

valuable background information on the early days of league activity.

Where we had little or no success with the Biographies Index, we found many of our subjects represented in Fletcher's Index, a set of three volumes located in the bay of shelves which houses the other major finding aids for Maori subjects. Fletcher's Index gives references to articles in publications such as the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*. The bibliographies and other publications located here, such as the various tribal histories, were also useful, although the large number of references they supply often lead to quite a small amount of information, sometimes little more than a mention of the name in passing.

Turnbull has been a valuable source of material on the ancestors of pre-European times. Nga wahine toa, the women of great and memorable feats, whose stories have been extensively recounted, recorded, and published, are relatively easy to find in the Turnbull collection, within many different publications, and usually with more than one version of their story.

If women's lives generally have been under-documented in the collections of our major research institutions, then the lives of Maori women have an even higher level of invisibility. The stories of *Victoria's Furthest Daughters* are now more accessible, thanks to the work of Patricia Sargison. But the lives of Maori women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are still in the process of being brought into the light. Sometimes that handy, all-purpose subject heading in the Reference Index: 'Maoris—Social life and customs', while a source of frustration, can throw light on women who cannot be located in the Library directly under their own names.

Some days the usual finding aids and methodical approach do not produce the desired results. Then, our leads may come from a particular staff member with good recall or an interest in the same subject. That type of occurrence is a bonus, but engenders fears of having missed the obvious. Letting members of the staff know who we are currently working on has paid off on many occasions.

The problems we have encountered in doing this research have been largely the result of the under-documentation of women's lives generally, and of Maori women in particular. Another minor problem has been the non-availability of some family papers which have been deposited, but are not yet completely processed and ready for use. Wharehuia Hemara, Kai-tiaki i nga Korero Maori has written elsewhere in this issue of the need to promote the Turnbull as the prime repository of iwi archival material. But it is vital, in order to keep faith with the donors, that the turn-around time between deposit and availability of material is not too protracted.

Those of us involved with this project have previous experience in using research institutions, as well as other sources and networks we