern was to establish intermediate schools for Classes 7 and

21 *Missionary Review*, June 1922, 12–13.

22 *Missionary Review*, August 1938, 16; November 1956, 11.

23 Tomasi Vakatora, *From the mangrove swamps* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1998), 7.

24 Stephens, 'Report on education in Fiji', 59.

25 Department of Education, 'Report for the year 1960', *Legislative Council Papers* no. 29 (1961), 6.

8, while primary schools finished at Class 6. Secondary schools either started at Form 1 (Class 7) or Form 3 (depending on the local availability of intermediate schools), and offered the Fiji Junior Certificate at the end of Form 4. Increasingly the bigger secondary schools then offered New Zealand School Certificate in Form 5 and New Zealand University Entrance at the end of Form 6, but this was far from universal at the time of Independence.

The Methodist Church reorganised its Toorak schools in 1965. Dudley High School became co-educational and multiracial, incorporating the boys in higher classes from Suva Methodist Boys' School, and older Fijian girls from the neighbouring (newer and smaller) Fijian Girls' School, with a separate intermediate department for Classes 7 and 8. All the younger children from the Methodist schools in Toorak were reorganised into Annesley Infants School (now Classes 1–3) and Suva Methodist Primary School (now Classes 4–6), using many of the old buildings and building new ones.²⁶ For some years after the reorganisation, and still when I taught there in 1977, Dudley High had a predominance of Indo-Fijian girls in the higher forms, while the demographics were becoming more diverse in the younger forms.

Ballantine Memorial School

The initial purpose behind Ballantine School was to educate iTaukei girls in domestic arts and science so that they could in turn teach other village women, and to train girls as teachers and nurses to serve the iTaukei population. This emphasis was triggered by widespread concern about the 'decline of the race', dating from the devastating loss of life in the measles epidemic throughout Fiji in 1875, when it was estimated that around one-quarter of the population had died, and it continued to drop until the 1920s.²⁷ The response of the Colonial Government was to appoint a Commission into the Decrease of the Race (1896).²⁸ Both the Methodist

26 Wood, *Overseas missions*, vol. 3, 93.

27 Brij V Lal, *Broken waves: A history of the Fiji Islands in the twentieth century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 336–37.

28 Victoria Lukere, 'The native mother', in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, ed. Donald Denoon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 280–83.

and Catholic missions embarked on a variety of schemes to improve hygiene in the villages, including Matavelo School at Ba in northern Viti Levu (founded 1899), which had a domestic focus.

Ballantine Memorial School (founded in Suva in 1934) widened the scope for girls' education a little further; at the opening of the school the Rev. McDonald expounded on the three objectives of the school:

The training of Fijian female teachers, the preparation of Fijian girls for entrance to the War Memorial Hospital to be trained as nurses, and the general education of Fijian girls that would make them worthy and capable mothers of the next generation.²⁹

While the envisaged career options may have been somewhat limited, the subjects taught at Ballantine School included English and arithmetic, history and geography as well as domestic economy and hygiene.³⁰ According to a memo from the missionary sisters of the Fiji District, the school was to have 200 girls and would be a special school with primary, post-primary and teacher training departments. In order to improve the infant mortality rate and train more Fijian women teachers, two European sisters would be employed. 'The training of Fijian girls has been culpably neglected in the past', the missionary sisters noted, so this new school must be staffed properly.³¹

The first Ballantine School was built at Muanikau, partly funded by a legacy³² left by Mary Ballantine, who had died in 1918 while a teacher at Matavelo. The time lag between her death and the building of the school was a result of several factors: the Depression and subsequent cost constraints on the mission during the 1920s and early 1930s, the fact that much of the money required needed to be raised from Australian and local sources, and debates within the mission about the location for the new school. The location was the subject of heated argument between those who wanted the school built among the other educational institutions at Davuilevu and those who wanted it built in Suva; in the end those who wanted a new institution in a new place close to the growing population

29 *Missionary Review*, January 1934, 7.

30 'Papers concerning the establishment of Ballantine Memorial School 1928-36', File E/9/B, Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia archives (MMSA), National Archives of Fiji (NAF).

31 Memo from the missionary sisters in the Fiji District – Misses Hames, Clark, Weston, Tolley, Brokenshire, Lawrence, Russell, Griffin, Foulcher, n.d., File E/9/B, MMSA, NAF.

32 Mary Ballantine left the Mission 104 pounds, 15 shillings and 10 pence for a new school, but the cost of the school at Muanikau was estimated in 1931 to be £5,660, of which £3,000 was made up of a government grant: File E/9/B, MMSA, NAF.

of Suva won. They included most of the Fijian members of the Methodist Synod and Miss Tolley, who was to be the first headmistress; the defeated included RA Derrick and others from Davuilevu.³³

The Muanikau site is marked clearly on a map of Suva dated 1934, on the present Vuya Road, more or less the same site as the present Fiji War Memorial. The mission recognised it as a prime site, elevated with a good breeze, close enough to be convenient for Suva girls, but not right in the centre of town. The closest neighbour on the 1934 map is the racecourse, which covers the area now occupied by the Pacific Theological College and Suva Grammar and Veiuto Schools. The school was seen as having model facilities, 13 acres of planting land for crops to feed the boarders,³⁴ and by 1938 there were three European teachers as well as several local teachers.³⁵ It operated as an amalgam of primary school, mainly Classes 3–8, and teacher training institute with classes similar to those at Dudley House School, where older girls were taught on an apprenticeship model. Several Australian guests to the Centenary celebrations of the Methodist Church in 1935 visited the school, and from them we have photographs of the building, students and teachers.



Figure 11.2: Ballantine schoolgirls at the original site in Muanikau, 1935.

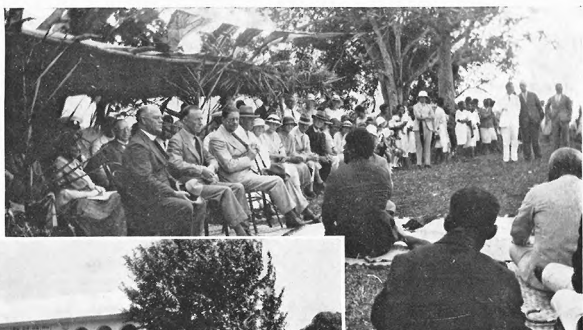
Source: From an album by J Heaps, a visitor to the Centenary celebrations, in author's possession.

33 Letter from R Macdonald to JW Burton, n.d. [?1933], File E/9/B, MMSA, NAF; Wood, *Overseas missions*, vol. 2, 273–76.

34 *Missionary Review*, November 1935, 12.

35 *Missionary Review*, August 1938, 16.

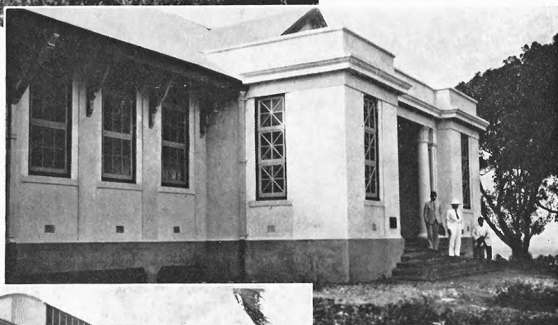
The
BALLANTINE
MEMORIAL
SCHOOL FOR
FIJIAN GIRLS



*His Excellency the Go-
vernor, Sir Murchison
Fletcher, lays the foun-
dation stone.*



The Sisters' Cottage.



The Memorial School.



The Dormitory.

Figure 11.3: Photos of Ballantine School on its original site 1935.

Source: From the Methodist Centenary souvenir *At the Gateway of the Day* (1935), 50.



Figure 11.4: Ballantine students and staff with Australian visitors, 1935.

Source: Photo by J Heaps, in author's possession.

But trouble was brewing in the shape of World War II, and the magnificence of the site overlooking the harbour entrance became a problem for the school. Immediately after war broke out in Europe, the Government of Fiji took over the land. In a letter dated 12 October 1939, the government demanded that the Methodist mission vacate the site within one month, since it would 'take permanent possession of our Muanikau land and buildings for urgent and essential defence purposes', that compensation would be offered and that the girls at Ballantine had to go back home, or to Dudley School.³⁶ It is notable that the synod (yearly meeting of all the European missionaries and leading Fijian ministers) of the Methodist Church was held during the first week of October. Perhaps it was not accidental the requisition order came only when the synod was over and most of the ministers and missionaries were back home. Within a month, and after some disagreement over the valuation of the Muanikau land, the mission accepted the offer from the government of alternative land at Delainavesi. This, Rev. William Green wrote, was a 'very suitable block of land in an elevated position overlooking the harbour', and the mission managed to negotiate for the government to move most of the buildings

³⁶ Letter from W Green to JW Burton in Board Minutes, 3 November 1939, MOM339, MMSA, Mitchell Library, Sydney. There was brief discussion about combining Dudley School and Ballantine School into a multiracial girls' school on the model of Suva Methodist Boys' School, but Rev. Green reported that 'Fijian opinion was unfavourable' and the idea was dropped. Board Minutes, 8 December 1939.

from Muanikau and re-erect them at government expense, as well as build an access road to the new school.³⁷ In the meantime many of the girls went to Matavelo School, or returned home.

Meanwhile the old school site was being transformed into a gun battery. While the official history of World War II in Fiji says the construction started in September 1939, Ballantine School did not vacate the site until November.³⁸ In December 1939 guns for the battery were brought into Fiji from Britain on the HMS *Leander*; guns were brought in on the same ship for another gun battery, Nasonini, on the present Pacific Forum site. It seems then that the two batteries were part of a single process of fortification and developed together – two batteries with guns pointing in opposite directions, protecting both the harbour and its approaches. According to Young, '[a] blackout was observed within the Suva vicinity to allow the two guns to be conveyed to the Muanikau hill to avoid the enemy's knowledge of its location',³⁹ but unless the coconut wireless was a great deal less efficient in 1939 than it is today, most of Suva would have known what was going on. The *Fiji Times* kept silent, however, and it was silent too about the closure and removal of Ballantine School, though moving a school of 200 girls could hardly have been kept a secret. There is nothing in the *Fiji Times* from October to December 1939 about either of these events, such was wartime censorship. The date of the development of the gun batteries also suggests that at this early stage of the war the main enemy was perceived to be German naval raiders.⁴⁰

Ballantine School was reopened in late 1940 on the new site in Delainavesi. Rev. Robert Green, describing the school for Australian supporters, claimed that 'the main building with its four airy, well-lit and verandah-shaded classrooms is a decided improvement on the old school'. There was a waiting list for places and the boarding facilities were to be expanded, and so while the mission had not wanted the disruption of moving the school, all had turned out well.⁴¹ By the 1950s, Ballantine School was, like many Fiji schools, looking to incorporate more senior classes, and under

37 Board Minutes, 8 December 1939, MMSA, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

38 Robert Howlett, *The history of the Fiji military forces 1939–1945* (London: Crown Agents for the Colonies on behalf of the Government of Fiji, 1948), 18, cited in Allison Young, 'World War II archaeology in Fiji: Assessing the material record', *Nebraska Anthropologist* 170 (2012): 83–84.

39 Young, 'World War II archaeology in Fiji', 83.

40 Britain did not declare war on Japan until December 1941. Australian fears about Japanese expansion were growing in the late 1930s, but the colonial authorities in Fiji were more concerned about German attacks.

41 *Missionary Review*, December 1940, 7.

Miss Phoebe Mills developed into a secondary school with the younger girls relocated to Navesi Primary School further up Delainavesi Road.⁴² It also extended its aims beyond just nursing and teaching to a more general secondary education, though nursing in particular remains the career choice of many of its students.

Conclusion

The history of Suva's Methodist schools in the colonial era is replicated in the histories of the schools of other religious and community bodies. In some cases, Indo-Fijians had to start their own schools to counter the colonial state's indifference in the matter, and there remains a rich history to be explored. There is a move from churches and other voluntary bodies aiming to educate their own children and perhaps convert others, to increasing involvement with government priorities and government money. The Colonial Government, and many parents, wanted more advanced education, and used the grant-in-aid system to subsidise church and other schools rather than build their own schools. Gradually government influence increased, with the development of inspectors, standardised examinations and advice from experts about the way the education system should develop. On occasion, such as the closing of the teacher training schemes at Dudley and Ballantine schools in favour of centralised training, the government effectively forced professional qualification standards on the missions. But in general the Methodist mission was happy to accommodate government demands in return for financial support, provided it could retain the Christian character of its schools, which the Colonial Government had no desire to interfere with. It was an arrangement that served, and continues to serve, Fiji well.

42 Wood, *Overseas missions*, vol. 2, 337. For an obituary of Phoebe Mills see 'The woman who changed the lives of many Fijian women', *FijiSun*, 19 September 2016, fijisun.com.fj/2016/09/19/the-woman-who-changed-the-lives-of-many-fijian-women.

This text is taken from *Suva Stories: A History of the Capital of Fiji*,
edited by Nicholas Halter, published 2022, The Australian National
University, Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/SS.2022.11