Southern District
Officer Reports

Islands and Villages in Rural Hong Kong, 1910–60

Edited by John Strickland

香港大學出版社
Hong Kong University Press

Hong Kong University Press
14/F Hing Wai Centre
7 Tin Wan Praya Road
Aberdeen
Hong Kong

ISBN 978-988-8028-38-2

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Secure On-line Ordering
http://www.hkupress.org

The Press is grateful to Tim Ko and James Hayes for providing the photographs in this book.

Printed and bound by Liang Yu Printing Factory Ltd., Hong Kong, China.

Contents

Illustrations

Photos

Maps

2
Author Introductions

INTRODUCTION (Eric Hamilton)

I took over as Assistant District Officer and District Officer Southern District in 1917 and served until 1923. ADO/S and DO/S were interchangeable. It made absolutely no change in the work of the job, as from my earliest incumbency I dealt directly with the Colonial Secretary. I took over from Arthur Dyer Ball, son of the sinologue and former interpreter in the Supreme Court.

I was never much good at Cantonese, I could get on with my colloquialisms with the delightful Chinese peasants of my district. I loved them all and I think they regarded me as a queer sort of Dutch Uncle whom the curious government had put over them.

My offices were three rooms on the top floor of the General Post Office building looking across Des Voeux Road to the Douglas offices next to Jardines. The end room was a sort of general office, the next the home of the enormous volumes which registered all the lots in my district, and in which the various mortgages were registered. The interest on Chinese Customary Mortgages was 2% per month. My personal office was the next and I had to walk through the two offices to get to it. There I worked and heard the many cases: land, general disputes and police court cases. I had been gazetted JP and a magistrate. I had not been functioning for three weeks when Leo D'Almada e Castro appeared for the defence in a police court case. He submitted that my office had not been gazetted as a place where police court cases could be heard. He was right. It had been going on for years. He then had the cheek to ask me to dismiss the case. I pointed out I had no jurisdiction there on his own plea and told the police to take the whole shooting match to the Central Magistracy. The office was very quickly thereafter gazetted appropriately.

My principal trips were to Cheung Chau (Dumbbell Island) and Lantao, Tai O which I did by launch on alternate Wednesdays. In emergency I did of course extra trips and occasionally had to go to

Silvermine Bay, Peng Chau, Tung Chung and rarely Ha Mei Wan on Lamma Island opposite Picnic Bay to avoid crossing the central ridge on foot.

Of course my travelling was done in a hired launch at $6 an hour. One padded one's estimate a bit on this vote item as it was recognised that the District Officer was entitled to a bathe. I used very often to take a small party with me, putting on board a picnic lunch from the Hong Kong Hotel, and very pleasant times we had.

INTRODUCTION (S. H. Peplow)

The administration of the New Territories is now wholly in the hands of the District Officers, North and South. The portion lying south of the Kowloon Hills and including all the islands around being under the District Officer South, and the area north of the hills under the District Officer North.

Let us take a trip with the DO South on an official visit to the village of Tai O, on the extreme northwest of Lantao Island.

Embarking on his launch at 9 a.m. we proceed through the Kap Shui Mun Pass, keeping near to the north coast of Lantao until we reach Tai O after a journey of about 2 1/2 hours. On getting ashore we are met by the Officer in charge and proceed to the Charge room of the Police Station, which is, during the DO's visit, converted into a Police Court.

Any and all cases in the Territory are dealt with by the DO. The head kaifong is generally the first man to greet us, and he is by virtue of his position asked to accept a seat near the DO.

The cases are brought forward, and should some question appertaining to the welfare of the village crop up, he is consulted. After all the cases have been disposed of, various subjects relating to the village are gone into. Perhaps a road or temple requires repairing; someone has encroached on another's property; so and so has been beating his wife and a hundred and one questions appertaining to the peace of the place are gone into. Nothing is too large or too small.

Would the District Officer be good enough to make a personal visit?

He will and does. The road or temple does need repairing and Government will grant a certain sum to assist. The unruly husband gets a talking to. The boundaries of the disputed lots are measured and marked out. We return to the Police Station and call it a day.

To the villagers in the Territory the District Officer is the Government. Whatever happens he is their own particular official, and what is more, their friend. He does his work with a minimum of legal formality, and a maximum of simplicity which has tended to inspire confidence, and to wean the people to our own matter of fact systems. Perhaps the PWD want to resume certain areas for making a reservoir or a new road. The DO is asked to confirm this, and to watch the people's interest in regard to compensation etc. He, it may be said, is the officer responsible for the welfare and happiness of the whole district. From the foregoing one might be tempted to think that these officers are men who know the peculiarities of the Chinese and how to deal with them. On the contrary, these posts are generally given to young Cadets after they have passed their necessary examinations in the Chinese language. They are given to them for two reasons. The first being to enable them to get a good idea of the habits and customs of the people, and the other, to get a thorough knowledge of the Territory in general.

Kaifong

In practically every village in the New Territory there are the Village Elders or "Kaifongs". These people are elected by the villagers yearly, and form what may be called for the want of a better name, a Town Council. They are under the direct supervision of the District Officer, and books are kept showing the expenditure of all public monies. They are generally men of mature age and known merit, whose duty it is to assist in the public welfare of the village. Their moral influence in the maintenance of the public peace, and their knowledge in the decision of questions concerning local customs, disputed successions, fung shui and such like, have often been of great assistance to the District Officer in charge.

Village Life

The majority of the people live in small villages. Nearly all are surrounded by small groves of trees which are carefully preserved, and, outside of these, by stretches of cultivation which present a very bare appearance, as they are usually devoid of any trees or hedges or grass land to give variety to the view. To see one village is to see the lot, they are all so much alike. One is often tempted to ask why the Government do not get a few standard block plans made, so as to give the villagers a variety of houses to choose from. Some of the houses are built of

stone obtained from the hillside, and others simply of mud and sand moulded into bricks. The average size of a village house is 40 feet long and 12 feet wide, one storey, and they are built at the north end facing the south. A wooden partition divides the long room into two, one being used as a sleeping compartment. The doors are of wood held together by a cheap lock, and the floor is merely the earth beaten flat. If the occupants own any pigs or poultry, there may be a small shed at the back of the building for them, but more often than not they are kept in the back of the house.

The construction of village roads is of the simplest, the most pretentious being of granite slabs laid on raised pathways about three or four feet wide. Outside the villages the roads are simply paths about two feet wide, worn by the feet of the villagers. Great care should be taken when walking out in the country; always keep to these paths. In and around most of the villages there are wild cats and pigs, and to stop these animals from destroying the crops, the Chinese put down steel traps of the old so-called "man trap" style, and they are liable to inflict serious injury to anyone caught in them.

Good wells are found in all the villages.

The average villager does not set great store by cleanliness, or better housing. He finds himself unable to understand our aims and ideas, or on dismal conditions of unrest. He frankly dislikes our iconoclastic spirit, our want of imagination, and our blindness to all the forces of nature. He fears the inquisitions of the Police, or for that matter any other Officer in the Government service. Sometimes I have had to find a certain man in connection with Government business. Seeing four or five villagers together, I have asked for him by name. Immediately they want to know what he is wanted for. After about a quarter of an hour's talk explaining, one of them will step forward and say he is the man. It is useless asking why he did not say so before. Everything must be explained beforehand to them and, should it be a serious matter, one will simply be told that the man is not there; he has gone to the country or some such excuse, and in nine cases out of ten, the person so informing you is the one you want. The villager dreads the Sanitary Board, but he does recognize some solid advantages from British rule — chiefly in the security of life and property.

God of the Earth

Probably the most common shrine in China is that of the To Tei, or God of the Earth.

At every entrance to a village one will be seen. He is represented by a smooth stone, having no particular size or shape. He is a local deity, and is regarded as a kind of constable in the next world. He must be informed promptly on the death of an adult in the village. Sometimes children are given in adoption to this god. The procedure followed is to write the name of the child stating whether it is male or female, upon a piece of red paper, and place it upon the shrine together with wine, food and incense sticks, asking for the gods protection.

In addition to the shrines placed at each entrance to the village, smaller shrines are sometimes built in the walls of the houses, near the entrance, thus asking for protection for that particular building.

Domestic Life

The domestic life of the villager in the New Territory does not differ much from that of Chinese in other parts of China. Nor has it altered much during the few years of British occupation; if anything, it falls rather behind the general standard of freedom and enlightenment in the Canton province. For this south corner of the San On District, which is now the New Territories, was a remote and rugged country, far from the seat of Government and learning in Canton. Before the cession of Hong Kong, it was little touched by external influences, and even now the customs and habits of the people are probably little changed from what they were a hundred years ago.

It may be easy to administer, but its old established customs and institutions must not be lightly changed or affronted, and the necessary innovations have to be introduced with the greatest delicacy. In the New Territory as elsewhere the continuous descent in the male line is the foundation for many of their habits and customs. Respect for old age and experience is the second characteristic. The father of the family is the supreme head, and his sons come next in position and estimation. The mother of the family reigns supreme by virtue of her share in the continuance of the family over the feminine establishment, and often proves a tyrant to her daughter-in-law.

One way of defence which a Chinese wife has at her command is herself. If she has a fluent tongue, she can generally hold her own. If she is able to raise a storm about any trivial thing and keep it up, her position is secure. A Chinese woman in a temper wants a lot of beating.

It is the object of every living male to provide himself with an heir; if he dies before marriage or has no male issue, he must be provided with an heir by adoption.

Crops in the New Territories

The population of the Territory is for the most part agricultural, and rice forms the chief crop and staple article of food. It is grown wherever sufficient water can be obtained, and the fields are laid out and irrigation channels constructed with extraordinary care and skill to utilise to the full the available supply of water. The rice is usually sown in March and two crops obtained before November. There are three main qualities of rice, the best being grown on somewhat raised and therefore easily drained soil. It is sent to Hong Kong for export, as it fetches a higher price abroad than the Chinese will pay here. Foreign rice is bought for their own consumption as it is cheaper and rather preferred to the local product.

Sugar cane is grown to a small extent in the north of the Territory. The cane grows to a height of from eight to ten feet and is cut down when ripe, and the long stalks crushed in a mill, composed of two large, rough round mill stones revolving inwards, and usually worked by four oxen, two at each end of a large beam in the form of a yoke, the centre of which descends into the mill, and makes it revolve; the oxen working this like a capstan. The sugar falls into a vat beneath, and the squeezed cane is sold to make torches, and as fuel. Some years ago, an up-to-date sugar mill was supplied by Government to the farmers in order to encourage the industry, but it was rejected for the characteristic reason that it squeezed the cane too dry and thus spoilt it for further use.

Peanuts are grown in fields where there is insufficient water for rice and fetch a fair price. They are used chiefly for making oil.

Sweet potatoes are grown as a winter crop on the rice fields.

Pineapples are grown on sheltered hillsides in different parts of the Territory, and on Tsing I Island, but the greatest quantity is grown in the valley stretching up from Tsun Wan (Tsuen Wan) to Shing Mun. This industry was taken up vigorously in the first few years of our administration, and there seemed reason to believe that a good demand for canning the fruit would spring up, but this has not been realised. The area under cultivation in 1929 was about 224 acres. For registration purposes 10,000 plants are reckoned as one acre. This gives a total of 2,240,000 pineapple plants. Assuming only one pineapple to each plant, and sale for an average price of five cents each, we get a total of $112,000 per year.

Fruit-growing has not hitherto been successful. A business venture was tried at Castle Peak soon after the Territory was taken over. A large stock of fruit trees was imported from California, apples, pears, lemons,

peaches, etc., but at no time during its career was it a success. The reason for this is perhaps not so much unsuitability of soil or climate as slack management and unskilled labour.

Lai-chi trees are planted in and around many of the villages, but the fruit yielded is of rather uncertain quality. Besides Lai-chis, there are a few oranges, limes, pomeloes, bananas and mangoes. But these have suffered in nearly all cases from want of attention, and no serious attempt seems to have been made by the natives to cultivate fruit with a view to supplying the Hong Kong market.

Animal Life

The commonest of the wild animals in the New Territory is the deer, which abounds in all the hilly districts. All are of the small species known as hog-deer, and do not possess horns. As they are very destructive to crops, and as their flesh is much esteemed and fetches a good price, they are hunted vigorously by the villagers, both with dogs and traps; they are not shot, as it is important to keep them alive to send into market.

Heavy damages are constantly being reported at various places on Lantao Island.

Game is not abundant; but snipe are fairly plentiful in certain districts in the autumn, and a good many quail with occasional partridge and wild duck can be obtained in the winter season.

Otters are to be found in some of the streams on Lantao and the mainland, notably in the Shing Mun River.

Wild Pig. In 1918 a report stated that considerable damage was done to the crops near Ping Kong by a herd of wild pig. An attempt was made to shoot some of them, but they succeeded in escaping from their lair just ahead of the guns. The herd was afterwards sighted near Wai Tau and probably made their way to the ravines of Tai Mo Shan. Both last year and this year the writer has been asked by the villagers of Sham Tseng, near the 13th milestone, to make up a party to shoot some of them on account of the damage done to the crops there. They have even offered to supply dogs and coolies free.

Tigers. There are well authenticated cases in which tigers have visited portions of the New Territory and even the Island of Hong Kong. Two tigers were knifed by Chinese in a cave in the hills near Sham Shui Po.

Cattle have been killed in large numbers, especially on Lantao Island, where some 60 or 70 were killed during 1911, apparently by some beast with claws and tracks similar to a tiger or panther. It was

reported by one native living in a hut on Lantao that a tiger was seen by him dragging a chain, and it is not impossible that the beast in question might be a tiger escaped from a local menagerie. It would live mostly on deer, but occasionally pounce on isolated herds of cattle; nor is there any reason to doubt that it could swim over from one island to another. In one case in May 1911, a number of cattle had been killed in the south of Lantao, and the remainder of the herd, thirty in number, were sent over for safety to a small island half a mile away; but within two days 16 of them had been killed or badly wounded. An expedition went out there three days later, but by that time the beast had probably returned to the thick cover afforded by the Lantao hills. It was said to have been seen again early in 1912, both on Hong Kong Island and Lantao.

Cattle are employed everywhere for ploughing. The strongest and most valued are the water buffaloes, which are especially suited for hard work in the low-lying parts. They are of a variety of the wild buffalo, and come originally from India, whence they spread both eastwards over China and westwards as far as Greece and Italy. They have long horns, thick smooth brown hides and big feet, and are very tame in the hands of the native, but shy and sensitive to strange sights and smells, a fact that renders them somewhat alarming to the foreigner. The other variety of cattle is the short horned cow, usually of a brown or reddish colour, which is in common use throughout the district.

Bees are kept economically throughout the Territory. Their hives are made, as a rule, out of cylindrical rattan baskets which can often be seen suspended over the doorways, out of the way of vermin, ants and cockroaches. The bees swarm about April, when the Lichee and other trees are in blossom, and the honey is sold almost entirely to the local chemist, by whom it is utilised as medicine.

No Chinese village is complete without its compliment of pigs, poultry, and in low-lying parts, also ducks; all of which cost very little to keep. They do the scavenging and fetch good prices in the Hong Kong markets.

Foxes. 20-year-age foxes were plentiful in the hilly parts of the Territory, and they too were very destructive not only to the crops, but also to game and poultry. Although not so numerous now, there are still some to be found. In the *South China Morning Post* last September, a small paragraph stated: "There were several interesting incidents in local golf during the past week. AB killed a cobra at the ninth hole of the Fanling Old Course. BC played a ball on to the 15 green, which was promptly seized and removed by a large red fox."

Fishing

Of all sections of the Chinese, the most interesting, and the least known to foreigners is the fishing population: and of all, they have been least affected by foreign influence. Their life, methods, and their materials are now much the same as they were several hundreds of years ago. The bulk of the fishing is carried on by large junks, which trawl in pairs, with a long net some 250 feet in length. It is very wide in the middle and tapers to two narrow ends where it is attached to the two junks. Such junk's will go to sea for any time up to 10 days, and to a distance of 100 miles or more from land; they carry a large supply of salt in which each catch of fish is thoroughly salted and stowed away. The fish is dried on board or onshore, and sold to the shops in the nearest port, which act as agencies for the big salt fish firms in Hong Kong. The season for the fishing extends from about October to May; during the other months the winds are unreliable and typhoons are feared.

The chief home of large junks is Macau, where there is a convenient and extensive anchorage, good fishing grounds, and cheaper living than near Hong Kong. Their chief resorts in our Territory are Aberdeen, Shaukiwan, Cheung Chau and Tai O. The large bulk of the fish trade is in salt fish, which is exported from Hong Kong in all directions, but in the immediate neighbourhood of Hong Kong much of the fish can be delivered fresh. This is caught during the night and sent in by launches to reach the market before dawn Life on a junk is altogether one of gambling and speculation, and therefore dear to the heart of the Chinese. A junk may return with fish to the value of $2,000 or $3,000 or almost empty, and in either case all on board share in the fortunes of the junk. Living such a life, junkmen are naturally open-handed and free with their money, good customers for the shops which will give them credit for many years in bad times, in the hope of a good season coming at last. They are honest and dependable and give little trouble to the Police; their domestic life is harmonious and free from the bickerings which are such a feature of life onshore. On the other hand they are simple folk, and their education and their standards fall somewhat short of those of the land population. They are very superstitions, and the numerous shrines and temples along the coast bear witness to their piety. On this account they readily fall victims to the wiles of the fortune teller, and averters of evil spirits.

Below the large junks in size come a variety of small craft of schooner or cutter rig, which fish in the more protected waters of the Colony. As a rule they work singly with smaller trawl nets, but

sometimes go out in pairs, as in the "Wong Fa" (yellow spawn fish) season in November and December. Lastly come the innumerable small craft which swarm in every sheltered cove, and emerge to fish either with small nets or with lines. The most notable of these are the Hoklo boats of whom many have settled in our waters. About April or May hundreds of these craft some 20 feet long, with high bows and sterns, and very shallow draught take advantage of a fair wind and descend upon these coasts. Three man each boat, of whom when fishing, one rows, and the other two work the net. The Hoklos are for the greater part connected with shops and fish dealers in Hong Kong, and surrounding ports; but many also come down as freelancers. When fishing is bad, the latter may become a menace to the more peaceful craft, whom they surprise and rob at sea on dark nights. They occupy mat-sheds at various convenient spots near good sandy beaches, where they can draw up their boats and dry and mend then nets. Fish are also caught in the large stake nets which are a familiar feature of the surrounding coasts; these are of two kinds, the offshore nets, worked from a sort of crow's nest, and the inshore nets fixed on four poles driven into the sea bed. Both nets are of similar construction, being large and square, with rather a small mesh to catch everything, and with a pocket in the centre, out of which the fish is taken from underneath. The net is fastened to four bamboo poles fixed into sockets, and is worked up and down by means of a windlass. The chief season for these nets is from June to September. It is a rather precarious living, and the nets are often worked at a loss.

The larger junks trawl for every kind of fish, except the porpoise, which is neither caught nor eaten, and the turtle, which the Chinese as a rule refuse to catch or eat, though they sell and eat their eggs, which are found in abundance on beaches around the coast during summer time. There are certain seasons and certain methods for catching various fish which deserve mention.

Whales, have occasionally visited the waters of Mirs Bay and in July 1905, one was struck by a passing steamer, and the carcase washed ashore at the top of Tolo Harbour, 10 miles from Tai Po; none appear to have been seen since.

Sharks come into the neighbourhood, one was reported to have been seen in June last year near Sham Tseng, Tsun Wan district, and they are fished for occasionally about June in the vicinity of Ling Ting Island, to the southwest of Hong Kong. A line about a mile long is laid down in the evening attached to floats, and fastened down by anchors at each end. To this are attached long hooks at intervals of every ten

yards or so, baited with morsels of fish or meat. If a shark catches one of the hooks, he wears himself out with pulling at the line, which is taken up in the morning.

Wong Fa, are caught in large quantities during November and December at the mouth of the Canton River near Tai O, Lantao Island. They come in with the tide in immense shoals, and all the craft from the neighbourhood sally out to catch them. On 20 October 1927, 600 piculs, roughly 36 tons, were caught. The boats go out in pairs with large nets having sinkers at one end and floaters at the other. The men detect the presence of the fish by keeping their ears at the side of the junk, and throw in the nets when they hear them coming.

At Tai O scouts are sent out in small flat bottomed boats. Alter rowing out about two or three miles, they lay with their ear pressed to the bottom of the boat listening, and when the fish are heard they signal to the junks in the harbour, which immediately proceed to the places indicated.

Chu Yu, a kind of herring with a slight taste of mackerel is caught in January, February and March, by nets of the same kind as the above: but their coming is detected by their movements along the surface on dark nights.

Hak Chong Yu (black pomfret) is caught during the summer months by means of decoy fish, made of sandalwood and painted white, which are dragged through the water and followed by these fish, which are then easily caught; or boards painted white are laid out on the side of the boat, and the fish leap on to these and fall into the boat.

Acetylene lights are used at night in sheltered waters for catching fish. Curiously enough, in some cases as with Cheng Lun Yu (a sort of small herring) they are used in conjunction with the noise of wooden clappers on the side of the boat to frighten the fish into a net spread in front: in other cases they are used to decoy fish towards the boat, when they are speared or scooped up in nets.

Shrimps are caught by means of a close-woven trawl net during the summer months in the waters around Lantao Island. The shrimps are made into a paste, which is potted and sent to Hong Kong, whence it is exported in large quantities.

Shell fish are highly esteemed by the Chinese. They are caught by means of a long line let down with hundreds of empty shells attached. The fish occupy these and when the line is pulled up, they are removed, and the line let down again. In some parts they are also picked up by means of bamboo forks some 20ft long with iron prongs, with which the men feel along the bottom, and thus pick up the fish.

Crabs and lobsters are caught by means of a long narrow net let down to the sea bed, or in bamboo trap baskets, with bait inside.

There are large oyster-beds in the shallow waters of Deep Bay.

Most of the large junks employed in fishing around these shores come from Macau and Canton.

But there is good business in the building of junks and sampans at various places in the New Territory. The chief business is carried on along the shores at Sham Shui Po and Cheung Sha Wan in the northwest of the Peninsula, where the bulk of the boatbuilding of Hong Kong is carried on.

Nets are made entirely by the fishermen and their families, the string being twisted out of fibrous grass found on the hillsides.

INTRODUCTION (Walter Schofield)

My first introduction to the Southern District took the form of journeys by Water Police launches to various parts of it during the summer of 1919, when I lived for three months in the Water Police station quarters before my first leave. After it I sometimes repeated such voyages for purposes of geological research, on which I embarked with Government encouragement. A professional geological survey of the Colony was being planned in order to help in developing the resources of the Empire after the 1914–18 war, and to most people the Colony's geology was, quite understandably, a sealed book. The coasts and islands of the Southern District afforded many instructive sections, often showing the relations of different rock and mosses in a nearly undecayed state, which except in stream beds could hardly be seen anywhere else in the days before great motor roads cut the hills. This work enabled me to prepare a preliminary report on the Colony's sedimentary rocks and granite batholiths, which was presented in 1923 not long before the Canadian geologists began their labours.

In 1922, while I was working as second assistant to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and deputy registrar of marriages, on the first floor of the Post Office building, Mr Wynne-Jones, the District Officer South, whose office was just above mine on the second floor, went to hospital with appendicitis and I was instructed at ten minutes' notice to go upstairs and do his job till he got better. As I had coveted the job for sometime, and had told my chief so (then the late ER Halifax), I was delighted.

In those days one of the District Officer's duties was to sit in his office as magistrate for the Southern District, excluding New Kowloon and the Lyemun area. This court usually functioned from 9 to 10 a.m. and might bring anything from a complicated murder to a petty assault case: the former, with its formalities, always ticklish for an inexperienced lay magistrate. The next job was to interview people sent for by the District Officer, deal with any disputes brought up by the parties or the Police, and hear any land cases fixed for that morning. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons the longer cases could be heard: failing these, there were always land deeds and registers to sign, files to deal with, or minutes to write. At the end of the day the ledger, cash books and receipts would come in for checking.

In my time most of the cases that came to my office were from the nearer islands. New Kowloon, and the Tsun Wan district. Another class of case nearly always taken there was resumptions which I always considered the most distasteful and unpleasant task a District Officer can be expected to perform: for those resumptions in 1917 were usually paid for at a quarter cent a square foot, and those in 1926 at three and a half cents a foot. I never felt that money could in any way make up to a peasant for the loss of most or all of his land. Nearly always they wanted land in exchange, which it was rarely possible to find. I may remark here that when Mr Ruttonjee started the brewery at Sham Tseng about 1926 he secured the land for it partly by leasing a piece of foreshore from Government and reclaiming, and partly by leasing agricultural land from the villagers who were mostly surnamed Fu for a fixed term at a yearly rent, thus giving them a regular income and a right of re-entry on their land in default of payment, which seemed to me a very fair arrangement, though the raising of foreshore levels made a terrible mess of the fields.

My first spell at the District Officer South ended in about four weeks; but in March 1923 I left the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs for good and became "Lord of the Isles", and not a mere substitute. This gave me the chance to carry out researches without applying for Police launches, so I expect the appointment pleased the Water Police! It was the custom for the District Officer South to hire a big launch from a Chinese firm to take him, his bailiff, and his Chinese demarcator to Cheung Chau and Tai O on alternate Wednesdays if business there demanded his presence, or there were enquiries to make, or local applications for land to consider. For this he got a large travelling allowance, I think $1,200 a year, which I believe I nearly used up every

year, though I don't remember asking for supplementary votes. Some District Officers seemed to pride themselves on saving as much as possible of this vote, but I always thought it a District Officer's duty not only to see as much of his district as he could, but to let its inhabitants see him.

The collection of revenue from the District, excluding lots held directly from the Government as Inland Lots granted through the Land Office, was always a most important duty of the District Officer. The Crown rent was collected both at the District Office and at various outstations, chiefly Tai O, Cheung Chau, Tsun Wan, and the small police quarters at Yung Shue Wan on Lamma. The outstation collections were done by a shroff accompanied by an Indian constable, and in the remotest places the Water Police gave their assistance. As a rule I believe the Water Police brought back the shroff and the money, though I think the ordinary ferry conveyed him to the scene of action. The collecting was done at the local police stations. It always began about the end of July, after the first rice crop, and went on at full blast till about October: Defaulters were dealt with early the next year. Licence fees for forestry, squatters fees, and pineapple plantation licence fees were usually paid before midsummer at the District Office.

In 1925, the year of the big Communist-inspired Nationalist general strike, the office shroff was transferred on promotion. His substitute was a young fellow fresh from the Treasury, who took advantage of the disturbance and the preoccupations of his superiors to embezzle part of the receipts, and finally absconded three months after the strike began. A former District Officer South remarked to me later that he had always been worried by the possibility of this kind of thing happening to him, and the almost total impossibility of keeping a tight check on shroffs when frequent absence from the office, sometimes all day, is part of the District Officer's duty. Luckily his security just covered his defalcations: and another shroff in the same racket was caught out by me and part of his loot recovered before I handed him over to the Police: thus I was able to show that on balance Government had in the end not lost a single cent. Both shroffs were arrested and sentenced later. I then spent a good deal of time, especially on voyages to the islands, drawing up rules for the financial guidance of my successors, but Mr Wynne-Jones, who took over from me in late 1926 thought them too cumbrous and discarded them.

INTRODUCTION TO PAUL TSUI'S VILLAGE REPORTS (James Hayes in March 2009)

The purpose of this brief introduction is to ascertain when and why the detailed socio-economic village reports contained in this section were produced. They are an important primary source, and some enquiry into how and why they came into being is warranted.[1]

I turned first to Paul Tsui's very detailed autobiography. Chapter 19, the last of the personal chapters, dealing with his time as District Officer, South, 1950–51, seemed the most likely place for information, but contained nothing. It provides an introduction to the District, but there is no account of his work there. The chapter stops abruptly, and is very likely unfinished.

I then found, from his Chapter 16 on the British Military Administration, Hong Kong, October 1945–September 1946, that Paul had worked in the New Territories during that period, and checked there for any likely clues.[2]

During that time Paul had been deployed to assist the civil affairs officer who advised the brigadier in charge of the mainland side of the harbour on matters affecting the Chinese population. This area had included the New Territories, and Paul had soon found himself working exclusively there, as part of the small team working for John Barrow, the very experienced pre-war D.O. North.

The chapter mentions a situation report written by Ken Barnett following a week-long visit to Lantao and other islands in the Southern District by police launch. Also, how Paul had produced a similar report on the Sai Kung side of the District, which, he says, had earned Barnett's approval, as being "more penetrating" than his own. This had led to various *ad hoc* assignments, all requiring investigative reports to be written, but as these were mainly to do with supply, trade and industry, it seems unlikely that they would have included the village reports.

Essentially, the village reports are concerned with land, livelihood, and village society, and combine economic data with other detail useful for senior officers requiring information on the New Territories (NT). Since it seems unlikely that such information would have been requested by John Barrow, the head of the post-war District Administration from 1946 until his retirement in 1952, with his long and close knowledge of the NT, it seems we must look elsewhere for the reasons that led to their production.

What follows is taken mainly from relevant archival material, Colonial Secretariat file 1/3184/50, now held by the Hong Kong Public Records Office.[3] The District Commissioner's printed annual departmental report for the financial year 1949–50 is also of some assistance, but only marginally.

In 1949, arising out of concerns expressed by the Development Officer, a Colonial Secretariat-chaired committee was tasked with reporting on land tenure in the NT, and whether rack-renting of immigrant vegetable farmers was taking place.[4] Needless to say, the District Commissioner was one of its members and closely involved. He had arranged for a number of Pilot Surveys on the ownership of land in the NT, which had confirmed that the average holdings were very small (about one acre). He had also established that press reports of large-scale rack-renting and eviction of NT farmers had been greatly exaggerated (DCNT's annual departmental report for the year 1949–50: paras. 20 and 30). Nonetheless, it had been conceded by all concerned that insufficient information was available on the farming villages.

No doubt with this in mind, during this period there had been correspondence with Professor Firth of the London School of Economics (LSE) in regard to a possible economic and social survey of the NT. Though not then serving in the District Administration, Paul had been consulted on the situation in view of his home village connections, his work in the NT during the period of military administration, and his attendance at Professor Firth's lectures whilst attending the "Devonshire Course" at Oxford University for colonial cadets in 1947–48. His name occurs frequently in the papers, and it is also clear that he had a great interest in the subject, even conducting some enquiries of the kind in his home area in his spare time. The LSE people were keen to involve him in any survey, but were told it was unlikely he could be spared for the work, especially as (in March 1950) he had just been appointed District Officer, South. On the basis of the papers I have seen, it would appear that, in the end, the NT-wide survey project was not proceeded with.

What can we deduce from the Southern District village surveys printed here? Some are originals, in Paul's own hand-writing. Others were in typescript. These latter were second or third copies, not the original typescripts. There is no covering memorandum or indication as to where they were sent, if indeed this had been the case. It seems most likely that the reports were written by Paul himself, during his one-year tenure as District Officer, South, and with or without the assistance of a few persons from the District Office.

What is still not yet clear, is whether they were done "off his own bat" or at the direction of his superiors. It is also unclear whether there were more reports which have either not survived, or not yet come to notice. A fuller scrutiny of the relevant Secretariat file, and a search for the originals and other copies of the reports in other surviving Secretariat or departmental files might shed more light on these points.

Whatever the case may be, there can be no doubt that the surviving reports are valuable documents, and probably unique of their kind. They were prepared by a capable person with a real "feel" for the task: someone who, on his own admission, had been tempted to take up an academic career in anthropology at one point during his attendance on the "Devonshire" course mentioned above (*Autobiography*, Chapter 17).

INTRODUCTION (Austin Coates)

This Memorandum has been written with the idea of providing District Officers with some general background information about the Southern District. When I first became a District Officer I felt the need of some kind of manual of information, and I think it is likely that succeeding officers in the same post may feel likewise.

Most of the material recorded was collected in the course of a tour undertaken during March and April 1955 when, accompanied by several members of the District Office staff, I visited more or less every village in the Southern District. Information regarding clans and their historical background, including generation periods, etc., is as given by the elders of the villages concerned. Wherever possible cross-checks were made, but I should warn anyone reading this Memorandum that it must not be taken as by any means accurate and final, it is not meant as an end-all statement on the District, but as a tentative beginning to assembling standard background information, to which I hope successive District Officers may feel inclined to add and supply corrections whenever they find inaccuracies.

Nearly the whole of the Memorandum was written out of office hours and in haste. It is therefore no masterpiece of literature. It is also as unsystematic as the jottings of a mediaeval monk. It consists of information about the subjects which interest me personally, and runs on as the different subjects occurred to me.

Due to illness, I was unable to complete it. The sections on the Saikung region, the Hang Hau Peninsula, Lamma Island and Lantau Island are more or less complete, but the Tsun Wan section is extremely sketchy and some of the Lesser Islands have been left out.

As well as providing background information, the Memorandum is intended to give, for record purposes, some idea of the state of the District in 1955, and much of it is therefore descriptive of things which today are commonplace, which in ten year's time may not be. Each section deals with a different region and is preceded by a general description of that region. At the beginning are some general observations and facts about the District which I hope may be of interest to Government officials outside the District Office, since as well as including various recommendations for the future, they may serve to give some idea of what the District Office does and has to think about.

I would like to record my appreciation of the services of the following members of the staff who accompanied me on the tour, and helped to assemble the material used here:

Mr Lo Cho Chi	Interpreter and Secretary
Mr Leung Ngai Kuen	Interpreter
Mr Fung Kwok Hing	Amanuensis
Mr Wong Wai Yuen	Amanuensis

INTRODUCTION (James Hayes)

My notes on these familiarization visits, now transcribed in full from the two small notebooks in which they have rested for the last fifty years, seem to require some accompanying commentary, to assist present-day readers.

First and foremost, unlike Austin Coates's Summary Memorandum, which, as stated in his Introduction, was intended to assist his successors in post, my notes were intended purely for my personal edification. I had not known of Coates's work, which was safely locked away in the District Commissioner's safe, and did not come across it until long after. Had it been available, I might not have persevered with my own note-taking.[5]

Secondly, whilst my notes cover much the same ground as the Summary Memorandum, there are major points of difference. Coates had been two years in post, and was able to provide long descriptive commentaries about the townships and sub-districts. As a newcomer to the District, I was, of course, quite unable to provide this kind of overall scrutiny and information. In any case, my purpose was essentially different and more limited in scope. On the other hand, I find that my notes on individual villages are sometimes fuller than in the Summary

Memorandum, as with the Pak Tam Chung and Tai Mong Tsai groups of villages in the Sai Kung region, and the Tung Chung villages on Lantao. Purely for the purpose of comparison, each has its uses, not least in Austin's case because his personality enlivens his account.[6]

As it was, acutely aware of my ignorance in practically everything connected with the New Territories, and with no other guidance than my predecessor's handover notes, my greatest need at the outset was to get to know the District and its people. This conviction drove me to visit practically all its 180 villages and hamlets within six months of becoming District Officer in mid-October 1957. And this, in turn, resulted in the notes which are reproduced in this volume.

There was no set programme of visits, nor could there be. In such a far-flung District with few roads, and many areas accessible only by sea, visiting was a very time-consuming business. I had my everyday work to do, and this was both varied and in abundance. There was, besides, and taking priority at all times, my duty to facilitate the civil engineering investigations in progress at remote but long settled Shek Pik on Southwest Lantao island, where, if found feasible, the government was fervently hoping to construct a large new reservoir, to ease Hong Kong's chronic water supply problem.

The notes were taken down from the village representatives and other men who met my small party when we arrived in each place.[7] The subjects of enquiry were of my own choosing. They focused on the kind of information I needed in order to understand how local people lived, and their needs, and hence, to do my job. They were also motivated by my keen interest in local history, about who they were and where they had come from, and their institutions, such as temples and shrines, ancestral halls, schools, and the like, since this information, too, was a means to better administration.

The figures quoted, on population breakdown, cultivated land, and the like, were provided on the spot. They were seldom verified thereafter. With the decision in mid 1958 to proceed with the reservoir forthwith, our work at Shek Pik had gained momentum, with the pressing need to recover all leased land from its owners and negotiate terms for village removals and resitings. Visits to villages after the initial round would be much fewer, and dictated largely by need. However, the population figures provided on our visits are close enough to those listed in Coates's record, and in J. T. Wakefield's invaluable *Gazetteer*, published officially in 1960.[8] However, they were bound to be similar, being taken from the same sources, and by the same means! What is more remarkable is that any information was to hand.[9]

The figures on land and livelihood are necessarily crude. I wanted them for general guidance, and there was no time to go into details, by lineage and family, of how much land was owned and how much was being rented from within the village, or from owners living elsewhere, etc., etc. Coates' figures are subject to the same caveats. We were not making the detailed surveys which would have given a more accurate picture.

Neither are our returns for lineages comprehensive or very satisfactory. The details were not always taken, and for lineages other than those to which the Village Representative (Village Representative) or other person volunteering the information belonged, their accuracy is questionable.[10] But it is striking how, in 1957–58, in some of the longest-settled villages, a few old lineages were represented by only one or two surviving families, whereas others of the same depth of settlement now had numerous descendants.

The notes show that, beyond question, all but a few villages predated the 1898 Lease, and that their resident lineages had lived there for generations: and indeed, in a great many places, for centuries. Also, that despite massive post-war immigration into Hong Kong, there was, in 1957–58, still only a handful of new settlements of agriculturalists in the Southern District. However, a closer scrutiny shows some internal movement within the District during the Lease, with people moving out of some villages to establish branch hamlets in the same area.[11] The entries show that the population was either Hakka or Punti (Cantonese speakers), with a preponderance of the former in its eastern parts.

Had we realized it at the time, this was the last period in which it would be possible to record the traditional rural economy of the region. Based on two-rice-crop subsistence farming, eked out by coastal fishing, various cash crops, and, for some families, remittances from absent menfolk, the process of transition had already begun. Over the next ten to fifteen years, development and modernization would force a total change of lifestyle, and especially for village women and girls. Rural society would never be the same again.

The notes provide an overall impression of what life had been like, and in most places still was. Besides the information recorded about crops, fields, and livestock, the answers given to my other questions provide more insights into the condition of the people in the villages.

One, prompted by the government's post-war drive to provide sufficient primary schools across the New Territories, brought much information on education for boys and girls, or the absence of it still. Factors emerged, including the traditional attitude that there was no

need to educate girls, and there were deterrents like poverty, the need for extra hands on the family farm, or the hesitation to send young children to school along rugged hill paths. There was yet a lack of schools in some places, and insufficient provision of places in others. Overall, by 1957–58, it is painfully clear that the situation in the District was still far from satisfactory. Even in areas like Clear Water Bay, close to Kowloon and connected to it by public transport, the notes show that it was downright shocking.

The responses to my enquiries as to whether the villagers wanted any of the materials supplied by the District Administration and the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association to assist them with local public works projects, were more positive.[12] The intention here was to encourage them to make improvements to irrigation dams and channels, to replace unsafe or inadequate potable water supplies from streams or wells with clean water piped in from the adjoining hills, and to help them improve existing footpaths to all-weather condition. Almost everywhere, village heads had projects in mind. It was clear that existing conditions left much to be desired, and that our assistance was both desired and appreciated by persons now willing and eager to help themselves.[13]

Our discussions brought information on other salient aspects of rural life. In many outlying places, people were still entirely reliant upon local ferries for travel and marketing produce and livestock, with attendant dangers.[14] And in mainland areas away from the existing roads, and on the islands, inter-village travel was mainly on foot, by old footpaths across hills and streams. As for municipal services in the townships, too much was still being left to their own managerial organizations (the Kaifongs) with some outside assistance.[15] In regard to medical and welfare services in the District, the government's provision was equally inadequate.

The notes of my initial talks with the Peng Chau Rural Committee show how energetic its old Kaifong of local shopkeepers had been, indeed still was, in its new guise, in providing local services, including an electricity supply, and how keenly it was pressing for the government and the public utilities to take them over. They illustrate very well the transitional nature of the time.

Like the expansion of the District Administration put in hand in 1959–60, the much needed programme of improvements in new government buildings and services introduced at the close of the decade was long overdue.[16] Both had been urged by Ken Barnett, my first District Commissioner, but not heeded in the corridors of power

until his successor, Ronald Holmes, confirmed that they were urgently required to cope with the steadily worsening situation brought on by immigration and development in the mainland New Territories.[17]

The notes refer to depopulation in some places.[18] Removals from older sites are recorded, ascribed to deaths caused by malaria or other endemic disease.[19] These moves were always associated with adverse fung shui, in which, good or bad, I had soon learned there was a universal belief. There is also mention of wartime losses, due to burnings carried out by Japanese troops in reprisal for suspected involvement in guerilla activities. And the visual evidence, of ruined village sites and abandoned fields, confirmed all these reports.

I found that, in the 1950s, and for long before, men had often worked outside the village. Besides some working in Hong Kong or Kowloon, not a few were still employed at sea, or had gone on contract to Nauru and North Borneo post-war. I met seamen and overseas workers from an earlier generation who were now retired, and heard of others who had gone to work in Singapore or Malaya and other parts of Southeast Asia (the Nanyang) pre-war, and even of a few families which had settled in Borneo, but not all of these had returned.

As for the people themselves, what did they ask for? Requests for post-registrations of birth, to enable younger men to get a passport to go to United Kingdom for employment in Chinese restaurants, were common in some areas. Employment for young men was often raised, especially in minor government jobs. Widows in need, and likely to qualify for assistance from the Kadoorie Brothers, were brought to my attention. Medical referrals or follow-ups were asked for. There was the assumption that all these requests were in order, and that it was part of my duty to assist and facilitate. This was also the official view.[20]

The village notes are not all of a uniform depth or quality. I did not always ask all the questions in my usual range of interests. So many of the visits involved walking to, and between, settlements, helped out by boat travel where necessary or available, that we might sometimes have had to push on. Then, too, I might have forgotten, or been lethargic, or else the Village Representative might have been absent and my listeners apathetic! But, taken overall, the notes have something to communicate: not least because, in so many ways, they are a faithful mirror of the past, as much as of the moment.

Now that the greater part has been transcribed, I have been struck by one curious fact. Although the villages were wholly rural, and the District Officer was the land authority for the District, it is remarkable how few mentions there are of anything relating to land, or reference

to any complaint or dispute. The general lack of development aside, a principal reason for this seeming anomaly is, I think, that life in the villages was, and for so long had been, very self-contained. All knew precisely who owned what and where, and public opinion was still a potent force, constituting a "damper" on unwarranted encroachment on other people's entitlements.

The notes do contain something I had almost forgotten. Along with the recorded facts, the earlier notebook contains "asides" which show how quickly I came to like Chinese country-folk. Some of my jottings refer to the Village Representatives, others to elderly villagers. They include the following comments: The Village Representative of O Tau, "a very nice man": the Village Representative of Nam A, "a good, intelligent chap, who came all round with us"; the 74-year-old Village Representative of Ngau Kwu Long, Lantao, "a nice old boy": and the like. The Village Representative of Sha Tsui, Sai Kung, was set down as "a sensible, courteous Village Representative". I had noted appreciatively that three persons from Shan Liu, including the Village Representative, had come to Nam A to guide me to their own village, and that the folk at Au Tau, near Tseng Lan Shu, on Clear Water Bay Road from Kowloon, were "nice people". The language used is banal indeed, but it indicates that they had made a very favourable impression.[21] Invariably welcoming, but not overtly deferential, the village people of the day had an inbred natural courtesy and ease of manner. Essentially, they were comfortable with themselves and who they were, and it showed.

Unfortunately, I am not a photographer. Nonetheless, I have some photographs of people and places from that time which help to illustrate what I saw during my visits.

However evocative these images may be, they cannot communicate the wonderful experience of walking through a countryside of great natural beauty, enhanced by human activity and effort. Both in the fields and on the hillsides, there were persons of both sexes at work, and the evidence of their forbears' industry and efforts was all around. Wherever we looked, there was this connection between the people and their past, which made the experience so special. And though not always so very far from a landing place or a road, many places possessed a remoteness in time and spirit; whilst in others, a reported sad and distant past seemed still to resonate.

In time, I would learn much more about the District and its people: especially in those places to which my work brought me more frequently, as at Shek Pik, and on Lantao generally.[22] But the knowledge and insights acquired during these initial visits would serve me well.

More, they had opened the door to a lifelong fascination with China and the Chinese. It is this which, looking back, gives these notes a special interest for me. And, perhaps, for those readers bitten by the same infectous bug!

Notes

1. To the best of my recollection they were found by one of my friends and colleagues in the Land Executive grade who, knowing of my interest in historical papers, forwarded them to me after finding them loose in a drawer in the District Office in which he was serving at the time (probably in 1981–82).
2. Strictly speaking, civil administration was re-established in May 1946.
3. Being unable to consult this file in person, I am grateful for the help given by Professor Chris Arriess of the University of Calgary and Mr Bernard Hui of the Public Records Office, in making copies of some of the relevant papers available for study.
4. Also expressed, had been the Development Officer's wider concern that the ongoing Communist land reform in China would highlight the unreformed situation in the New Territories, requiring the Hong Kong authorities to review the situation there as a matter of expediency and some urgency.
5. See Chapter 5, note 10.
6. He was well-liked and remembered in the District, because of his obvious interest in his work, but perhaps also because his theatrical manner struck a chord with the village people. They loved opera shows and, when the need arose, could themselves become suitably dramatic!
7. There had always been village headmen, but in 1948 the District Administration introduced more formality into the system, by providing for appointments as "Village Representatives". See note 3 above.
8. The full title is *A Gazetteer of Place Names in Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories*. It was published by the Government Printer, and the foreword is dated December 1960. There was a reprinting about 1969. Mr Wakefield's name does not appear, but I know he was the compiler, when serving as Chief Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs in the 1950s. Prior to this, he had also been District Officer South.
9. This has set me wondering. Were they available simply because the village representatives needed figures to hand, to satisfy "busybodies" like successive district officers, or were there other reasons? The last Hong Kong census had been in 1931, and the first post-war census was not taken until 1961. The clue may lie in Mr Barnett's mention that an "unofficial census

of the population of the New Territories was taken in March 1955…" (see page 3 of the printed *Annual Departmental Report of the District Commissioner New Territories 1955–56*). No information is provided on means, but hopefully this can be found in the archives. It is curious that Austin Coates' tour of villages was made at precisely this time (his preface states March and April 1955) but there is no hint of the count being part of the reasons for his visits). Together with statistics on landownership and tenancy in the New Territories supplied by the Director of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Mr Barnett's population figures were included in a table which he circulated among the District Officers. A copy is included in the appendix to these notes.

10. Some of the replies in regard to length of settlement clearly refer to the period since the first ancestor came into the province, and not to the current village. This is not uncommon, but it misled Austin into making some projections into local history on this basis. I believe this was one of the reasons why the District Commissioner kept the Summary Memorandum in his safe!
11. I suspect that there was more movement than I was able to uncover here. This would have caused problems for their descendants when, approaching the end of the Lease, and in accordance with the provisions of the Sino-British Joint Agreement of 1984, the District Administration was drawing up its list of pre-1898 villages, so that indigenous inhabitants could benefit from the provisions inserted in their favour.
12. The Kadoorie Brothers also gave loans, funded projects like village orchards, and helped widows with grants, and gifts of livestock, channelled through the Agricultural and Forestry Department and the District Administration. Initially, these philanthropists had not thought that the government was doing enough in these, to them, important fields — especially with a Communist China over the way.
13. We had a recently appointed Assistant Inspector of Works, seconded from the Public Works Department, an able and enthusiastic young man, ideally suited to give technical advice where required.
14. On my initial visit to the Sai Kung Rural Committee, it was mentioned that several persons from Sai Wan and Tai Long had been drowned in transit to the township.
15. The Kaifongs were the traditional local management bodies comprising local shopkeepers, to be found in Cheung Chau, Peng Chau, Tai O, and Sai Kung.
16. The size of the buildings housing, say, a police post, a post office, a medical clinic, a public health office, and the like were such as to make them the largest and most imposing structures in the place. On Peng Chau, where they were sited on a new reclamation that included a proper ferry pier, the new building was known derisively as "Lam Shue-chun Buildings", after the then rural committee chairman.

17. A full account is given in his printed *Annual Departmental Report* for that financial year, and those immediately following.
18. Lower population figures are confirmed for some places — especially on Lantao island, by comparisons with the detailed returns of the 1911 Hong Kong Census, as illustrated in some of my footnotes.
19. There is little or no mention of this depopulation in pre-war official reports, but that malaria was a scourge is made plain by the strict measures taken to prevent sickness in the large workforces assembled for major public works in the 1930s, as for the Shing Mun reservoir and the Gin Drinkers Bay defence line. Malaria was still prevalent in some areas well into the post-war period.
20. Confirmed by the paternalistic tone of the statements in regard to welfare and employment contained in the District Commissioner's printed annual departmental reports for the first decade of the post-war years.
21. Not that I was undiscriminating. There were some uncharitable judgments in the notebooks which I have not transcribed into these published notes.
22. I should mention here that I was D.O. South until I went on overseas leave in November 1960. Upon my return in August 1961, I became D.O. Islands, because the Sai Kung portion of the District had been excised following an intended, but later aborted, proposal to build a new reservoir in Hebe Haven. Thus, my close connection with that area ceased at that time.

Index