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## Misima

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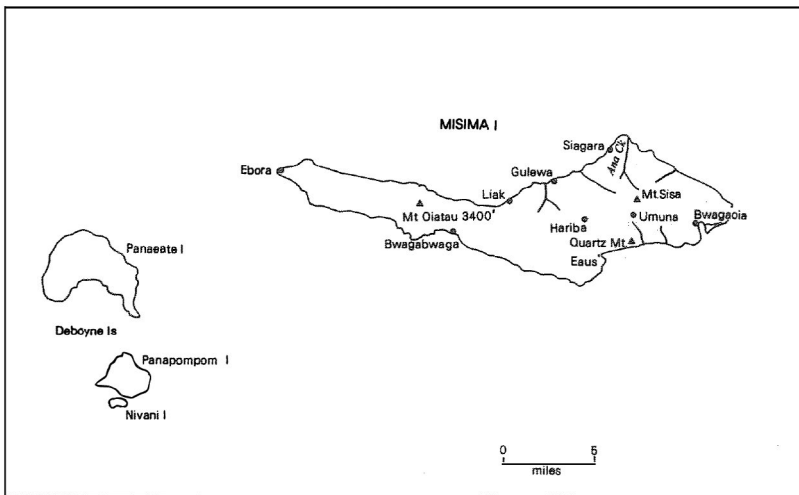
### warlike and civilised

By October 1888 the miners had decided that Sudest was not rich enough to support all the men who were there or coming, and that if there was gold on one island then it was likely to be found on others, perhaps in greater amounts. As the ships leaving north Queensland were deep in the water, their holds packed with stores and the decks crowded with passengers, the diggers found it difficult to find boats to take them to islands beyond the reefs near Sudest. To assist the miners and to ensure that they did not 'disperse all over the Possession without authority or supervision' MacGregor agreed to accompany a party to Rossel Island. The miners selected twenty-one men to go aboard the government schooner and H.M.S. *Swinger* towed her through the passage to Rossel. For a week government officers and miners searched the creeks which cut the island's forested slopes. They found no gold, and although they visited several small villages and met two men who had been to Queensland, they saw few islanders. Back on Sudest the prospecting party was reduced to twelve and they again left with MacGregor for an extensive tour, testing ground on Pana Tinani, Misima, Normanby, Fergusson and Goodenough. No rich finds were made, but having washed 'rough colours' on Misima the diggers went back to work alluvial along creeks in the south-east of the island. One group returning to Sudest to collect stores reported finding 30 ounces, and other miners prepared to cross to the new field. Some paid £1 for their passage on canoes manned by Misima villagers and organised by Nicholas Minister. By March 1889 eighty men were on Misima and a storekeeper had set up business. A few were able to win an ounce a day, but no rich finds were made until Jimmy the Larrikin and Frenchy, rarely and more properly known as James McTier and Frank Rochefort, began working rich ground on 17 March 1889 on a branch of the Ana which flows into the sea on the north. They celebrated the day, a faith and a nationality by calling the branch St Patricks Creek. Miners looking at the coarse particles lying in front of the riffles in the sluice boxes decided that there was a reef shedding gold not far away. Ships

leaving north Queensland began sailing direct for St Aignan (the miners and government officials at first called Misima by the name of a lieutenant who had sailed with D'Entrecasteaux on *La Recherche*, one hundred years before). Close to the beach at Siagara traders built four or five 'unsubstantial' stores of iron and thatch where they competed for the miners' patronage with rations and 'ordinary and better known medicines' at Cooktown prices. Before taking the 3-mile walk to the nearest mining area, many newly arrived men could talk of delays caused by headwinds and calms, and nights spent on hard boards, but thirty miners from Cairns could recount the danger of sailing on the schooner *Freddy* with Captain Don Smythe who (with willing help) broached the cargo, neglected his ship and his navigation, and had to beach the sinking *Freddy* about 300 miles off-course at Hula on the Papuan mainland. In spite of contrary winds and human frailty, within two months of St Patrick's day, 500 miners had landed on Misima. A year later fifty remained.

About one-third of the area of Sudest, Misima was higher, wetter and more densely timbered. James Cashman said it took half a day to clear a space to pitch a tent, and some miners had to move 10 feet or more of earth and boulders before reaching gold-bearing wash. By the middle of 1889 forty or fifty men were suffering from malaria, and many had decided that Misima was 'no place for miners'. It was certainly not an area for those wanting somewhere to scratch out a few pennyweights while they waited for news of the opening of a richer field.

Map 4 Misima Island



The miners thought the people of Misima 'warlike and civilized'. Between two and three thousand people lived on the island in 1888. They travelled frequently to Panaeate and other islands in the Calvados

Chain and regularly took their *waga* 100 miles north to Woodlark and west to Wari. Unlike most of the other Louisiade islands Misima had no large reef-protected lagoon. On the north and west coral limestone cliffs cut by fissures and ravines rose over 100 feet above the water; in the south-east there were shore reefs, sandy beaches and mangroves. The only sheltered anchorage was at Bwagaia where ships could pass between the coast and the small lagoon enclosing Managun Islet. From their exposed coast it was difficult for the Misima to harvest the seas; but they were 'industrious cultivators of the soil'. Extensive, carefully worked gardens extended up the hillsides, lines of logs placed across the slopes marked individual gardens and stopped the topsoil from being washed away; fences kept the village pigs from the crops. Men from islands with little fertile land came to Misima to trade for betel nut taken from 'countless thousands' of palms, yams and other garden foods. All the villages except Hariba were near the coast, some containing up to fifty houses spread, in groups of four or five, for half a mile. Each house, like those on Sudest, had a thatch roof curving down from a central spine to put a cover over a raised platform. Looking like up turned whaleboats, they were well-designed to withstand the strong south-easterlies which blew in the middle of each year. Travellers on the tracks connecting the eastern villages had to use the bush ladders built against the steep cliff faces; in the west visitors went from one village to another by canoe. In high seas it was almost impossible to go from Ebora in the extreme west to any other part of the island. Some of the Misima were potters, but the best pots were brought by trading expeditions from Brooker and Panaeate Islands. To nineteenth-century Europeans the Misima appeared vivacious, industrious and healthy; the skulls that decorated their houses and the spears and shields that lay about were taken as evidence that they fought frequently and savagely. They suffered one obvious disability: many had *tinea imbricata*, a disease which made their skins dry and scaly. Europeans did not catch it, and could not cure it.

Partly protected from direct outside influence by the lack of safe anchorages, the Misima could keep informed of events in the area by their seamanship, their inclination to travel, and their close linguistic, trade and ceremonial links with peoples on other islands. Some labour recruiters came to Misima in 1884, and later John Douglas called one of the returned men, Molnos, 'an old friend'. In a lecture illustrated by slides, Douglas told the Brisbane branch of the Royal Geographical Society in 1888 how Molnos had returned from Queensland wearing 'regatta shirt, white trousers and straw hat'; but when he saw him on a later visit to the Louisiades he was naked, and Douglas remarked, 'What a beautiful young man I thought him'. For helping the government party return labourers to their home villages, Molnos was allowed

to select from the products of European technology carried on the boat and he asked for soap; Douglas gave him a 'bar of yellow'.

In 1886 the people of Misima had a more dramatic confrontation with another group of foreigners, and this incident had a stronger influence on what foreigners thought about them. Lieutenant-Commander John Marx, looking for information about the killing of Frank Gerret in the Deboyne Islands, brought H.M.S. *Swinger* to anchor on the north coast of Misima. The people were cautious but eventually some men came on board and exchanged yams and fowls for tobacco. Hoping to increase the confidence of the Misima in the benevolence of Her Majesty's navy (and obtain a pig), Marx took a ship's boat to the beach while another boat, its crew armed with rifles, stood off covering the party onshore. The only man prepared to trade with Marx took tobacco in one hand and slashed at him with the other, cutting him on the head and arm with a bush knife. The sailors fired on the man, but they thought he escaped unhurt into dense bush close to the point of attack. Seeing other men concealed in the area, Marx believed his assailant had acted too soon, spoiling 'a plan for an attack on a large scale'. The only explanation Marx could give for the action was revenge: the Misima had explained through the interpreters carried on the *Swinger* that recruiters had been to the area, taken men away and not returned them.

Douglas, when asked by Rear-Admiral G. Tryon about punishing the islanders, advised that nothing be done in 'any retaliatory spirit' to the poor ignorant savage' who struck the blow; but for 'the future well-being of the Islanders themselves', for the safety of Her Majesty's subjects (and especially her servants), and for the protection of life and property, the islanders should be forced to surrender the guilty man on the promise that in due time he would be returned: 'only as a last resort should justice be vindicated by an act of war'. The 'outrage' against Captain Marx confirmed the 'very bad name' of the Misima. When Captain Francis Clayton visited 'Treachery Bay' in H.M.S. *Diamond* the people were defiant, and he had difficulty finding an anchorage. Eventually he 'fired a few shells to clear the bush, then with much difficulty owing to the surf, landed a boat's crew, burnt the small village, and destroyed two canoes'. The Misima may not have known that the shells and the burning were done for their improvement; but they must have learnt a little more about the behaviour and technology of some foreigners. Thirty-seven years later Resident Magistrate Louis Brown was surprised to find the people of Nigom village using an unexploded 6-inch naval shell as a canoe anchor; they explained that many years ago it had been fired at them from a man-of-war.

On the eve of the arrival of the miners in the Louisiades the Misima had some knowledge of white men and they were curious about them;

but while the Sudest and Pana Tinani were being harried and reduced, life in the Misima villages was little changed. The Misima could still believe that they could protect themselves. In the five months between the arrival of the prospectors on Sudest and the start of mining on Misima, they had time to learn something of the peculiar ways of the most numerous of foreigners, the diggers, and when they met, the Misima behaved much as the Sudest had done.

For payment of two sticks of tobacco a day they carried from the anchorages at Siagara and Bwagaoia to the mining areas, and a few worked on the claims. Siagara, a small village of only eight or nine houses, was overwhelmed by the rush to St Patricks Creek, and its inhabitants moved away. Hely said that the storekeepers paid the villagers in tobacco for their houses and as Siagara was only a temporary fishing village they had suffered no hardship. But MacGregor was less certain that they had been treated justly: he had seen Siagara before the arrival of the miners, at the height of the rush, and a year later when the Siagara had 'miserable houses' and lived as 'industrious beggars'. Other villagers, protected by distance and rough country from the direct impact of the rush, sold yams, coconuts, sago and breadfruit to the miners. While there were times when the Misima had only sago to sell and the miners complained that they could not do a full day's work on 'native food', many could not have stayed on the field without the produce of the Misima gardens. In the early weeks of the rush miners arrived more quickly than rations, and by 1891 only the *Wanganui* provided an unreliable three-monthly service from Cooktown to Sudest and Misima. At times the miners were forced to ask villagers for credit, and one man diverting a creek to bring it across an alluvial area explained to MacGregor that his labourers worked on 'tic'.

The villagers also visited the mining camps to steal. By the middle of 1890 'cases of pilfering' were 'everyday occurrences'. Perhaps it was inevitable that the Misima would take goods left unguarded on their lands, and that the frequency of their raids would increase when they learnt that it was difficult for the miners to protect their property or recover it from the villages; but one digger returning to Cooktown from Misima said that miners had started the cycle of thefts by taking village pigs and fowls. A man from Panapompom Island just to the west of Misima certainly acted in retaliation. William Campbell, the Resident Magistrate, confiscated a gun he had obtained from Nicholas Minister so the islander in turn stole tobacco from Campbell's store at Bwagaoia. MacGregor urged his officers to speed the building of a house at Bwagaoia 'calculated to inspire the native with respect', pursue all thieves relentlessly, and punish them severely. But when the miners at St Patricks Creek complained to MacGregor that Wagima of Kakoma, a village about 4 miles west of the mining area, had stolen tobacco he

found it impossible to make an arrest. In Kakoma he asked for the 'king' and Harimoi was 'tendered'. Harimoi and the three elderly men who spoke with MacGregor admitted that Wagima had been stealing and they pointed to his house, but they could not or would not hand him to the government party. After MacGregor had detained one man by throwing him on his back and the police had seized another, he was able to extract a promise that Wagima would take a load of yams to St Patricks Creek to pay for the tobacco. He left doubting that Wagima would do so.

MacGregor found it equally difficult to impose the Queen's peace on Misima. In January 1892 he arrived at Bwagaoia where he met H. Neville Chester suffering from sandflies, malaria and a second theft of tobacco from the government store. Convinced that Chester had encouraged enormity by releasing the Panapompom thief and his accomplices after only three months in prison, MacGregor was determined to teach respect for the law and government officers. The Gulewa had recently raided Hariba killing two men, burning houses and cutting down coconut trees; they were, said MacGregor, the 'worst of a number of bad tribes' on Misima. Two miners, Sanderson and Simpson, increased the government's obligation to intervene by persuading the Hariba not to retaliate, but to wait until the government officers arrived.

But the government party could not land at Gulewa on the north coast and when MacGregor, Chester and six police tried to cross overland from the south coast, the Gulewa watched them struggling along the bed of a creek. The government force on its rush into a deserted village captured only one woman and two young boys. The woman was told that the government did not fight women and was released. MacGregor waited three days in Gulewa, feeding his men on the inhabitants' gardens, using their firewood, and attempting to bring the neighbouring villagers into an alliance against the Gulewa. Dogs and pigs returned to the village, and MacGregor wrote in his diary: 'the dingoes stick to the houses & not to their masters'. MacGregor had come to dislike the Gulewa. He wanted the subjects of the Possession to do as they were told or fight (and be defeated), but the Gulewa would neither submit nor fight. They refused to respond to his messages that the government wanted only the two leaders of the raid on Hariba and that they would be pursued until they surrendered. Having to go to Samarai, MacGregor left Chester with additional police and instructions to keep the Gulewa isolated, take as many male prisoners as possible, and exchange them for the two leaders. MacGregor took with him a policeman injured by one of the many spear traps that the Gulewa had left on the tracks around their village. Gulewa's neighbours drifted away from Chester's force, one prisoner cut his ropes with a shell and

escaped, and Chester was left uncertain whether the Gulewa were living in rough country in the west or sheltering with other peoples. Six months later MacGregor reported that the 'Gulewa murderers have not yet been secured'. After a further lapse of two years MacGregor wrote that one, Kokove, had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for killing a man from Hariba, but no mention was made of the other wanted man. Through the 1890s the Misima learnt what the government thought was good behaviour: public displays quickened their learning and their submission. Having been sentenced to gaol for theft, Babaga of Panaeate escaped and on his recapture was held on the government cutter in Bwagaoia Harbour. At night Babaga killed Constable Umi who was sleeping on deck and injured the Papuan coxswain with a tomahawk before jumping overboard. In spite of leg irons and Chester's attempts to shoot him, he reached shore. Babaga mixed freely with his own people and once he was seen fishing on the reef opposite the government residence, but it was two months before he was recaptured. He was hanged at Panaeate on 2 August 1893, 'dying without a struggle'; the first Papuan to be executed by the imperial government for an offence against another Papuan. On Sudest the islanders had seen that the penalty for killing a white man was hanging, now it was demonstrated that the police acting as servants of the government were to be given equal protection.

Among the forty or fifty men assembled to witness Babaga's death were two of his brothers. Babaga, MacGregor said, was a vicious man, feared by his neighbours for his violence. When questioned, his brothers said, 'i waisi ...', it was good that he alone should die. When the Gulewa were asked to confirm that the *gavamani* was righteous they had argued that in the past the Hariba had killed them and it was unjust now to punish the Gulewa for retaliating. In 1892, three years after the miners had arrived, the Gulewa still believed that the strength of their group depended on their ability to raid and counter-raid. Within another two years the Louisiades were in 'a tranquil state'. The Misima then knew that the government was clumsy, but powerful and persistent. The village constables were hostages for their people: through them the government officers obtained information and gave directives.

By the end of the 1890s Alexander Campbell, the Resident Magistrate at Nivani, was unworried by clashes between warring parties or cultures on Misima. In court he dealt with cases of adultery, lying reports and petty theft. He celebrated distant occasions. Seventy days after the event he instructed the crew to dress the government boat and led the Armed Native Constabulary in three cheers for the Relief of Mafeking; a month after Queen Victoria's passing, he lowered the ensign to half-mast for seventy-two hours to mark her death. Campbell had time to order that all islanders visiting the government station have a bath once a day 'to

instill some idea of personal cleanliness'. On patrol he checked to see if the villages were clean, the tracks kept in good order, enough coconuts planted, and whether there had been any sickness. Susuina in 1903 cut races and then robbed the miners' camps when they went to find out why the water had ceased to flow; but he was an exception. And while the way of life of the Misima had been changing the people had faced another group of foreigners who came with particular ideas of right and wrong for others to follow.

In 1891 Brother Samuel Fellows arrived at Panaeate to establish a branch of the Australasian Methodist Missionary Society. The people were 'very kind' and Fellows decided not to carry the Winchester rifle he had brought with him. 'Red-haired and emotional, sometimes on the mountain peaks and again in the valley', Fellows had gone to work in a Derbyshire steel mill at thirteen. Having furthered his education in Sunday Schools and shown his talent and dedication by lay preaching, Fellows became a candidate for the ministry after his migration to New Zealand. For three years he directed the work of the mission on the Deboyne, Calvados and Misima Islands. He learnt the Panaeate language, which allowed him to communicate with all people in the northern Louisiades, and he produced the first printed texts in Panaeate. Attracted by Misima's large population and productive gardens, he made his first journey along its southern coast two months after landing at Panaeate. Although sometimes sick with malaria and frustrated by winds which would not take the mission schooner, *Waverley*, in the right direction, he worked hard for a God who was close and whose message was clear and dominant. In his diary he wrote of his need for the 'atoning-cleansing blood' of his saviour: 'I do need Him in all His pity, tenderness & love, in all his willingness and power to save from sin.' The people of the Louisiades, he thought, lived a 'fairly enjoyable life', they worked 'systematically and laboriously' in their gardens, traded actively and kept agreements but they were superstitious, had many 'degrading and impure customs' and above all were unaware of their 'moral responsibility to God'. And he found they resisted his injunctions to change:

They are as proud as the proudest Pharisee that ever lived, and as mean. This, with their inherent tendency to lying and deception, makes it an easy matter for them to deceive themselves with the idea that they are an exceptionally good sort of people, with whom it would be difficult to find serious fault.

Although he quickly gained some influence among them, he realised that 'The devil evidently [meant] to make a fight for his Kingdom among these people ...'.



At the end of 1892 Fellows preached at twenty-three points on the Misima coast. Where landing was easy the crew of the mission boat carried Fellows's harmonium ashore and helped him to gather a crowd; where landing was difficult he alone took a dinghy through the surf while the crew held the *Waverley* in safe water. Believing his knowledge of the Panaeate language gave him 'an influence over them such as nothing else could have done', Fellows preached, prayed, repeated the liturgy and finished with two or three hymns. His flock was inclined to laugh and talk while he prayed but when they found how important the ceremony was to him they usually did as he told them and knelt and closed their eyes. In his sermons Fellows instructed the people to give up fighting, cannibalism and polygamy, and he spoke of Albert the Good as an example of a great man who had taken only one wife. He pleaded for a lessening of the women's share of the work, reverence during services, and an end to 'sabbath breaking' and 'the unrestrained sexual connection of the young people'. (For a time his devotion was tested by women who lay on their backs, put aside their grass skirts and called to him.) He told his congregations that God was their father and He loved them, but he also explained the 'way God will deal with [the] ungodly at Judgment & there was a sober earnestness on all faces, one woman shrieked when [he] described the thrusting down of Sinners into "prisons of fire"'. While some sermons aroused no interest or were interrupted by ribald comments, occasionally the audience was enthusiastic, and Fellows responded with greater passion and fluency.

When I asked them if they knew the way to the Father's House in the heavens — they said in chorus — No. What a thrill of joy I had in telling them that I knew & would show them — teach them. I got thoroughly worked up & had a splendid time.

At the end of his first year on Panaeate Fellows had not gathered the 'spiritual fruits' he had 'longed & prayed for'; but he could soon record changes in behaviour: children went to school, congregations paid closer attention during services, the hymn, 'Pull for the Shore', promised to be 'a great favourite', and some young people were repeating the Lord's Prayer before going to bed at night. Soon after Fellows left the *Louisiades* in 1893, the propriety of the Panaeate sailing their canoes on Sunday when on long voyages had become an important question for both the islanders and the missionaries.

In 1892 two Samoan mission teachers and their wives landed at Bwagabwaga and a Tongan and his wife went to Alhoga further along the south coast. The villagers had previously told Fellows that they would accept the teachers and Fellows could sometimes bring them stores; but once the mission schooner had left, the teachers were largely dependent on their ability to exchange a few stores, tobacco, and knowledge for building sites, food, and a measure of village

leadership. Kolinio, a Fijian who went to work at Liak on the north coast, strengthened his contract by marrying a local girl; but generally the mission insisted that the teacher went ready-married to his post. From the time the teachers took up residence on Misima the people obtained most of their knowledge of *tapwororo* (the church and its teaching) by watching and listening to a Tongan aristocrat, or a Fijian or Samoan commoner. They still heard men 'called' from the Midlands of England or suburban Australia but less often, more distantly and at times of greater ceremony. In the long term the South Sea Islanders may have been most influential in setting a style of behaviour for the Papuan teachers who worked under their direction and eventually replaced them. In villages where the South Sea Islanders preached and conducted schools, the Misima began the progression from catechumen to member-on-trial, baptism and full membership. Many were found guilty of fornication and forced to begin again; but by 1898 twenty-two people from Bwagabwaga had been received as full members, and the next year five men from Misima began training as mission workers. By 1920 twelve of the fourteen teachers on Misima were Papuans.

The Sudest, fewer in number, living in smaller villages, less able to support teachers and speaking a different language, saw little of the representatives of the Christian churches for fifty years after the arrival of the miners. On Sudest the government officers and police played an indirect part in stopping feuding on the island, and after the first few years of mining government officers landed infrequently at Griffin Point or Pantava. In 1932 Patrol Officer Ivan Champion reported that the inland hamlets of Sudest had not been visited since 1920; many people were listed as living in villages which had been shifted or no longer existed. Previous officers had made patrols by sending word of their coming so that all could meet them at the anchorages.

By contrast the Misima had faced many agents of change. The different foreigners had come at almost the same time and their influence, concentrated at particular points, had spread over the island. The Siagara had been thrust aside by the miners, the Gulewa had been harried by the government, and the Bwagabwaga had been hosts to Samoan and Tongan teachers. When Alexander Campbell came to Bwagabwaga in 1897, his first visit for fifteen months, he stayed at the teacher's house and he inspected the school where he listened to seventy-seven pupils sing a hymn, pray and repeat 'parrot fashion a few syllables on a blackboard'. Campbell might conclude that only eight of the pupils had 'any knowledge of reading and writing, and then it was of but a rudimentary nature; but he did not doubt that the Australasian Methodist Missionary Society, directed and interpreted by South Sea Islanders, was important in Bwagabwaga.

Fellows wanted the people to know that he was different from the government officers. He tried to persuade the escaped murderer Babaga that he should give himself up; but he also assured Babaga that he would not give the government officers any information. Some Gulewa prisoners captured by Chester's police 'laughingly told' the crew of the mission boat how they had been linked together by a rope around their necks and marched to the coast: the men wanted by the government for the attack on Hariba watched from close by. On the same day Fellows spoke with many of the Gulewa in a neighbouring village.

But while Fellows gave the Misima a chance to learn that the foreigners were divided, other members of the mission blurred the distinction between church and state. A teacher on Panacate sent a group of men to Campbell to be punished for working on Sunday: they were relieved to find that while the government itself did not do business on Sunday it declined to punish those who did. Similarly Josephata, a Fijian at Bwagabwaga, insisted that the village constable from Panapompom take two couples charged with fornication, a man guilty of not attending divine service and witnesses to Nivani for trial. Campbell told them they had 'done very wrong' but they had broken no government laws and he could not punish them. Later Josephata asked for a village constable to be appointed to Bwagabwaga so that he did not have to spend so much of his time 'preaching government'.

Table 4  
South-Eastern Division government officers

<i>Officer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
J.B. Cameron	October 1888/89	Sudest
M.H. Moreton	1889	Siagara, Misima
	1890	Bwagaoia, Misima
W.T. Campbell	1890/91	"
N.H. Chester	1891	"
	1892/94	Nivani
J.W. Graham	1894	"
A.W. Butterworth	1894	"
W.T. Campbell	1894/95	"
R.J. Kennedy	1895/96	"
A.M. Campbell	1896/99	"
C.A.W. Monckton	1899 (January-April)	"
A.M. Campbell	1899/1902	"

Note: In 1902 the headquarters of the South-Eastern Division was moved from Nivani to Bonagai and then to Kulumadau on Woodlark Island. When mining again became important on Misima and declined on Woodlark the headquarters was shifted back to Bwagaoia in 1920 and remained there until 1942.

For the people of the Louisiades the distinction between church and government was puzzling, and their confusion must have been increased by the variety of men who spoke for the state. Robert Kennedy, Gold Warden and Resident Magistrate for the Louisiades in 1896, was charged with 'entertaining highly improper relations with native women', some of whom were procured for him by the crew of the government boat. At Nivani he lived with a Logea Island woman who was known to the people of the area as his wife. MacGregor allowed Kennedy to resign because he was young, previously of good character, and his mother was 'a very respectable resident of Brisbane'. Alexander Campbell, who had served in the customs departments of Fiji and Tonga, was temperate, fussy and just. He was concerned about the way recruiters completed indenture papers and the welfare of the men whose names and villages were listed on the forms. On special occasions he invited mission teachers and local villagers to the government station to see a magic lantern show and listen to his gramophone. Often acting to protect villagers and labourers, he was strongly prejudiced against 'the objectionable creation of the whiteman, the "whiteman's native"'. Faced with the "'over-civilized" type' capable of 'cunning, lying, and otherwise disreputable actions' Campbell felt he had to protect the 'honest whiteman'. To Chester at Bwagaoia the people were 'swine & niggers etc', and Fellows feared he would 'delight in shooting down the natives on the slightest chance'. Expressed in his dispatches to the Governor of Queensland, MacGregor's policies were rational and consistent: the governed in the Louisiades had to learn to live with the actions of men of different beliefs and appetites.

The missionaries and the government officers had come to change the islanders; but the miners were more numerous. By 1900 sixteen remained on Misima. They suffered from malaria, comforted by the belief that if they survived the first periods of fever later bouts would be less severe; they obtained food from the villages by purchase, exchange or begging; they built houses using local materials and skills; and they employed men and women from the villages to sluice for gold. They were less concerned about their sexual and racial purity than some of the early miners on Sudest. Robert Warren lived with a local woman and her kin had free run of his house. Alexander (Sandy) Grant and Charles Coppard, who came to the Louisiades in the first rush, formally married local women. Both accepted responsibility for maintaining and educating the children. Others took temporary 'wives' and tried to limit their association with the villagers. The most eccentric, the least capable of making a living elsewhere, the most integrated into village life, the most tolerant of the physical conditions, and two or three men who could reasonably hope to invest their earnings from gold in profitable trading and planting, stayed on. Among the best known

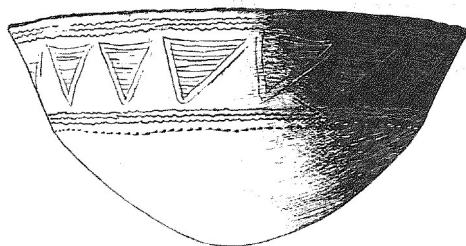
were Jimmy the Reefer (James Carlow), who believed he had not slept for seven years and talked of the days when he had been a sculler of note on the Tyne; Carl Ernst, a German, confined to his bed with an ulcerated leg and fed by the charity of the villagers; and August Degen. 'Jumbo' Degen, 'a fine handsome man well over six feet', had been on Misima from the early days of the rush. He worked dressed in a bag, and even when new and unfrayed it reached only to his waist. Degen had fought for Prussia against Austria and France, and he asked Murray at their only meeting in 1908, 'How are the French?' Murray replied that as far as he knew they were all right. 'They are a bad lot the French', Degen said, 'they are like the natives; they should get a hammering every five years'. Murray 'understood his antipathy to the Great Nation but [thought] he was rather hard on the natives considering that he, like many others at that time on Misima was living almost entirely on native charity'.

The Misima fields were more difficult to work than those on Sudest and the Misima people had less need to mine than the Sudest, but from the late 1890s a few men worked old ground. At the same time those Misima who chose to sell coconuts received only one stick of tobacco for forty nuts. Although some Misima villagers had many palms, selling nuts was obviously a slow way to riches. Miners coming from villages a few hours' walk from the alluvial areas near Bwagaioia and along Mica, Cooktown and Ana Creeks could easily obtain food and they worked on their own land, or on land owned by people with whom they had close associations. But it was more difficult for men from distant villages to become miners. They had to search out the land-owner and then find some marriage, trade or totem relationship which they could use to begin discussion. After obtaining permission to work in an area, the miner would present rice or tobacco to the landowner. While most gold was taken by people from the villages on the edge of auriferous lands, eventually men from Eboria and the Deboyne Islands mined on Misima. Whereas on Sudest the gold was left to the villagers, on Misima both Papuans and Europeans mined until 1942. By about 1914 Papuan miners on Sudest and Misima were each obtaining about £500 of gold in a year.

In 1902 the 'once pretty station' at Nivani was abandoned: Mahony leased the government plantation and placed a 'Manilaman' there as overseer. Government officers on Woodlark or Samarai came in frequently to talk to the village constables, inspect a few villages and take away ten or so people to the lock-hospital on Eboma Island to join others suffering from venereal disease. The people of Panacate told Campbell in 1905 that the disease had come recently from Wari and Tubetube. Campbell believed them for he had seen no sufferers during his years on Nivani, and he blamed Greek traders and pearl

buyers for its introduction to the Louisiades. It was not brought by the early miners. Venereal disease probably did not reduce the population significantly on Sudest and Misima, but it may have contributed to severe depopulation on some of the smaller islands. In the eighteen years of little government supervision after 1902 Misima retained the interest of other foreigners: South Sea Island mission teachers and a white supervisor, about ten miners, a trader and one or two men with small leases hoping to establish plantations.

Clay Pot, made on Brooker and traded to Misima Island, 1974



Sixteen years after their arrival on Misima, the diggers located the 'mother lodes' of much of the island's alluvial gold. Men pegged leases at Mount Sisa, Umuna and Quartz Mountain, and tried to raise capital, but the ores were too low grade, of uncertain extent or 'refractory', needing complex processes to free the gold from associated minerals. A little was recovered from test workings, and from the efforts of men who cut tracks and dragged heavy equipment to their leases. Then in 1914 Block 10 Misima Gold Mines (No Liability), controlled by Broken Hill Proprietary Limited, began extensive development works and eventually took over all leases on the Massive Lode at Umuna. Block 10 invested heavily, tunnelling for several thousand feet, installing crushing mills, cyaniding vats, sawmill, black-smiths' and carpenters' shops, electric lighting, staff accommodation and port facilities, and laying down 7 miles of tramway. The locomotive hauling the trucks on the 2-foot gauge tramline crossed twenty wooden bridges on the journey between Bwagaoia and Umuna, and 'some of the points of beauty to be seen *en route* ... would vie with similar spots in many locations'. At its height in 1921–2 Block 10 employed 63 Europeans and 512 Papuans to produce £56,508 of gold. Faced with further costs to maintain their gold yield, the directors closed the mine in September 1922. A local company employing about eight Europeans and 160 Papuans worked the leases until 1928 when Freddie Cuthbert, over seventy years old and already having made and lost a lot of money on Queensland fields, floated New Misima Gold Mines Limited to reintroduce larger-scale workings. The route of the old tramway was reformed to take motor trucks and new treatment

plant was installed. During the 1930s steadily increasing amounts of gold were extracted from the Umuna mine. Before selling to Cuthbert's Misima Gold-mine Limited in 1935 New Misima had increased its dividend payments to 2s. a month on £1 shares. In the ten years before the mine closed at the start of the Pacific war, the Umuna mine had produced over half a million pounds worth of gold; it had been Papua's most valuable mine, and the most profitable enterprise conducted by Australians in the Territory. In some years it was probably the only Papuan company paying a dividend.

On Ana Creek workmen inched equipment up cliff faces to install a hydro-electricity plant, but soon after the machinery was set in motion the manager knew that returns were so low he would have difficulty recovering his salary. At Quartz Mountain and Mount Sisa companies worked intermittently to win little gold. In 1938–39 Gold Mines of Papua Limited earned £30,755 at Mount Sisa; it was the only year any group provided substantial evidence to support those who believed they could bring another Umuna into production.

Most traders, planters and alluvial miners adapted the way they worked to meet the needs and ways of the islanders. The Osborne brothers on Rossel, Mrs Mahony and Charles Arbouin on Sudest, employed local people, advanced money to those unable to find their £1 government tax, and paid men to make *sapi-sapi*, the shaped-shell beads used in inter-island trading. Alluvial miners were dependent on the goodwill of villagers for food and labour. When a miner handed trade goods to his workers to take to a neighbouring village to exchange for a pig, there was no equality between miner and labourer and villager; but there was interdependence. The companies came to reshape the land and its resources to make an efficient mine; adaptation was something for engineers and chemists faced with strange ores, and for inexperienced overseers directing indentured labourers. Most of the men recruited from Australia by the companies to occupy the company houses at Bwagaoia and the mine sites remained expatriates; the most frequent messages sent by the AWA transmitter at Bwagaoia were instructions to Australian bookmakers.

The companies planned to use local labourers to exploit the Misima lodes, but the demand soon exceeded the supply. Although the management of Block 10 hoped that the imposition of the head tax in 1919 would enable them to recruit 300 Misima for road work, most of the men on the island decided that there were easier ways of earning their tax money. By 1920 Block 10 employed over 600 Papuans and while the number of workers fell in the 1920s it rose again in the 1930s. In 1937 over 1000 Papuans worked as indentured labourers for Cuthbert's and the other companies. Most of the labourers were from the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, particularly from Goodenough. Known

to recruiters and overseers as 'Gosiagos', they were more willing to work underground than other labourers. Much of the heavy surface work, cutting timber and roadmaking, was done by men from the Northern Division. They appeared on the monthly labour records as 'Tufis, Opis and Orokaivas'. Other labourers came from near Milne Bay and the south coast: the 'Baniaras, Buhutus, Suaus and Mailus'. Boatloads of recruits arrived regularly at Bwagaioia, signed-on at the Resident Magistrate's office, and walked up the road to the dormitories ('of 40 boys capacity') at Umuna; others, having completed their contracts and converted their wages into a box of trade goods from the Bwagaioia stores, went on board for the voyage home. Some men lost their trade goods on the voyage home: to other labourers who were better or luckier gamblers, or to women who offered delight at some of the island anchorages. A few men from the D'Entrecasteaux Islands and Milne Bay took wives with them; five women from Eaus village alone married labourers from the mines. A few other men from the south-east settled in the villages of Misima wives; one, Rupeni of Goodenough Island, was still living in Eaus in 1974. Generally Western, Gulf and Northern Division men did not marry Misima women. Labourers also took away memories of feasts on stolen pigs and garden foods; but during the twenty years that the indentured labourers made up about a quarter of the population on the island fights between 'sign-on boys' and villagers were rare.

In 1915, while 200 Misima men worked for the companies, other villagers earnt £674 washing gold at St Patricks Creek. In 1932 when the Umuna mine was paying 'handsome dividends' and few Misima worked regularly for the companies, the Resident Magistrate, Alexander Rentoul, stopped to talk to some men tending sluice boxes on a creek near the track to Mount Sisa. They told him that in two weeks two men could obtain gold worth £3, twice as much as they could earn by signing-on with the companies. Some villagers found it worthwhile to pay 3s. for a small bottle of mercury so they could amalgamate their own gold; their costs were lower if they stole the *silba* from the mines. With alternative ways of obtaining cash most Misima men chose not to be indentured to the companies. But they did do a lot of casual work, much of it by 'contract'. For a cash payment of specified goods villagers agreed to supply timber, thatch, sago or coconuts; or repair a road, or build a bridge. Having completed the 'contract' they were free to work in their gardens, travel or do government work.

When Block 10 began to exploit the Umuna lodes, the government returned to Misima. In 1920 white officers, police and prisoners began building the residency, the patrol officer's quarters, the office, barracks, post office, customs quarters, bond store, and two gaols. In five weeks of closer government supervision, four European employees of



Table 5  
Cuthbert's Misima Goldmine Ltd  
Monthly Labour Record<sup>1</sup>  
February 1940

<i>Origin</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Contract (months)</i>
	454	12
Island boys <sup>2</sup> [D'Entrecasteaux Islanders]	13	18
Mailus	97	18
Baniaras	22	18
Orokaivas and Opis	75	18
Tufis	4	18
Buhutus	14	18
Misimas	5	12
Suaus	3	12
Casual employees	8	(not indentured)
	Total 695	
<i>Distribution</i>		
Mine	442 <sup>3</sup>	
Battery & treatment	62	
Timber getting	41	
Timber squaring	18	
Trucks & roads	67	
Engineers	7	
Carpenters	9	
Domestics	6	
Cooks	40	
Hospital	3	
	Total 695	

1. The monthly labour records are in C.A.O., C.R.S., G. 180, item 3, maps and charts.

2. The classification is from the labour records.

3. This group included all underground workers; 345 were from the 'Islands' and 74 from 'Mailu'.

Block 10 were fined for assaulting labourers, and one Papuan was gaoled for two months for assaulting a European. After hearing the complaints of three labourers who arrived at the station 'badly knocked about', W. R. (Dick) Humphries, the Resident Magistrate, wrote in the station journal, 'I have reason to believe that assaults have occurred here very frequently'. He told the mine manager that, 'in a friendly spirit', he should warn his staff not to take the law into their own hands. The manager replied that before the building of Bwagaioia station they had had little trouble with their labourers. Now many were refusing to work, and if they were sent before the Resident Magistrate for breaking their contract the punishment was so mild

that it incited others to stop work. Humphries's sympathies remained with the labourers. He had seen a few men who had been battered; he had received a letter from a former accountant with the company offering to provide evidence of 'cruelty, flogging and overwork under a Contract System'; and he had gone underground to watch the Gosiagos at work. In his report to the Government Secretary Humphries wrote:

To say that I was surprised at the nature of the work performed would not be fully expressing my feelings. In an atmosphere of heat and dust, lit only here and there with the light of a candle I caught glimpses of Island boys at work with the picks. Some of the cross-cuts were less than six feet high with a breadth much the same — a hole in fact, as the boys themselves describe it. Yet in these small dark heated spaces they do good work and the Underground 'boss' Mr Quintrill speaks very highly of them.

They worked a forty-eight hour week for 10s. a month and keep. They were probably the lowest paid free underground miners in the world.

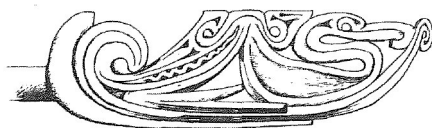
Later few cases were heard in court and presumably few men were bashed at Umuna. The company apparently learnt that it would have to obey the regulations about keeping labour records, sanitation and diet, for later government inspectors recorded few complaints; and the labourers continued to sign-on for Block 10.

After 1920 government officers visited the villages more often, condemning dilapidated houses, lining the houses to make the villages more orderly, instructing the people to keep the tracks clear, telling the Hariba to move to the coast and then letting them shift back to the hills, collecting taxes, paying the baby bonus of 5s. to every mother with four children under the age of sixteen, checking the census and hearing adultery cases. Under the Native Plantations Ordinance villagers were instructed to clear land and plant coconuts in straight lines with careful spacing. Initially keen to have their own 'companies', later the villagers had to be compelled to maintain the plantations. The return from copra sales was low and the people, especially those on the north coast from Gulewa to Ewena, could not see the point of a few acres of carefully maintained trees when they had such an abundance of bearing palms that the uncollected nuts rotted on the ground. The land, gold, 'contracts', intermittent employment, and the loads of betel nut which they sold to traders and government officers to exchange for yams in the Trobriand and D'Entrecasteaux Islands allowed them to be both independent of the mining companies and critical of the government's modest plans for their self-improvement.

Government officers sometimes spoke of the Misima as a 'soft' people with a static or declining population. The officers did not read, or did not believe, the statistics collected by their colleagues. In 1913

and 1914 the Resident Magistrate had estimated that the population was about 2500. By the mid-1930s the officers knew that there were over 3000 in the Misima villages, and Native Medical Assistant Lahui Vai had calculated that 43 per cent of the population was under fifteen, clear evidence of an expanding population. Thirty years later the population of Misima was over 6000.

Paddle handle, Massim, after Haddon 1894



In January 1942, two days after the Japanese captured Rabaul, white government officers, the Reverend Harry Bartlett and most of the other Europeans on the island left for Samarai. Bulega, a young man from Siagara village, increased his influence. He preached of a new world order in which the black men would become white, they would have all the food and goods they needed, and those who were now white would work for them. Many of his followers gathered on Motorina Island in the Calvados Chain and decided they would kill the returning 'government'. In December Lieutenant R.G. Mader of the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), George Burfitt, Corporal Segaradi, Constable Gio and Kaioki of Suau went to Motorina to arrest Bulega, and, surrounded by people, they were killed without acting in their own defence. In other clashes men from the Calvados Islands killed an old Filipino resident and five islanders. ANGAU officers and police pursued those thought responsible for the murders through the islands of the chain, destroyed houses, damaged canoes, shot five people and arrested over 150. In 1893 the government had demonstrated its power and morality by hanging Babaga at Panaeate; fifty years later it reasserted both by a public hanging at Bwagaoia of eight men found guilty of murder. One man told the crowd assembled to watch him die that he was being killed because he had believed Bulega. Bulega, using a rope plaited from strips of his rami, hanged himself in the privacy of his cell. Another eighteen men were sent to gaol for three to ten years.

In their acceptance of Bulega's teaching and their violent rejection of the government's attempt to re-impose its rule, some people had shown they were dissatisfied with the old order, but many disruptive events had taken place between the departure of one lot of government officers and the return of another. Villagers, 'sign-on boys', two of the Bwagaoia police detachment and three of the Europeans who had stayed after the general evacuation had fought each other; abandoned stores and private houses were looted; the villagers had heard the

'terrific sounds of guns and bombs and ... aeroplanes' as the Battle of the Coral Sea was fought above and around Misima; the Japanese had established a float plane base close to the old government station at Nivani; someone had written 'Welcome Japan' on the trucks from the mine; Isikeli Hau'ofa, a Tongan mission teacher, and Kenneth Kaiw, a government clerk, had worked to establish peace on the island; villagers with no knowledge of the course of the war or the aims of the contestants had fled from their villages at the sound of low-flying aircraft; the Sudest had feared that inter-island raiding would begin again and wild rumours had swept the island, one of the most persistent being that the government would come and take all taxable men away to work. The killings in the Calvados Chain and the hangings at Bwagaioia were part of these traumatic events, but the men who responded to Bulega's dream that he could 'reverse the world' were also influenced by years when they had little gold and little power. Other Misima villagers, having known disorder and fear in 1942, cheered when they learnt that the 'government' was returning to Bwagaioia.

Much of the information on early alluvial mining is from the same sources used for the chapter on Sudest: MacGregor in his diary, dispatches and *Annual Reports*; other officers in *Annual Reports*; north Queensland newspapers; and J.P. Thomson and B.H. Thomson, 1889a, 1889b. There is very little early ethnographic material on the Louisiades except for Armstrong, and Tindale and Bartlett. The clash between Commander Marx and the people on the north coast is recorded in Royal Navy Australian Station, New Guinea 1884-8, Case 17, microfilm, N.L.A. The work of the early Methodist missionaries is taken from Fellows's diary and papers kept temporarily with his collection of artifacts in the National Gallery, Canberra; Bardsley; *Missionary Review*, and Minute Book of the Panaeate Station and Circuit, and Minutes and Journals of District Meetings, Boxes 13 and 20, United Church Papers, New Guinea Collection, University of Papua New Guinea. Mrs Amirah Inglis consulted the records of marriages at the Registrar General's Office, Port Moresby and provided details about marriages between white men and Papuan women. Other information about relationships between miners and villagers is from interviews on Misima in 1974. Murray recorded his meetings with eccentrics in his diary, 7 April 1908 and reminiscences pp. 18 and 19.

No comprehensive figures of gold produced by Papuans are available but sometimes the warden reported production in *Annual Reports*:

		£
Misima	1914/15	675
Sudest	1916/17	412
Sudest	1917/18	420
Sudest	1918/19	660

E.R. Stanley wrote his 'Report on the Geology of Misima, (St Aignan)' just as Block 10 was beginning work and he has a detailed account of the leases, and some photographs and maps. Other information about lode mining from Kulumadau and Bwagaioia Station Papers; and C.A.O., C.R.S., G180, item 3 (monthly labour records), and item 71 (correspondence between Humphries and Manager, Block 10 about the treatment of labourers 1920). Obituary notices of Charles Coppard and Freddie Cuthbert are in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 1945 and November 1948.

The events of 1942 are recorded in J.V. Barry, 'Commission of inquiry ... into the circumstances relating to the suspension of the Civil Administration of the Territory of Papua, February 1942', copies in Australian War Memorial, Australian Archives and New Guinea Collection, U.P.N.G.; transcript of evidence, C.A.O., C.R.S. A518, X 800/1/5; ANGAU War Diary, Australian War Memorial, 1/10/11 (includes two accounts of killing of Mader and arrest of Bulega's followers); *Rex v. Bona etc.*, Australian War Memorial, trials of natives, 506/4; *Rex v. Le Boutillier and Downey, Samarai 1948*, folder 82, Supreme Court Building, Port Moresby.

Much information was also obtained on a visit to Misima in 1974. Three people who gave their time and knowledge generously were John Grant, Kenneth Kaiw and Alby Munt. In Canberra I was assisted by Epeli Hau'ofa, the son of Isikeli Hau'ofa.

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