



TO THE MEMORY OF
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Died May 17th 1910

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PACIFUL CLIMES FOR SLEEPLESS EYES
LIFE FOR DEATH, AND SONGS FOR SIGHS

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Hocken, Thomas Morland 1836 - 1910
Doctor, historian, collector, bibliographer

Thomas Morland Hocken, whose name is perpetuated in the Hocken Library, Dunedin, was born on 14 January 1836 in Rutlandshire, England. He was the third surviving son of Joshua Hocken, who was of Cornish descent, and his wife, Anne Richardson of Yorkshire. His father was a Wesleyan minister in the Stamford, Lincolnshire, circuit. Educated at Woodhouse Grove School near Leeds, Morland subsequently received a medical training, being indentured to an apothecary at St Helens, Lancashire. He then attended the Newcastle upon Tyne College of Practical Science and the Ledwich School of Surgery & Medicine, Dublin, before gaining his MRCS and LSA in 1859. After service as a ship's surgeon on the Australian run he was discharged at Melbourne, Australia, in January 1862, and arrived at gold-prosperous Dunedin, in Otago, New Zealand, on 22 February. Two days later he set up in general practice.

Hocken quickly established himself as one of Dunedin's leading physicians. His practice in the 1860s rarely brought in less than £10 a day, and he was to become much sought after for his skill in treating women and children. Despite his small stature, a mere five feet two inches (a sensitive point), Hocken's energy and obvious, if sometimes touchy, integrity soon made him a leader of his profession. In January 1863 he secured the post of coroner for Dunedin, an office he held for 22 years. He was eventually excluded, to his great anger, in 1885 in accordance with a government decision that medical practitioners should not hold the office of coroner.

In 1864 Hocken was appointed to a commission to inquire into the management of Dunedin Hospital and the lunatic asylum, and was a prominent advocate of improved public health when giving evidence to the Dunedin Sanitary Commission. He was also honorary physician and surgeon to Dunedin Hospital; honorary surgeon to the Otago Benevolent Institution (1864--87); and briefly (1876--77) clinical lecturer in surgery at the University of Otago Medical School. He became first president of the short-lived Dunedin Medical Society in 1873, of the Otago branch of the New Zealand Medical Association in 1876, and of the newly formed national association in 1886. Hocken also rose socially, becoming as early as 1863 a member of the Dunedin Club. His closest friends were professional and university men. Most were members of the Otago Institute, a scientific society which Hocken had helped found in 1869 and of which he was three-times president. He was also a member of the Otago university council from 1883, becoming vice chancellor in 1910. His father's Methodism notwithstanding, he became a devout Anglican and was active in church administration.

On 3 July 1867, at Waikouaiti, Hocken married Julia Anne Dakyne Simpson, the daughter of an Edinburgh lace maker. She is said to have been an alcoholic, and died, childless, in 1881. Two years later, on 24 July 1883 at Invercargill, he married the very cultivated Elizabeth (Bessie) Mary Buckland, daughter of a wealthy Auckland merchant. Their only child, Gladys, was born in June 1884.

In Bessie, Hocken found a companion to support his interests in natural history, Maori and Pacific ethnology, and above all New Zealand history. As early as 1865 he had exhibited moa bones and Pacific islands costumes at the New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin. An early interest in botany saw him elected in 1883 a fellow of the Linnean Society of London. But it was his pioneering lectures, writings and exhibition displays (1889--90 and 1898) on early New Zealand history, which earned Hocken wider recognition. He published a number of articles in newspapers and the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, including the text of Abel Tasman's 1642 journal translated from the Dutch by Bessie Hocken. His first major work, *Contributions to the early history of New Zealand [settlement of Otago]*, appeared in 1898. In 1909 the government published his comprehensive *Bibliography of the literature relating to New Zealand*, which became the standard reference for over 60 years and is still valued for its

annotations.

These interests grew out of a passion for collecting, which from the late 1870s became Hocken's major preoccupation. He corresponded and travelled widely, gathering artefacts by purchase, gift and exchange. For his ethnological collection he acquired Maori cloaks, hei tiki (figural neck ornaments), mere and wooden carvings, notably the magnificent Tu Moana house panels; and Solomon Islands artefacts, masks from New Guinea and Australian Aboriginal weapons. From 1891 the Otago University Museum acquired by gift and purchase almost the whole of this collection, creating the basis of its ethnographic department and for the teaching of ethnology at the University of Otago.

Hocken's fame justly rests, however, on his collection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, paintings and photographs relating to New Zealand and the Pacific generally, but particularly strong in his own interests of the early European voyages, the missionaries and the settlement of Otago. It was from this collection that the Hocken Library was to be formed. His greatest acquisition was the letters and journals of Samuel Marsden and of other early CMS missionaries in New Zealand. Also notable were the papers of Edward Shortland, Captain William Cargill, and the Canterbury Association; and two paintings, J. A. Gilfillan's 'A native council of war' (1853) and James Smetham's 'New Zealand chiefs at Wesley's house' (1863). He was less successful with the New Zealand Company archives in London, but secured the gift of duplicate documents to the New Zealand government.

In 1897 Hocken announced his wish to give his collection to the public, an intention made good in 1908 when it was gifted through trustees to the University of Otago for use as a 'library or Museum of Information and reference by the general public...without any fee or charge'. A special wing funded by public subscription and government subsidy was added to the university museum, and the Hocken Library was opened by the governor, Lord Plunket, on 31 March 1910. Sadly, Hocken himself was too ill to attend. He died of cancer on 17 May at his Moray Place home in Dunedin, survived by his wife and daughter.

Thomas Morland Hocken was an early and effective promoter of New Zealand history. As a bibliographer of its documents he was unrivalled; as a collector of them and public benefactor he stands with George Grey and Alexander Turnbull as one of the pre-eminent New Zealand trinity.