



McLean Museum and Art Gallery Polynesia Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Polynesia collection, McLean Museum and Art Gallery
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Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Curator, McLean Museum and Art Gallery
Date Completed	18 th December 2014
<p>There are forty items from Polynesia including: Cook Islands; New Zealand; Tonga; Samoa; Fiji; Hawaiian Islands; and Niue. A fly whisk and a length of coconut fibre cordage are of unknown origin but thought to be from Polynesia.</p> <p>From Niue are a canoe model acquired from George Kerr in 1879, and a piece of 19th century decorated backcloth (<i>hiapo</i>). A pearl shell fishhook comes from the Society Islands. From Samoa are a bow and two fish spears acquired from John Stewart in 1881. There is also a piece of decorated barkcloth said to have been taken from the wall of Robert Louis Stevenson's house in Apia, Samoa by a Mr J Mackie in the 1890s.</p> <p>From the Cook Islands is a ceremonial adze from Mangaia likely to be early 19th century as the form suggests it was not made for trade. It was acquired in 1892 from Walter Washington Buchanan Rodger. Also from the Cook Islands is a boat model from Manihiki inlaid with pearl shell discs, with sails of woven plant fibre. It was gifted in 1876 by Captain William Hamlin. Hamlin also gave the two unprovenanced Polynesian artefacts mentioned above and an item of woman's dress from Tonga in the form of a long piece of woven material with a fringed edge decorated with a dark lined pattern. Also from Tonga is a club of wood with surface decoration including human figures.</p> <p>Nine items are thought to be from Fiji, six of which were collected by Thomas Steel (1858-1925) who worked on a sugar refinery at Nausori, Fiji, from 1885-7. Some of these items have been previously attributed to the Hawaiian Islands but are stylistically Fijian, including two woven mats with wool edging from Rotuma and a fan. Also from Fiji are clubs of wood, a piece of pottery and a kava bowl. From the Hawaiian Islands, Steel gave a skirt and axe heads as well as one of two pieces of barkcloth. These are part of a larger Hawaiian collection of eight artefacts. The other piece of barkcloth and a beater date from the late 19th century.</p> <p>Finally, there are nine 19th century items attributed to New Zealand including a short wooden <i>wahaika</i> club with a carved blade, a stone club, and five paddles of wood with surface decoration.</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	