

Seen But Not Heard?
Collecting the History of New Zealand Childhood

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Abstract

This thesis examines the extent to which selected New Zealand museums have collected the history of childhood from their inception to the present. No research on collecting the material culture of childhood has been done in New Zealand and international studies in this area have mainly focused on exhibitions. In breaking new ground, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of objects relating to children that have been acquired over time and it evaluates how and why the experiences and perspectives of children have been incorporated into collections, and therefore which childhood histories have been preserved. The case study at the heart of this thesis focuses on the history collections of two large metropolitan museums, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

This thesis employs a multi-method approach in order to gain information about the collections, the objects and museum practices as they relate to children and childhood. Close scrutiny of museum collection databases, object files and accession registers enabled the documentation of what was in the collections and what associated information was recorded. Current and long serving curators were interviewed to provide unique perspectives and personal reflections on the realities and complexities of their practice. In addition, published museum histories, archival information and planning documents provided crucial information on the strategic collecting direction of each museum from 1851 to 2007.

This study provides important empirical evidence on collecting the material culture of childhood. The thesis also provides new insights into museum theory and practice and advances the premise that museum collections are shaped by the historical context within which they were created, whether at the level of social discourses or the activities of individual people. There were changes in the kinds of childhood objects collected, from ethnographic specimens to colonial and decorative arts objects, to everyday objects that embody multiple perspectives and personal stories. Contrary to conventional wisdom, exhibitions and the 'new museology' are shown to be a positive influence on the inclusion of childhood objects, especially things that embody the child's perspective. The way that childhood objects provide a tangible material link to the past, capturing an element of history that cannot be expressed in text-based form, is evident throughout this research. The thesis concludes by arguing that the distinctive way museums make history provides an important opportunity for museums to ensure that children are included, visible and heard in New Zealand history.

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Contents Page

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents Page	iv
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One: From Cathedrals of Science to the Infancy of Childhood Collecting: 1851 to 1950	17
Chapter Two: The Toy Box Grows: Collection Development Between 1950 and 1990	38
Chapter Three: Story Time at the Museum: Collecting Between 1990 and 2007	68
Conclusion	97
Bibliography	103

List of Figures

Figure 1.1	Christening Gown, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC747	17
Figure 1.2	Child's Moccasins, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FE3649	32
Figure 2.1	Infant's Harness, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC887	38
Figure 2.2	International Year of the Child, Display Panel at The National Museum, 18 December 1978	48
Figure 2.3	Harris's Cavendish House, Centennial Street Exhibition, Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2007	50
Figure 2.4	German Bisque Doll, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC1369/1	53
Figure 2.5	Christie the Walking Doll, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH3513	59
Figure 3.1	School Locker – year 2000, with Pocket Collection. <i>Wild Child</i> exhibition, Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2007	68
Figure 3.2	Kindergarten Gift Set, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH4089	84
Figure 3.3	Paper Doll 'Ruth' and Clothes, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH11542/1-16	88
Figure 3.4	Play School Toys, Humpty, Manu and Big Ted, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH14510, GH14509, GH14511	95

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Auckland War Memorial Museum, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 1980	55
Table 2.2	Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 1980	56
Table 3.1	Auckland War Memorial Museum, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 2007	82
Table 3.2	Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 2007	83

Introduction

Guy Fawkes Guy, stick him up on high,
Stick him on a lamp post and there let him die.

A penny for the guy,
A hapenny will do.
If you haven't got a hapenny,
You're a mingy Jew

(Sutton-Smith, 1959, p. 44)

Guy Fawkes Day has been celebrated from the very first days of New Zealand European settlement (Sutton-Smith, 1959). In the past children would make stuffed Guys and chant rhymes like the one above in order to entice money away from adults. The Guy would be burnt on a bonfire on Guy Fawkes evening and there would be other general public festivities and fireworks. The chant is not commonly recited today. The wording in the rhyme 'You're a mingy Jew', seems inappropriate and racist, and the currency, 'A penny for the guy, A hapenny will do' is from a past era. The act of burning a Guy in public is considered to be unacceptable behaviour and dangerous by today's childcare standards. However, by recording this rhyme and the associated traditions, Sutton-Smith (1959) has preserved an aspect of New Zealand history, relevant to both adults and children. The rhyme and changing traditions illustrate the way the experiences of children and the ideologies of parenting and childcare have changed over time. But perhaps most importantly, this example demonstrates that the history of childhood 'provides critical insights into the human past and contemporary social experience' (Fass, 2003, xi).

I come to this topic from two different but intertwined perspectives, as a parent and as a history curator at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. The birth of my daughter in 2005 heightened the realisation that there is a parallel realm of life existing alongside the adult one: playgrounds, parent groups, coffee mornings, kindergartens, play groups, toys, clothing, push chairs, and a vast range of differing perspectives about children, childhood and childcare. I also realised that children are

not passive individuals: they engage with their environment, they are determined, and they manipulate the people and environment around them. As a new parent I was happy to be manipulated and became completely obsessed with the care and development of my child. However, as I read about the history of childhood I realised that my views and feelings about my child were not natural and much of what I was experiencing was socially constructed. For example, in contrast to the Victorian era when children were to be seen but not heard, children are now considered central to family life and New Zealand society.

One of the earliest and most influential social histories written about childhood was by Philippe Ariès (1962). He analysed the content of historical paintings as evidence of the emergence of the concept of childhood in history.

Medieval art until about the twelfth century did not know childhood or did not attempt to portray it. It is hard to believe that this neglect was due to incompetence or incapacity; it seems more probable that there was no place for childhood in the medieval world.

(Ariès, 1962, p.33)

As childhood historians Hiner and Hawes point out, Ariès made a key observation that is important to this thesis: ‘childhood is not an immutable stage of life, free from the influence of historical change’ (Hiner & Hawes, 1985, p. xvi). He was the first scholar to argue that childhood and attitudes towards children are continually changing. This thesis explores this premise in relation to the collections at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and the Auckland War Memorial Museum (Auckland Museum). I investigate the childhood objects in the collections and to what extent the collections include the perspectives and experiences of children in history. I question how and why collecting priorities have changed over time and whether the collections reflect changing ideas about children and childhood.

Museums have for a long time been concerned with the child’s experience within the museum. Thomas Cheeseman, Director of the Auckland Museum from 1845 to 1923, wanted to incorporate a Children’s Museum into the new Auckland War Memorial Museum (Wolfe, 2004). This did not occur but the example illustrates an early desire to engage children in the museum environment and it highlights the way museums

have traditionally focused their attention on children. Over time child-focused education programs and travelling education boxes, and later discovery centres, became a core component of museum business. New interactive and engaging displays are now expected and school groups regularly visit museums as an exciting way of meeting the requirements of the school curriculum.

Museum professionals have concentrated their discussion on the educational needs of children and museum literature dealing with children has focused on ensuring that the needs of children are met in terms of display, delivery style and experience (Spock, 1979; Gorbey, 1987; Kimber, 1999; Skramstad, 2004; Monahan, 2007). Children are now encouraged to be seen and heard in the museum environment as visitors. My thesis takes this a step further and asks whether children are seen and heard in museum collections. My primary research question is: To what extent do New Zealand museums represent children's history in their collections? This aspect of museum history, theory and practice is currently unexplored. It is a new avenue of enquiry that provides fresh insight into the way museums represent children and museum practice in general, and collections and collecting in particular.

This thesis explores the notion that children have been marginalised by museums and often excluded in the same way other minority groups in society have been. I argue that the perspective and voice of the child in history has largely been overlooked. Even so, the material culture of childhood has always been present alongside human history in museums and I argue that museum collections contain a diverse range of childhood objects that are in their own way revealing about New Zealand childhood. This study shows how the history made in museums, through the perspectives represented by the material culture of childhood, provides a unique glimpse into the lives of some New Zealand children. Further, the research demonstrates how objects link the historical perspective of children to the material world, drawing on a physical reality that cannot be captured in any other way.

This thesis considers how the representation of childhood is situated within dominant historical and museum discourses. I discuss this in relation to the type and volume of childhood objects collected as well as the sort of information recorded along with each acquisition. It is now commonly accepted by scholars in the field of museum

studies that collections are social constructs which are employed in a process of western identity formation generating social and cultural statements (Pearce, 1992; Clifford, 1994; Pomain, 1994; Pearce, 1995; Kavanagh, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Kreps, 2002; Spalding, 2002). Through an investigation of the material culture of childhood this research provides a specific local case study that reinforces the recent scholarship in museum studies, arguing that collections reflect a picture of ourselves (Pearce, 1994; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill 2002).

This thesis is positioned within several bodies of literature including museum studies, material culture studies and social history. The literature situates this study within a broader theoretical framework and informs the reading of primary sources. Literature from museum studies that focuses on museum history and theory, dealing with collections and collecting practices and the ideas of the ‘new museology’ form the theoretical backbone, while studies that investigate material culture in the museum environment are also important, as is work that explores the way New Zealand museums make history. Writing about the history of childhood and the material culture of childhood is also relevant in that it provides information about the way particular childhood objects reflect cultural and historical contexts. Finally, and most closely related to this thesis, is literature from international scholars who have analysed the way museums construct and present the history of childhood and include or exclude the historical perspectives of children in museum exhibitions.

Museum theory, collecting and the ‘new museology’

Hooper-Greenhill’s history of museums (1992) clearly shows how museums and their collections have been shaped by dominant and commonly accepted ideas and philosophies. Museums organise and present themselves according to what is believed to be of value depending on the collector or curator’s view of the world. For example in the Medici Palace, in fifteenth-century Florence, the prince who was the patron and principal collector was the ‘apex of a fixed hierarchical structure, closer to the Creator-God than others’, so objects in the collection were organised to show how the ‘visual splendour of his material existence’ gave him the right to rule the world (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 192). After Florence was invaded by the French the royal collections were disbanded, then reorganised and re-presented according to the requirements of the French revolutionaries (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). The history of

museums not only demonstrates how the institution has come to be as it is today, but it illustrates that museums are not neutral, passive or objective (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Walsh, 1992; Bennett, 1995). As Spalding explains, this picture is continually changing and evolving:

Museums are not just packed with things from the past; they are riddled with past thoughts. Everything in them has a reason for being there and not necessarily one that would interest us, or even occur to us today. It is tempting to think that museums do not change because their collections stay the same. In fact, they are changing invisibly all the time because, though the specimens might be pinned down, our thoughts about them cannot be. (Spalding, 2002, p. 13)

Pearce (1994) identifies three broad areas of study relating to collecting and collectors that offers a useful framework for research in this area. These include studies that are concerned with collection policies, the history of collections and collecting, the nature of the collections themselves and the reasons why people collect. This thesis draws from all three of these strands of study, but mainly focuses on the third area, the nature of collections and the reasons why curators collect what they do. For as Pearce explains we need to better understand the history and nature of collections to reveal the assumptions about knowledge that the collections embody (Pearce, 1994).

Pearce goes on to explain that museum collections arrive in a variety of shapes and forms, and these are far from bland, sanitised or uniform. She writes that a collection: ‘comes incomplete, imperfect, and with associated documentation and information, itself immensely variable in quality and quantity’ (Pearce, 1994, p. 194). This is the reality of collecting in museums and it is the building blocks from which curators make history. Pearce describes the process of organising and constructing collections as ‘systematic collecting’ (1994, p. 201). Objects are perceived, valued, categorised, they are selected or rejected, included or excluded, and certain histories are made visible or invisible. My research starts with the understanding that collecting is an imperfect reality, but it also draws on the idea that some histories are preserved while others are not.

Since the 1980s, the ‘new museology’ has questioned the way museums work, and a dramatic shift has occurred concerning objects which are now valued for the memory,

the history or the associated story, rather than their intrinsic quality or aesthetic appeal (Vergo, 1989). Conventional museums are seen as object-centred, but the new museum was to be people-centred, action-oriented, and devoted to social change and development (Karp & Lavine, 1993; Kreps, 2002; Spalding, 2003; Weil, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). These philosophical changes forced museum professionals to think about who their audience was and whether they were represented in the museum environment. Ideas about social inclusion primarily focused on inclusion by access or audience development but it became an issue of social responsibility. Richard Sandell argues that museums have the potential to empower individuals and communities, and combat the multiple forms of disadvantage (Sandell, 2003, p. 45).

Museum studies literature dealing with the inclusion of minorities has tended to focus on ethnic groups, gender bias, gay rights and disabled people. The general focus has been on the need for museums to be more representative or inclusive of all peoples and cultures within society and in advocating for this, museums become more socially responsible (Karp, Kremer & Lavine, 1992; Karp and Lavine, 1993; Sandell, 2002). Richard Sandell points out that:

All museums and galleries have a social responsibility. The argument for acknowledgement of a social responsibility emerges from discussion around the interplay between the notions of social inequality and cultural authority. (Sandell, 2002, p.4)

In this thesis I deal with children as a group in society that are in the same position as other excluded minority groups. I argue that children should be included in much the same way and for the same reasons. Even so, the unique nature of childhood means that there are several issues that make their situation different from other underrepresented groups. The very nature of being a child means that they are in a weakened position, 'they are relegated to the state of childhood which, by definition, largely robs them of the ability to represent their own interests' (Shepherd, 1994, p. 68). Unlike most minority groups who can advocate for themselves, and often resist outsider groups when others try to interpret their experience, children are not able to do this. An interpretation of the child's experience usually involves the help of adults. Although curators are always in the position of interpreting the reality of others, the unique situation for children is that all adults have gone through childhood and

therefore have some understanding of the child's perspective. However, it is important to acknowledge that all childhoods are different and that once a child reaches adulthood their perspective and recollection of the past changes. Despite the difficulties in including a childhood perspective in museums, this thesis argues that the history of childhood and the perspectives of children are relevant and that museums have a social responsibility to include their voices.

Making history in the museum

Literature that focuses on the way museums make history provides critical insights into discourses that influence museums. This literature informs this study by tracing the historical background to the way museums make history and also by emphasising the complexities that influence museum practice. Ruth Lane discusses the way history exhibitions are constructed. She argues that exhibitions reflect a certain discourse depending on the period of time in which they were developed. She states that 'the curator's role in developing exhibitions is increasingly one of selecting the juxtapositions and arrangement of objects and stories pertaining to individuals or groups rather than providing his or her own analysis of history' (Lane, 2000, p. 201). Lane (2000, p. 193) shows how changing approaches to nature and society have affected both the nature of collecting and the way collections are presented. Her exploration of the curator's role in the construction of history is closely associated with my research, even though she has focused on exhibitions.

In New Zealand, recent studies that have focused on the way museums make history have exposed the social and historical forces which shape displays and museum practice in the local context. McLean (2000) gives a detailed account of the developments of the New Zealand heritage movement, 1890 – 2000, placing museums within the overall context of changing historical interests and developments in New Zealand society. Henare (2005) focuses on Maori taonga and other museum objects in a historical and material ethnography that explores the way museums and collections develop through time as they relate to Scotland and New Zealand. McCarthy (2007) traces changes in Maori exhibition display from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, revealing the changing meaning of Maori things in New Zealand museums. McCarthy uses a genealogical approach that takes into account 'discontinuities and breaks' (McCarthy, 2007, p. 10) rejecting the notion

that museum developments in history have occurred in a linear and progressive manner. Labrum (2007) analyses the post-war history collections at the Te Awamutu and District Museum, and the Waikato Museum, exploring the complexities of collecting history in the context of museum and heritage development. Like these studies, this thesis reveals the historical influences and complexities behind museum practice by foregrounding the particular realities of each period and the perspective of the people working in the museum. This literature provides a frame of reference for analysing the way objects embody meaning through discourse at particular points in time. Rather than advocating a progressive model of professional museology, the approach I favour views collecting practice and the childhood objects in the collections within a web of interrelationships and historical discourses of their time.

Furthermore, I discuss the way museum history is influenced by and draws from academic history, but also operates independently of it. I do not aim to judge the history collections or curatorial practice against the work of historians. Some thesis students who have focused on the way museums make history have argued that museum history does not advance scholarship and that museums fail to reach the standard of academic historians (Smith, 2003; Wright, 2006). In contrast to these studies and more in line with current museum research is the work of Louisa Knight (2007). She discusses a collection of documents, photographs and objects donated by returned servicemen from the 21 Infantry Battalion. Knight argues that history as represented in museums cannot function as if it is a history book, it has different methods of production and dissimilar goals: museums are about entertainment and education as well as critical concepts and ideas. Furthermore, she argues that museums should use material culture as the base for developing historical narratives. This in itself makes the history made in museums unique and different to the work of text-based histories (Knight, 2007). Knight concludes that her research has also affirmed the centrality of material culture to the work of museums in creating history. She concludes:

The 21 Battalion collection has demonstrated that museums make better history when they acquire material in such a way as to connect a range of artefacts and support items together, bolstered with supplementary material to justify them or draw out their meaning. The range of items in the collection and the use – past and potential – that

can be made of them, illustrate how it is the stories and connections attached to objects, rather than the items' physicality, that makes them noteworthy. (Knight, 2007, p. 128)

Simon Knell (2007) also emphasises the unique way museum objects exemplify history. His analysis further adds to my discussion on childhood material culture by providing a detailed and in-depth historical investigation into the idiosyncrasies of objects in museums. While he acknowledges the impact of past museum discourses he points out the frustrations and difficulties of dealing with a massive body of material culture that has been 'decontextualised' and is 'historically unreliable' (Knell, 2007, p. 8). His exploration of the way museums consider material culture highlights many issues important to this thesis including the value of capturing and recording an object's subjective relations and social contexts. He also points out that when museums collect an object they capture a fragment of context, 'we understand its imperfections but counter these with a belief that in capturing the thing we also hold something of untapped and unrecognised potential' (Knell, 2007, p. 25). These issues are relevant to any exploration or interpretation of material culture and museum collections. In my exploration of childhood material culture I explore both the broad historical narrative expressed through the childhood objects in the collections of Te Papa and the Auckland Museum and also draw out some of the unique and individual stories expressed through objects. In many of these object-based case studies I interpret the object through the literature of historians and studies that focus on the material culture of childhood.

The history of childhood

In this thesis I refer to the research of academic historians to provide context and information relating to childhood objects and also to explore the way the changing historiography has had an impact on museum collecting. New Zealand history is now firmly established as an academic field of research, but only since the 1980s has social history gained academic status. Historian Jock Phillips argues that an increased desire to understand what it is to be a New Zealander has led to a proliferation of social history research and publications. In addition new social movements like women's liberation paved the way for the study of women and the family, and a new consciousness among indigenous peoples provoked questions about patterns of racial dominance (Phillips, 1991, p. 331). Social and cultural historians have unleashed a

plethora of new topics ranging from welfare, sexuality and medicine to recreation, the body and popular culture (Dalley & Labrum, 2000, p. 1-2). Histories that directly relate to children started appearing around the same time. Until fairly recently, historians had excluded children mainly because 'historical scholarship was largely confined to an exploration of the people at the top and the politics of power' (Fass, 2003, p. xi). However, it has now become well established that histories that explore childhood have led to new understandings of society and the way cultures define themselves (Hiner & Hawes, 1985; Fass, 2003; Stearns, 2006; Graham, 2006).

Peter Stearns explores the history of childhood in the global context. He defines the concept of the 'modern child' - he or she does not work, schooling is important, there is less risk of infant death but there are fewer children in the overall population and in individual families (Stearns, 2006, p. 57). He notes that the modern child emerged in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (2006, p. 55). The concept of the modern child is therefore extremely relevant in terms of New Zealand's colonial history, and reveals changing ideas about children, childcare and childhood in the global context. Associated with the concept of the modern child is the notion of the idealisation of children. 'Children were portrayed, in middle-class literature, as wondrous innocents, full of love and deserving to be loved in turn', writes Stearns, 'pictures and stories disseminated the image' (Stearns, 2006, p. 60). Ideas about childhood are important to this thesis and an international perspective is often included, but also very relevant is literature that explores New Zealand childhood history.

McDonald (1978) wrote one of the earliest historical overviews of New Zealand childhood. He investigated the history of New Zealand childhood through four main stages starting with the colonial child and ending in the 1970s with a child that is cherished and valued as a citizen in their own right. McDonald's presentation of the history of New Zealand childhood largely focused on legislation and institutional developments. Since then historians have explored aspects of the history of childhood from different perspectives providing this study with a rich source of historical detail. These include: Dalley (1998) who focuses on the history of social welfare in the twentieth century, Tennant (1994) who explores the history of New Zealand health Camps and May (1997) who wrote a history of early childhood education.

James Belich (2001) challenged previous conceptions of the New Zealand child and has put forward the idea that the early New Zealand child ran wild and free – a ‘wild child’. Belich’s theory about the wild New Zealand child is important because it became the concept, title and focus of an exhibition at the Auckland Museum. Belich’s ideas about the New Zealand child’s experience have therefore been incorporated into the history collections at the Auckland Museum. Belich (2001) discusses examples of the activities, toys and games New Zealand children played. He highlights the point that early New Zealand toys were very simple and cheap (Owen, 2000; Belich, 2001). They included knucklebones that were free from the butcher, iron hoops made by the local blacksmith, marbles, slingshots, and rag dolls that were homemade (Belich, 2001, p. 361). Belich’s observations not only draw attention to potential collection opportunities but he also demonstrates how the material culture of childhood is often intangible and cheap. These objects may not be valued by the general population and could therefore be difficult to capture and collect.

Jeanine Graham has been a strong advocate for scholarship in the field of childhood history arguing that a focus on children and youth reveals not only a uniquely child-focused aspect of history but it brings out a history that explores the ‘rhythms of life’ familiar to most New Zealanders throughout the country (Graham, 2000, p. 96). She wrote a historical overview of New Zealand childhood published in the *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* (Graham, 2003). She includes Maori and Polynesian children in her historical account and divides the history of New Zealand childhood into four distinct phases based on childhood experience starting in the twelfth century and the origins of contemporary Maori and ending with recent history. Graham’s discussion exposes some important contemporary childhood issues of inequality. She argues that while thousands of New Zealand children grow up happy, benefiting from a life rich in sporting and cultural opportunities, hundreds of other children do not. Graham, like other historians and museum studies scholars specialising in children’s history, raises the issue that not all childhoods are happy ones (Shepherd, 1996; Kociumbas, 1997; Graham, 2003; Roberts, 2006), a topic that is important in terms of collecting, interpreting and representing the history of New Zealand children.

The material culture of childhood

Literature by specialists in the field of children's material culture also provides examples of how objects or groups of objects can represent society's changing ideas about children. Several recent publications that have focused on childhood objects like toys, juvenilia and clothing have shown this to be the case (Calvert, 1992; Cross, 1997; Kevill-Davies, 1991). This literature, with a focus on specific types of objects, provides this thesis with important information about the objects themselves, potential themes and storylines, ideas for potential collection items and the background for assessing the content and context of history objects. For example Gary Cross explores the way toys reflect changing ideas about childhood and parenting, and the modern consumer society in America (Cross, 1997, p. vi).

Representing childhood in exhibitions

Academics and professionals who have studied the way museums represent the history of childhood and interpret children's material culture have mainly focused on exhibitions. Even so, many of their arguments and conclusions are relevant to this thesis. Brian Shepherd (1994, 1996) has written about the way children are represented in exhibitions, categorised in collections, and how museums construct a narrow and stereotypical perspective on childhood through exhibitions. Shepherd (2006) focuses on the Edith Cowan University Museum of Childhood in Perth (Australia), and an exhibition based on three key collections held and displayed at the museum. These collections are grouped and displayed in terms of the family that owned and donated them, each illustrating typical toys from different periods of time. Shepherd's critique of this exhibition highlights some of the key issues and problems for museums when making historical exhibitions about children. He argues that childhood exhibitions mainly focus on toys and the history of toys rather than the child's experience and he is critical of the fact that displays rely heavily on nostalgia. Shepherd points out that objects are not used to their full potential and suggests that the interpretation of traditional childhood objects need not be superficial but could illustrate the changing reality of childhood. Shepherd explains the possibilities:

The challenge for the museum lies in judiciously harnessing its collection and its information to unlock the varieties of children's experience in captivating, intellectually respectable and balanced ways which assists diverse clientele to join in the making of meaning.
(Shepherd, 1996, p. 269)

Even so, museum visitors have expectations when they come to see an exhibition displaying the material culture of childhood, and nostalgia has a key role to play in the way visitors interpret the display. Adults like to see historical toys because it reminds them about their own childhood. The visitor, their experiences and preconceptions all contribute to their understanding and perceptions of history (Shepherd, 1996; Kavanagh, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Kreps, 2002). The visitor brings with them a frame of reference, including their own personal past experiences and various different levels of education and knowledge. Adults like to see the familiar and what they know so that they can understand or make sense of the past. The dilemma for museums, especially when presenting childhood related histories, is to decide whether to satisfy the expectations of the visitor or challenge them with something different 'forcing them to rethink the concept' (Shepherd, 1996, p. 262).

Shepherd (1994) argues that this dilemma is not only important for the display of childhood material culture, but rather it shapes the way museums categorise childhood objects in collections. The main categories used are: toys, dolls, games, juvenilia and children's clothing. These classifications come with entrenched stereotypes and social myths that mask rather than reveal the underlying social issues (Shepherd, 1994, p. 71). Childhood is removed from reality and exists in 'an almost dream-like realm where the perception of the child (and hence of childhood) is fanciful, imaginative and ideal' (Shepherd, 1996, p. 262). Shepherd discusses the fact that it is difficult to find information and objects relating to children's experiences, work, play or home life, pointing out the benefits of including this type of classification in the collections. He also discusses some of the issues and problems associated with collecting, for example he argues that 'play' is often not dependent on easily recognizable material objects. The world of children can be very secretive making it difficult to present and preserve historical childhood perspectives (Shepherd, 1994, p. 71).

Sharon Roberts (2006), another scholar who explores the way children are represented in museums, concurs with many of Shepherd's findings. Concentrating her research on British museums and the way they represent the history of childhood, she comments on curatorial practice, the interpretation of childhood objects, and on collecting, with a key focus on how the material culture of childhood is used in exhibitions and displays. Like Shepherd, Roberts is critical of the way that many museum displays maintain and promote an image of childhood that is nostalgic and idealised. Roberts explains that British museum displays often focus on the Edwardian nursery as an illustration of past childhoods, presenting a one sided and privileged experience of the history of childhood (Roberts, 2006, p. 157).

Roberts raises several important issues for this thesis. First, that the inclusion of children in museums should be considered alongside other minority groups that have traditionally been excluded. Second, that museums often use the banner of childhood as an excuse to exhibit toy collections revealing nothing about children themselves. And finally, that even though there has been a growth in the number of museums of childhood, and exhibitions about children and childhood, curators need to be more intellectually ambitious in terms of representing the negative aspects of a child's experience alongside the pleasant imagery of toys (Roberts, 2006, p. 161). Roberts asks 'Are children under represented in museum displays?' She concludes that museum displays about children are 'exhibits of childhood without children' (Roberts, 2006, p.155). The voice or experience of the child is often missing. The child's voice in history has become an increasingly important phenomenon to museum professionals and historians studying this subject. In this thesis I explore museum history and theory, the museum's distinctive approach to history, its focus on material culture, and the ability of museums to bring out the stories and perspectives of children in relation to objects. But the main underlying question is: are children represented in museum collections?

Methodology

A multi-method approach was taken in order to gain different perspectives and to ensure that a detailed, comprehensive and historical overview could be achieved in addressing the research question. Museum theory, institutional records, museum reports and publications, object based case studies, interviews and archival

information all contributed to my analysis. The childhood content of the history collections of two large metropolitan New Zealand museums, the Auckland War Memorial Museum and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, was my primary focus. The main aim was to discover the number of childhood objects in the collections, the nature and extent of the information that has been recorded with the objects, and how the collections have changed and developed over time. I used both the electronic databases and museum accession registers at both museums to extract and record relevant content. I created a catalogue of childhood objects for each museum and then organised this information according to each object's acquisition date. I then created graphs that statistically and visually illustrated my findings. Each graph shows the number of objects acquired during particular time periods and provides a breakdown of the types of objects collected. I also used object files, curatorial information and subject files to extend information about each object.

In order to incorporate a curatorial perspective into the way the collections of childhood objects have evolved, I interviewed history curators from each museum. This added to my analysis by providing information about the realities and complexities of making history in the museum environment. Curators are knowledgeable and reflexive about their practice and in this thesis the history curators I interviewed have been able to provide insights into the nature of their practice. In addition, my own perspective as a history curator at Te Papa is important to acknowledge and contributed to the way information was accessed and interpreted. Strategic collecting documents were also referred to when available, mainly from the 1990s when they were first written.

My decision to focus on two large museum institutions rather than specialist children's museums was also important because it placed my analysis of childhood collecting within the broader context of New Zealand history. This study explores the nature of childhood collecting in the mainstream museum forum and discusses the inclusion of childhood as part of society, rather than a segregated niche group. I also decided to focus this thesis on the history collections rather than across all museum collections. Traditionally Maori and Polynesian collections in museums have tended to focus on traditional objects rather than the contemporary world. At Te Papa, Maori objects that relate to the contemporary experience are often included in the general

history collections. The growing ethnic diversity of New Zealand, particularly the increasing Polynesian population is an important demographic change in New Zealand society. I acknowledge the importance of the inclusion of Maori and Polynesian children and have included this when the material evidence is present. An analysis of the material culture of childhood that focuses on ethnic diversity and the inclusion of Maori and Pacific Island cultures would require a separate and specialist field of enquiry.

The structure of this thesis is organised around three distinct time periods that encapsulate major changes in the type of childhood objects collected in museums. Chapter one, 'From Cathedrals of Science to the Infancy of Childhood Collecting: 1851 to 1950' focuses on a period when large museum institutions were mainly interested in building scientific collections. Even though the childhood objects collected at this time do not present a complete picture of New Zealand childhood, they do provide a unique and thought provoking link to the past that reveals much about the way objects reflect the interests of museum practitioners. Chapter two 'The Toy Box Grows: Collection Development Between 1950 and 1990', focuses on a time when New Zealand museums started to collect history objects and as a result there was massive collection growth in this area. Along with other history objects, particularly objects that related to New Zealand's colonial history, childhood objects of the same genre took their place in the collections. The final chapter 'Story Time at the Museum: Collecting Between 1990 and 2007' explores a period in which the 'new museology' was a dominant force and objects were collected and valued because of their associated histories and stories. Throughout each period I ask whether the child's perspective in history is present, and this becomes a major concern of chapter three. In this latest period social history and the collection of multiple personal perspectives became an important aspect of collecting and therefore the question of the inclusion of childhood perspectives is even more relevant.

Chapter One

From Cathedrals of Science to the Infancy of Childhood Collecting: 1851 to 1950



Figure 1.1 Christening Gown, maker unknown, 1800s. Cotton and lace. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC 747. Ke Emu image MA_I090956.

In 1948 Francis Warner donated a christening gown to the Dominion Museum in Wellington. According to the museum record, the christening gown was made in the 1800s. It is described as a ‘White cambric and embroidery christening gown. Hand made and worked, probably very old, extensively repaired and restored’ (Te Papa, Ke Emu Database Record PC747, 2007). In just under a century, Te Papa’s history collections gained seven childhood objects (including this christening gown) and the Auckland Museum collected thirty. Even though the numbers are low, these objects reveal some important aspects of New Zealand childhood. Principally, they reflect the museum practice of the time, past collecting priorities and the way museums construct

and reflect history. In this chapter I trace the history of these institutions, as well as the general historical context and the museum discourses operating between 1851 and 1950. I then analyse and discuss examples of the childhood objects held in the collections and consider the extent to which they reveal the lives of New Zealand children and the history of childhood.

The Warner christening gown marks the end of an era in which museums were mainly focused on collecting natural history, Maori and ethnographic material or art rather than 'history' (Labrum, 2007, p. 6). Both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa evolved out of this same museological discourse. Neill (2004, p. 180) observes that 'objects and collections contained in the museum signify layers of history, the cultural development of the nation and a former colonial parent'. In this chapter I analyse the childhood objects collected within the context of the period, pointing out shifts in power and knowledge and exploring the way many of the childhood objects collected during this time were symbolic of the museum's aim to be a scientific and encyclopaedic authority, rather than out of a desire to collect childhood history. By the end of the 1940s the accession registers at Te Papa and the Auckland Museum confirm that a strategic change had begun and these museums had started to expand their collecting beyond science and ethnography. Colonial settler history had become topical with the New Zealand centennial celebrations in 1940 (McLean, 2000, p. 30). The large scientific museums responded by collecting objects that represented European or Pakeha New Zealand history and this included a few childhood objects.

The Warner christening gown was also among the first of many christening gowns and other baby and infants' clothing to be donated over the following decades. It represents my initial impression of the way early museum collections represent New Zealand childhood. Both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa have a vast array of infant, child and baby clothes from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. At Te Papa I have seen many boxes filled with cream coloured garments each containing examples of beautiful needlecraft, including fine lace and embroidery. A similarly situation occurred at the Auckland Museum where items of children's clothing were considered as part of a larger group of costume collections, mainly "Applied Arts" (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). These objects are illustrative of the collecting priorities and museum practice that shaped the history collections of this

period. Shepherd (1994) argues that by examining how museums represent childhood, insight can be gained into the way museums create, represent and appropriate culture. He points out that 'it provides a uniquely suitable spring board for thinking about some common practices and assumptions used in representing social groups in museums' (Shepherd, 1994, p. 66). In this period most of the articles of children's clothing were categorised as applied or decorative arts and collected because they were examples of the finest or best of colonial dress or because they contained examples of elaborate and intricate lace and embroidery. The associated classification system for the Warner christening gown, 'PC' for 'Period Costume', highlights the original collecting category and positioning within the museum. This category, no longer in use, is evidence of the way museums form collections around specific collecting priorities and construct history through them. The fact that this cataloguing system was superseded by another one is illustrative of the changing nature of museum collecting practices.

New Zealand museum studies scholar, David Butts (2007, p. 89) argues that 'once garments enter a museum collection their lives continue'. They reflect changes in museum practice and focus, and as such their significance varies over time. In contrast to today, the museum practice and curatorial emphasis associated with the early history collections focused on the aesthetic qualities of objects. A main priority was the physical care of objects and effort was given to dealing with a backlog of objects that had never been officially accessioned. The initial focus of museum staff who were involved in the history collections in the 1950s was to sort, store and record history objects in the museum accession registers (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Up until this point in time history objects like the Warner christening gown were often stored in cramped and potentially damaging conditions. Records were brief: the initial museum record for the Warner christening gown was a one line entry in the accession register. There was no recorded provenance and although the donor's name was known, there was no information about who Francis Warner was, who made or wore the christening gown, or why he chose to donate it. The record is minimal but it is typical of the museum practice of the time.

Even so, many of these early childhood objects illustrate social and cultural practices associated with childhood, as well as providing a glimpse into the lives of New Zealand children. McKergow (2000, p. 164) observes that ‘dress is a fundamental dimension of shared cultural experience’ and that at any given point in time it reflects the social and cultural circumstances of people’s lives. The Warner christening gown, for example, marks the participation of at least one child’s involvement in a Christian religious ceremony. Furthermore, christening gowns were commonly passed on from one generation to the next (Butts, 2007), and as such they represent a family tradition involving generations of children. In addition to the christening ceremony, the Warner christening gown is symbolic of a period when a great deal of time and energy was put into creating children’s clothing. Christening gowns were traditionally hand-made by the mother or grandmother, evidence of the physical and emotional investment in children. They embody the ‘hopes and aspirations’ of parents and grandparents for their children in the early stages of life (Butts, 2007). However, whilst the Warner christening gown represents a commonly experienced aspect of New Zealand childhood, this object, like many others collected in this period, was acquired because of an adult’s perspective on childhood. The associated child’s story is hidden and the experience of the child marginalised.

Museum history and collection development

John Alexander Smith was the founder of the Auckland Museum. It opened on 27 October 1852 and was housed in a farm workers’ cottage (Stead, 2001, p. 7). Smith, like many others throughout the world, was inspired and encouraged by his involvement in the ‘Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations’ held in London in 1851. This was one of the earliest of the great industrial exhibitions and it ‘was responsible for encouraging the enormous popular appeal of displays of national productivity’ (Stead, 2001, p. 7). Smith organised Auckland’s contributions to the 1851 London exhibition and then went on to establish a museum for the Auckland region. His collecting strategy and priorities can be clearly seen in an advertisement published in *The New Zealander* on 27 October 1852:

The object of this Museum is to collect specimens illustrative of the Natural History of New Zealand – particularly its Geology, Mineralogy, Entomology, and Ornithology. Also, Weapons, Clothing, Implements &c., of New Zealand, and the Islands of the Pacific. Any

Memento of Captain Cook, or his voyages will be thankfully accepted.
 Also, Coins and Medals (Ancient and Modern).
(The New Zealander as cited by Stead, 2001, p. 8)

Smith also requested samples of industrial materials including ‘building and ornamental stone, timber, clay, sands, dyes, gums, resins, flax, hemp, and hair’ (Stead, 2001, p. 8). Like other major museums of the Victorian era the Auckland Museum was established with a strong natural history and industrial focus, and then between 1875 and 1917 the museum received a significant series of Maori, ethnographic and art objects. Together these objects provided the foundation for the collections as they are today. In the future the collections would be reorganised, reinterpreted and priorities about what was important to collect would change. In this way collections simultaneously reflect the past and the present (Bennett, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Walsh, 1992; Henare, 2005). Henare (2005, p. 9) observes that ‘museums have adapted their collecting and exhibiting practices in relation to changing historical milieux’. Objects represent how things used to be and how things are, and collections are built up through a sequence of exchanges (Henare, 2005, p. 9).

Te Papa, like the Auckland Museum, had its origins in 1851 and began with the New Zealand Society collection of geological specimens, the majority of which was curated by Walter Buller (Dell, 1965). These collections were incorporated into the Colonial Museum in Wellington which opened in 1865, with James Hector as director. The collections still mainly consisted of geological material, but also included zoological and botanical specimens as well as Maori artifacts (Dell, 1965, p. 4). Hector noted that by September 1866 there were ‘9297 specimens of rocks, minerals and fossils, 2846 specimens of recent shells, 1811 specimens of natural history including woods, fishes, wools, native implements, weapons, and dresses’ (Dell, 1965, p. 4-5). Hector was clear about his intentions and aimed to ‘organise for the use of the Colony a complete typical museum of reference that will illustrate all the branches of its natural history and mineral resources’ (Hector as cited by Dell, 1965, p. 8). Hector’s aim to establish a ‘library of natural specimens’ was clearly part of a colonial project that involved the exploration and classification of New Zealand’s natural resources (McCarthy, 2007, p.16).

Both the Colonial Museum and the Auckland Museum were established at a time when the British Empire and its colonising ideologies were reproduced throughout the world in various colonial outposts (McCarthy, 2007). This culture of collecting was a distinctively European tradition whereby the accumulation of objects was an important aspect of the way Western cultures defined themselves and exerted their authority through knowledge (Pearce, 1995). Collectors over the last five centuries aimed to create a relationship with the past that was seen as ‘real, reasonable and helpful’ (Pearce, 1995, p. 310). Furthermore, Pearce argues that this practice was underpinned by the theory that ‘history is not really a random set of occurrences but a living web of cause and effect in which the effects are not predestined but may, at least in part be what we make them’ (1995, p. 310).

By the early twentieth century large museum institutions started to incorporate human history into their collections, but there was still an encyclopaedic rationality behind the way human history was included. For example, the Colonial Museum started to focus on Maori history, art and culture, alongside the continued development of natural history. During Augustus Hamilton’s directorship between 1903 and 1913, there was a definite change and ethnographic collecting grew along with additional topics relating to human history such as coins, tokens, stamps, and fine arts (Dell, 1965, p. 9). Dell points out that Hamilton was known to be a collector and systemiser in a variety of fields:

whether as a zoologist among the bones at Castle Rock, or as a botanist in the wilds of southern Westland and on Macquarie Island, or as the gatherer of his unrivalled collection of New Zealand Stamps, most of all, as a collector of objects throwing light on the life, industry, and art of the ancient Maori.

(Dell, 1965, p. 9-11)

Between Hamilton and Hector the main strengths of the museum became natural science and ethnology, with significant holdings in history and fine arts (Oliver, 2004, p. x). Most of the early childhood objects collected at this time reflect the museum’s interest in anthropology and ethnology. Rather than representing New Zealand childhood they are from other countries, such as America, India, the Pacific Islands and Ancient Egypt.

In 1907 the Colony of New Zealand became a Dominion and the Colonial Museum was re-named the Dominion Museum. At this time New Zealand displayed a determined 'cult of dominionism', as it closely aligned itself with Britain and adopted highbrow British models of gentility and hierarchy. Most European New Zealanders still regarded themselves as British (Belich as cited by McCarthy, 2007, p. 64). Museums and other cultural institutions became an important apparatus of the modern state, and it is therefore not surprising that the emphasis at the Dominion Museum was on producing 'a sense of cultural heritage for a settler society but this was ultimately a local chapter in an essentially British story' (McCarthy, 2007, p. 65).

The Dominion Museum's emphasis on the natural science collections continued with renewed vigour when James Alan Thomson was appointed Director in 1914. Thomson, the founder of the museum's reference collections in zoology (Dell, 1965, p. 14), was a Rhodes Scholar and a brilliant scientist who considered the scientific collections to have been neglected in previous years (McCarthy, 2007, pp. 66-67). He also introduced new methods and ideas such as displays that would appeal to the general public, and advocated the separate storage of specialist research collections (McCarthy, 2007). At this time the international trend for museum displays demanded that it was the duty and social responsibility of the museum to 'improve' the public (Henare, 2005; McCarthy, 2007). The next director of the Dominion Museum, W. R. B. Oliver, who was appointed in 1928, was also an exponent of the educational approach to exhibitions, although his main areas of interest were geology, plants, reptiles, mammals, birds and molluscs, and ecology (Dell, 1965, p. 15-16). Oliver (1944, p. 5) wrote that the necessity for the wide distribution of scientifically-based knowledge cannot be over-stressed. Oliver embarked upon public education through displays, school services, developing reference collections and publications. The emphasis on educational displays, an international and national trend, was to become a significant development in the relationship between museums and children, and this was clear at both the Dominion Museum and the Auckland Museum.

Thomas Frederick Cheeseman was the Auckland Museum's first full time curator and secretary. He held this position for 50 years, from 1874 to 1923. Like Hamilton he was known to be a systematic collector and an astute observer of nature. The 'Cheeseman Herbarium' which became the most comprehensive of its kind in the

colony was donated to the museum after his death (Stead, 2001, p. 11). Cheeseman was a key person in the planning, design and development of the new Auckland Museum in the 1920s. Arguably this reflected an early 'history' focus for the museum, starting with the decision to make the Auckland Museum a War Memorial Museum and resulting in the acquisition of objects from the First World War. Cheeseman also saw this as an opportunity to broaden the museum's focus.

Like his contemporaries at the Dominion Museum, Cheeseman was interested in museum developments that would educate and improve the general knowledge of the New Zealand public. He specifically focused his educational approach on children and advocated for children as an audience. He wanted 'to provide attractions for young visitors and requested a Children's Museum for the Auckland War Memorial Museum' (Wolfe, 2004, p. 18). Even though the Children's Museum disappeared from the plans early on, its initial inclusion marks a turning point in changing attitudes towards children. Museums specifically designed for children were a new phenomenon. The world famous Brooklyn Children's Museum was established in 1899, and like other museums of this period, its early collections were natural history specimens, cultural history and technological artifacts (Pohle, 1979). The aim of these early children's museums was to be educational, using the collections of the time rather than developing collections that tell the history of childhood or the perspective of children in history. Museums were still mainly concentrating on natural history and not the inclusion of objects relating to the lives and experiences of children.

Even though the new Auckland War Memorial Museum did not include a Children's Museum, it did develop a significant resource for children. By 1932 there were 26 travelling educational cabinets 'containing displays of birds, insects, shells, rocks, timber and Maori and Polynesian subjects' (Wolfe, 2004, p. 38). The cases were lent to schools for a fortnight at a time, once a year. Like the Auckland Museum, the Dominion Museum in Wellington was interested in providing a service for school children. The museum's formal Education Service was officially established in 1957 but from as early as 1917 efforts were made to accommodate school groups (Dell, 1965, p. 18). By about 1938 an education service was established, with an Education Officer and travelling school cases prepared (Dell, 1965, p. 19).

Museum educational initiatives occurred at a time when there was a shift in the way children were valued by the family, in society and by the government. Children were no longer regarded as an economic commodity and expected to work or contribute to the family income as they had as new colonial settlers, but rather they were now considered to be emotionally priceless and effort was put into ensuring children grew into strong, healthy, well educated and knowledgeable adults (McDonald, 1978; Tennant, 1994; Dalley, 1998). The New Zealand government followed international trends and introduced children's education initiatives in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This was followed by a significant increase in the number of preschool education centers in the 1950s (May, 1997). New education and display initiatives in museums were part of a national and international emphasis on investing in children's intellectual and cultural improvement. However, this was not yet materialized in the collections of large museums like the Auckland Museum and the Dominion Museum.

In contrast to the collecting priorities of the large museums, smaller provincial museums had started to collect colonial history much earlier. Most of the childhood objects in the Auckland Museum's collection, collected prior to 1950, were actually collected by the Old Colonists' Museum in Auckland. The first objects that had an association with the history of New Zealand children were two slate boards collected in 1923. But these objects were not incorporated into the Auckland Museum's collection until 1965 (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). I have included them because my analysis considers the collections within a historical framework that analyses what was collected at a certain point in time and why. The Old Colonists' Museum was officially opened on 22 March 1916 in the Public Library and Art Gallery building. The museum was set up with the specific purpose of collecting artefacts of the early colonial settlers, and among the objects collected were a few examples relating to the lives of children. The opening of the Old Colonists' Museum occurred not long after New Zealand gained Dominion status in 1907, and by the time it closed in 1957, large New Zealand museums were seriously collecting New Zealand's social and cultural history.

This was a period when New Zealanders had started to look back at their colonial roots. Small provincial museums and historical societies were the first to respond to

this interest. McLean (2000, p. 27) notes that ‘Dunedin’s 1898 jubilee inspired the creation of the Otago Early Settler’ Association (OESA), which soon set up New Zealand’s first social history museum’. The New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch, 1906-7, closely followed the jubilee celebrations. Jock Phillips writes: ‘The context and timing were significant. The exhibition came after a decade and a half of Liberal government, much of it under Seddon’s premiership’ (Phillips, 1998, p. 17). The exhibition became an opportunity for Richard Seddon to express and celebrate the nation’s achievements as a successful British colony.

The centenary of the British settlement of New Zealand under the Treaty of Waitangi, celebrated through the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in 1939 – 40, marked another major milestone in the development of an interest in New Zealand history. It encouraged people to regard New Zealand history as a significant history worthy of attention. A later Prime Minister stated that:

I think it was only in 1939 and 1940, when we celebrated our National centennial, and the years just prior to and succeeding that, when we celebrated provincial centennials, that many people in New Zealand for the first time became conscious of the fact that we really did have a history of our own, quite separate from the history of the Mother Country. (Keith Holyoake as cited by McLean, 2000, p. 31)

The content of the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition was also significant for the children of New Zealand because they were included in at least two major exhibits. The Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children (now known as the Plunket Society) had an exhibit that was described as ‘model Plunket Rooms or Advice Centre, typical of many such centres provided by the Society throughout the Dominion’ (New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, p. 118). The exhibit contained information about the society, their aims, history and activities. It was also an opportunity for Plunket nurses to give support and information to mothers including advice on childcare and health.

The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union (INC.) was also present and established a model kindergarten building, ‘specially designed and furnished along modern lines’ which was available for ‘the convenience of visitors to the Exhibition (New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, p. 76). Children could be left at the model kindergarten while

their parents explored the rest of the exhibition, but there was also information about the history and work of the kindergarten movement along with a publication that was for sale, 'dealing with the problems of the small child' (New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, p. 76). These exhibits, along with school-based education initiatives at the Auckland Museum and the Dominion Museum, show that children had become an important consideration. Childcare, child welfare and educational initiatives for children were major new developments in the early twentieth century, and it is clear that children had become cause for celebration in the Centennial Exhibition.

Following the Dominion Museum's closure during the Second World War, in 1947 a new Director was appointed, R. A. Falla. His primary research focus was in birds, but he was also interested in a wide range of other museum fields including the history of whaling and sealing, the Subantarctic, Antarctic and ships and shipping (Dell, 1965, p. 21). Falla was keen to improve exhibitions and displays by grouping objects to 'tell a story which would be comprehensible to young people of normal intelligence, rather than to present rows and rows of similar objects which would have meaning only for specialists' (Dell, 1965, p. 21). From this point on the collections grew massively in size. Some of the increase resulted from the museum undertaking additional responsibilities in the fine arts, colonial history, costumes and technology (Dell, 1965), demonstrating an emerging interest in the histories, arts and cultures of European New Zealanders, which I explore in more detail in the next chapter.

So far I have focused on the specialist fields and interests of the directors but some of the more subtle changes that museum staff were bringing about were equally important. At the Dominion Museum the employment of Nancy Adams in 1959 was an important development for the museum's history collections including childhood objects. Adams retrospectively documented a great deal of the museum's early collections, including colonial furniture and textiles, and started to systematically organise and store many of the history objects. Prior to Adam's appointment, the history objects were packed away and boxed up in the museum's basement (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Most of these objects were in disarray partly due to the chaos caused by the fact that when the museum was closed during the war, they had been 'dumped higgledy-piggledy amongst the show cases' (Dell, 1965, p. 19). The museum's registers contain entries by Adams for acquisitions

dating back to the 1940s. They reflect the way the collections revealed themselves to her as she unpacked and catalogued the boxes of garments, including the first christening gown donated by Francis Warner in 1948.

Adams was employed as an artist and was responsible for the preparation and presentation of exhibitions, the illustration of natural history material, and the registration of early Museum collections' (New Zealand Botanical Society Newsletter, 2007). She became one of New Zealand's leading botanists and botanical artists but her work in documenting objects collected in the later part of this period was also significant in that she laid the foundations for future museum professionals working with the history objects at Te Papa.

It is no coincidence that someone who became so well known for her interest in the natural sciences had such an impact on the beginnings of Te Papa's history collections. This illustrates the way in which an individual's diverse range of interests and talents can have far reaching effects on museum practice. Both Thomas Cheeseman in Auckland and Nancy Adams in Wellington are celebrated for their contribution to natural history but they were both systematic and fastidious museum professionals who were interested in documenting and preserving objects, whatever their category, with a view to developing significant collections. Each in their own way planted a seed for the future inclusion of New Zealand children in museums. The Auckland Museum eventually did establish an exhibition about New Zealand childhood *Wild Child* in 1999, and both museums developed significant collections of objects relating to children over the following decades.

Childhood objects in the collections

Between 1851 and 1950 the lives of New Zealand children changed significantly. As young colonials they lived through a time of conflict and hardship including land wars, gold rushes, depression and two world wars (Graham, 2003). This was also a period in which the state introduced education, health and welfare initiatives (Tennant, 1994; Dalley, 1998; Graham, 2003). Ideas about childhood and childcare changed dramatically. The modern child was cherished, nurtured and even idealised especially as family size reduced (Stearns, 2006). For Maori children this was also a

time when they suffered poor health, loss of land and bad living conditions (Graham, 2003). The collections contain a few items relating to the lives of young colonials—furniture and clothing, slate boards, embroidery, books, a doll and a child's stay— but there is no evidence of children's participation in the major historical events. For example there is no indication of conflict, Maori suffering, depression or war, even though children lived through and experienced these events.

Some aspects of the material culture of childhood collected by museums support academic studies on the history of childhood, but this is rarely the case. Museum collections have developed independently of the historiography and what they highlight are the unique and individual aspects of childhood history and the stories that do not always neatly fit into the picture presented by historians. In the introduction to this chapter I discussed a christening gown donated by Francis Warner in 1948, and argued that this garment provides a glimpse into an important life event in childhood. Another object, this time from the Auckland Museum's collection, also provides insight into family life, and is evidence of an aspect of childhood contested and debated by childhood historians. It also demonstrates the way the material culture of childhood and its associated history can reveal a highly personal, emotional and poignant perspective. Leslie Frances Hill's shoes (Auckland Museum, OCM1911) were donated in 1947, but she had died many years prior in 1890, only 9 months old. Through this simple pair of shoes a powerful and compelling story of the death of a single infant can be told, along with a broader narrative about the high infant mortality rates in nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand. The registers do not explain how or why she died but the fact that this pair of shoes was kept is evidence of the depth of emotion felt by the family.

Some scholars of childhood argue that parents were reluctant to invest emotionally in their children because of the high rate of infant mortality, however this example challenges this theory. Frances Hill's shoes demonstrate one family's long lasting emotional attachment to a baby, even after its death, and as such the shoes support the idea that families were emotionally affected by infant mortality. Belich (2001, p. 357) is critical of what he describes as an exaggerated international picture of childhood as nightmare before the advent of benign modernity (Belich, 2001, p. 357). He continues:

For nineteenth-century working-class children, the argument is, prevailing attitudes and economic conditions combined to create a childhood based on work and obedience with little in the way of overt affection. Parenting was stern and cold, sometimes harshly oppressive. (Belich, 2001, p. 357)

In line with Belich's view and in contrast to theories that describe early parenting methods as 'stern and cold', the collections contain objects that demonstrate the way families celebrated childhood. Both museums contain objects relating to birth and the celebration of new life including elaborate christening gowns and christening mugs. The Auckland Museum also has a high chair hand-made from native timbers. In general these objects show how parents invested time and energy into their children in a positive and loving way.

However, other objects in the collection support the view that early parenting methods were harsh and possibly even cruel. In 1939, a pair of child's stays (Auckland Museum, OCM1672), was donated to the Old Colonists' Museum, and had been worn by a Mrs Wearne between the 1860s and the 1880s. Stays or restraints are no longer in popular use in New Zealand but they represent a past in which some children in New Zealand were subject to a different set of values. Kevill-Davies (1991, p. 217-8) explains that 'stays became necessary for a fashionable figure...During the nineteenth century, particularly among the upper classes, appearance mattered quite desperately'. It is possible that the stays and their use were part of this Victorian ideology, in which some New Zealand children were physically moulded, constrained and restrained with stays to conform to strict adult ideals at a time when fashion and physical appearance were more important than comfort.

At Te Papa there were only two objects that had a strong link to the life of New Zealand children; the christening gown donated by Francis Warner that may have been worn by a child in New Zealand, and a high chair c.1850, made of oak and cane. Both items have minimal provenance so it is difficult to establish a connection with life in New Zealand but in theory they could have been worn or used by a child in New Zealand. At the Auckland Museum there were about thirty childhood objects from this period with a definite link to New Zealand life. In general these objects are an indicator of what was to be collected after 1950 and it is the absence of material

culture relating to the experiences and life of New Zealand children that is important here.

The total number of childhood objects collected at Te Papa was seventeen, but eleven of these objects are now classified and stored as part of the Pacific collection or the international collection (previously known as the foreign ethnology). My research at Te Papa using the electronic database Ke Emu and searching under broad categories identified some early childhood objects that reflect the museum's focus on ethnographic material. These childhood objects are important to consider because they demonstrate how children are often included as part of a wider cultural or ethnographic group, even when objects relating to children were not actively collected. This occurred despite the fact that museums were not trying to establish collections of childhood material. The examples I found included two sets of moccasins from the United States of America, one made in the 1700s (FE352), donated in 1912, and another pair of child's moccasins (FE3649), donated in 1934 (Figure 1.2). Both were made of leather and beautifully decorated, one with coloured leather strips and the other with coloured beads. A boy's dress from South Africa (FE1060) was purchased in 1915, and four Indian drinking cups (FE84) were donated by Alexander Turnbull. Polynesian objects acquired from London dealer W. O. Oldman, now known as the 'Oldman' collection, were also acquired by the museum at this time including a Hawaiian wand or puhenehene (OL548), sometimes used by children to play a guessing game. In addition to these ethnographic objects, an Ancient Egyptian child's shoe (FE1728), fifth to sixth century AD, was acquired by the Dominion Museum through the Egypt Exploration Society in 1914. At this time the museum subscribed to 'The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology' and the 'Egypt Exploration Society'. Part of the contract with the Egypt Exploration Society involved the museum receiving a portion of archaeological findings. The museum's subscription to the society ceased in 1932 due to economic circumstances (R. O'Rourke, personal communication, October 2, 2007).



Figure 1.2 Child's Moccasins, made by Prairie Indians, America, 1930s.
Moose hide and glass beads.
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, FE 3649.
Ke Emu image MA_1090948.

These childhood objects, with no connection to the history of New Zealand childhood, demonstrate past collecting priorities and the way museums construct history around the dominant ideology of the time. The encyclopaedic collecting paradigm of the museum practitioners from this period is evident in the way that ethnographic objects were collected and preserved as 'scientific specimens' in the same way natural history specimens were. Scientific specimens were collected as illustrations of the laws of the natural world. As an extension of this the objects or specimens of human history illustrated Darwinist ideas about the evolution of human society (McCarthy, 2007). Furthermore, non Europeans or indigenous peoples were regarded as an 'exotic other' (Pearce, 1995). Evolutionist ideas were progressed according to a belief that understanding the 'self' could only be achieved in relation to a perceived 'other' that is seen as different and as inferior, unpleasant and dangerous (Pearce 1995, p. 308). Childhood ethnographic objects collected prior to the 1950s were included as part of an ethnic 'Other' that was of interest to white New Zealand but not considered to be part of it, and in so doing they set up a dichotomy between who was or was not part of New Zealand society.

Through the formation of collections, museums are engaged in a process of 'western identity formation (Clifford, 1994; Pomain, 1994; Kavanagh, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Kreps, 2002; Spalding, 2002). Far from being neutral places, they reflect, create and reinforce the dominant ideologies of the culture they are positioned within. As Hooper-Greenhill writes:

Groups of objects brought together in the form of a collection generate social and cultural statements. These statements are produced through the objects combined together in such a way that each individual object confirms the statement as a whole.

(Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 49)

Pearce (1995) explains that collecting is tied up with notions of things being the same or different, the self and the other. Ethnographic objects, as part of the 'Other', defined who we were as 'it is only by gazing on the abnormal that we can appreciate our normality' (Pearce, 1995, p. 316). Furthermore, scientific and ethnographic collections reinforced a belief that colonising peoples were superior progressive and intelligent peoples (Henare, 2005). A spiritual and less progressive indigenous or native culture was juxtaposed against the 'scientific and practical know-how of settlers' (Henare, 2005, p. 13).

In contrast to the objects collected from Polynesia, North America, India and Ancient Egypt, all of which became part of the foreign ethnology or Pacific collection, other objects of non-New Zealand origin were included in the history collection. These were a French child's bodice (PC44) made in the 1700s (a bequest from Alec Tweedie in 1946) and clothing thought to have been worn by England's King George the third (PC600-PC601). Although these objects were not of New Zealand origin their European lineage was considered part of the New Zealand story. They were not considered 'Other' because they were European, and therefore these objects became part of the history collection.

From another point of view, the inclusion of objects relating to children suggests that they were incorporated as part of an ethnic or cultural group. Even though they weren't actively included they were not left out of the collections altogether. Childhood objects from the colonial period of New Zealand's history can also be

analysed from this perspective. From the early to mid-twentieth century colonial objects were collected and it is significant that the material culture of childhood was included. Colonial objects from the Auckland Museum, collected by the Old Colonists' Museum, typify this type of collecting. Some of the first items collected were slate boards, children's clothing, christening gowns, a christening mug, furniture and books. Early exhibitions and displays using colonial objects have been criticised as displays that 'lack any overview framework or narrative, apart from being vaguely all nineteenth century' (Young, 1994, p. 5). However, even without a great deal of detail many of these objects, by association with the historical narrative, tell a poignant story that can be linked to specific people and events in history.

The slate boards that were collected in 1923 by the Old Colonists' Museum are good examples. One was brought to New Zealand by Reverend Richard Davis in 1823 (OCM783), and the other (OCM800) was used by Mr King in the first Maori Mission School in the Bay of Islands (Old Colonists' Museum Accession Register, Part One, Auckland War Memorial Museum). Both slate boards represent early missionary work in New Zealand and for young Maori their initial involvement in both religious tuition and a European school system. Mission schools were part of a scheme that aimed to enlighten and improve Maori (Henare, 2005, p. 99), however this was not the entire story and often the indoctrination was reversed. For example, Thomas Kendall, the Schoolmaster at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands, found himself attracted to Maori philosophies and wrote that he had almost completely turned from 'Christian to Heathen' (Henare, 2005, p. 104-105). The slate boards are thereby representative of a cultural exchange and although the immediate assumption is that they represent a one-way flow of intellectual influence, in reality the exchange of ideas went both ways particularly with the acquisition of literacy by Maori which was to have a huge influence on the recording of traditions. The provenance recorded with the slate boards immediately brings forward the history of the adult missionary, the establishment of mission schools and the introduction of religion to New Zealand. However, there are also childhood stories, in particular the experiences of young Maori children.

Furthermore, objects that have an immediate childhood association can also give insight into the general history of New Zealand. A china christening mug

(OCM2016), donated to the Old Colonists' Museum in 1948, demonstrates this point. The christening mug was given to Mary Thomas by her aunt, Mrs Letheridge, who was thought to be the first white woman in New Zealand. The christening mug, a childhood object, becomes the vehicle to explore the story of Mrs Letheridge and an early settler experience in New Zealand.

Conclusion

Between 1851 and 1950 very few childhood objects were collected by the Auckland Museum and the Colonial / Dominion Museum. This is not surprising because for most of this period New Zealand history was not a collecting priority in these museums. These were large metropolitan institutions whose main consideration was to be the 'storehouses of science' (Henare, 2005). Their principal focus continued to be natural history, closely followed by ethnography, Maori culture and art for most of this period (Henare, 2005; Labrum, 2007; McCarthy 2007). It is not coincidental then that the first childhood objects included in the collections were 'ethnographic'. Rather than representing a childhood perspective in history they were collected as ethnographic specimens that illustrated the evolutionary ideologies of this time.

Other important influences and historical events also had an impact on museum practice. There were two world wars, New Zealand gained Dominion status, and in 1940 New Zealand celebrated its centennial as a colony. The Colonial Museum became the Dominion Museum in 1907 and the Auckland Museum became the Auckland War Memorial Museum and officially opened as such in 1929. These changes were reflected in the types of history objects acquired and also had an influence on the childhood objects collected. The Auckland Museum's history collections included its first New Zealand childhood objects in the 1920s. However these objects were actually collected by the Old Colonists' Museum. The Auckland Museum acquired this collection in 1965 when they were establishing an exhibition about Auckland called *Centennial Street*. This illustrates the contrast between large museum institutions and the smaller provincial museums. New Zealand history and identity had started to become a collection priority in smaller museums in the early twentieth century, a phenomenon that was prompted by jubilees, early settler societies, the change to Dominion status in 1907 and social changes in the immediate

post World War One era that saw New Zealanders reflect on their colonial settler history. The earliest examples of New Zealand childhood objects at the Dominion Museum were collected in the late 1940s. The acquisition of history objects at both museums during the 1940s and 50s again reflected the growing public interest in New Zealand colonial history but this time it was prompted by the New Zealand Centennial celebrations. Pakeha New Zealanders became eager to celebrate and explore their own sense of history and identity.

During this period there was also a major ideological shift in the way children were perceived. Children came to be considered essential to the future success of New Zealand. This had a major impact on the way museums regarded children. At the Auckland Museum, Director Thomas Cheeseman requested that a children's museum be included in the new Auckland War Memorial Museum. Both the Auckland Museum and the Dominion Museum created mobile educational cases for schools, and exhibitions had started to have a strong educational emphasis with the purpose of improving the general knowledge of the New Zealand public. In 1944 the director of the Dominion Museum proclaimed that the place of the museum in the community was to widely distribute scientific knowledge and that one of the lessons learnt from the War was that the 'main mass of people were under-educated' (Oliver, 1944, p. 5). This was the prevailing attitude of this period and children had become an important component of the museum audience.

To a large extent the inclusion of colonial childhood objects, collected during this period, are indications of an approaching change in museum practice. These objects mark the infancy of childhood collecting but they are also typical of the passive way childhood objects were included. My research has shown that the material culture of childhood has always been included alongside the main collecting priorities. Children are simply considered to be naturally part of society or a cultural group and childhood objects are therefore included alongside adult objects of the same genre. This occurred organically and passively rather than through a deliberate strategic collecting thrust but it is an important and valid part of the way museums make history. In the subsequent collecting period (1950 – 1990), discussed in chapter two, the inclusion of objects that relate to New Zealand's colonial history dominate the type of childhood material culture collected. There was a much larger volume of objects collected that

provided a greater range of childhood histories and experiences to explore. I continue to discuss the histories embodied by childhood objects and question whether this tangible presence means that children are seen or heard in the collections.

Chapter Two

The Toy Box Grows: Collection Development Between 1950 and 1990



Figure 2.1 Infant's Harness, maker unknown, 1900s. Wool and brass bells. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC887. Photograph by the author.

In 1953 C. Lindsay donated an infant's harness to the Dominion Museum (Figure 2.1). The harness was hand knitted in shades of red and pink wool and has five bells attached to the front panel. This object, selected from the mass of objects collected between 1950 and 1990, introduces this period by revealing several key topics that will be explored in this chapter. This includes an investigation of the collecting practice of this period and the process by which objects were collected and documented. Importantly, this harness demonstrates the way the material culture of childhood reveals the history of childhood as well as changing parenting ideas and methods.

The acquisition method and associated documentation of the Lindsay harness reflects the museum practice of the time. It was collected passively, meaning a member of the

public donated it and the museum accepted it into the collection. There is minimal information recorded about it, including only nominal information about the donor, with no information about the child who would have worn it. As in the previous period, discussed in chapter one, the history collections continued to develop in a passive and ad hoc way. However, the main point of difference in this period is that large institutions like the Dominion Museum and the Auckland Museum acknowledged New Zealand history as a collecting priority. As a result the number of history objects acquired grew at an immense rate. This fact is clearly evident in the way that the number of childhood objects collected steadily increased between 1950 and 1990. This is illustrated in two charts that summarise the data I collected from the Auckland Museum and Te Papa (Table 2.1 and 2.2), which are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Furthermore, for the first time the Dominion Museum appointed museum staff to specifically care for the history collections. This did not occur at the Auckland Museum until much later marking a major point of difference in the way the collections developed at each of these museums. The original record for the Lindsay harness was made by Nancy Adams who, as mentioned in chapter one, was one of the earliest museum professionals to engage with the history collections. She was responsible for sorting, storing and recording many of the museum's early historical items. Curatorial input started in the 1960s and was followed by input from conservators and subject specialists resulting in additional research and 'object files' in the 1980s (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Thus, the Lindsay harness has an object file that contains additional object information including a copy of a page from the *Weldon's Practical Knitter* that has a pattern for making a similar garment.

The heightened focus on New Zealand history was part of a wider discursive change, and it is indicative of a growing public interest in New Zealand history stimulated by New Zealand's centenary celebrations (McLean, 2000). The museum record states that the harness was made in the 1900s, in either England or New Zealand (Te Papa Ke Emu Record PC887, 2007). It is significant that in the record it describes the harness as 'made in England or New Zealand' because when the harness was acquired in 1953 Pakeha New Zealanders were only just beginning to explore their own

culture, identity and history (Belich, 2001; McCarthy, 2007). Of New Zealand's cultural identity poet Allen Curnow wrote in 1945 that 'New Zealand, strictly speaking, does not exist yet' (Curnow as cited by McCarthy, 2007, p. 116). Thus, the boundary between something made or used in England as opposed to New Zealand was blurred and could have even seemed irrelevant.

Even so, many of the childhood objects collected in this period demonstrate the unique way material culture can illustrate the history of New Zealand childhood. Indeed, the changing nature of childhood and associated parenting ideas and methods is exemplified by this object. Walking harnesses or restraints became popular in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when parents were concerned about keeping their children safe in an expanding urban environment with increasing traffic (Children's Walking Harnesses, 2003). By contrast in New Zealand society today it is rare to see a child's harness being used. There has however been an increase in their use in Europe with parents becoming increasingly concerned about safety, and a fear of children being abducted while out in the city (Children's Walking Harnesses, 2003). The harness was considered to be an acceptable way of keeping children safe, nearby and even amused. In the 'Weldon's Practical Knitter' (date unknown), the introduction to the knitting pattern that is identical to the Lindsay harness reveals, 'These reins are quickly and easily knitted, and afford a great deal of amusement to children, besides being capital exercise' (Te Papa Object File, PC887). However, opponents of the use of reins and harnesses advocate that they restrain not only the physical exploration of the child but also their mental and psychological development. This attitude could be a reason for its decline in use in the 1960s when concern about the psychological and mental development of children was paramount (McDonald, 1978). By the 1970s the rights of the child had become an important issue in New Zealand (McDonald, 1978; Dalley, 1998). In an era of 'children's liberation' (McDonald, 1978, p. 51), the use of harnesses and restraints would have been at odds with this movement:

Growing legal advocacy for children, the mention of children's rights in the 1973 *New Zealand Handbook of Civil Liberties*, and the 1979 International Year of the Child all suggested a new awareness of the child as an individual. (Dalley, 1998, p. 262)

However, earlier in the century when this harness was made parents had a different set of priorities. The fact that it was hand-knitted is typical of a time when parents and other family members hand-made clothing and toys for children. Mothers traditionally knitted or sewed most of their children's clothes, toys and games were also mainly hand-made, and less emphasis was placed on bought and manufactured items. Like the Warner christening gown, discussed in chapter one, the knitted harness illustrates the fact that parents, usually mothers or grandmothers, spent a great deal of time and energy making children's clothes and accessories (Labrum, 2007a). One of the main reasons why these objects were hand-made was due to the financial constraints of the time and the absence of affordable manufactured products. In early New Zealand life families were generally large and money scarce, it wasn't until the more affluent decades of the 1950s and 1960s that there was a substantial increase in the emergence of consumer goods for children (Owen, 2000). The harness, as an item that was hand-made in the early twentieth century, is therefore evidence of a broader New Zealand history. It is representative of the activities and everyday life of both adults and children, parenting ideas and methods, and it is an example of a handmade garment that embodies a childhood experience.

The harness is also an object that represents and illustrates museum practice between 1950 and 1990. One hundred years on from the establishment of the Auckland Museum and the Colonial Museum, and at the end of a period in which both museums were consumed by a perceived need to collect natural history specimens and ethnographic artefacts, both museums started collecting large numbers of objects relevant to New Zealand history, including objects that related to the life and experiences of New Zealand children. Most of the objects at both museums were collected passively and the collections developed organically. The objects individually and as a group embody a complicated web of relationships that occur as people live their lives and interrelate with the material world. Pearce (1994, p. 194) argues that: 'The collections, in their acquisition, valuation and organization, are an important part of our effort to construct the world'. This chapter untangles the various interwoven threads that have had been knitted together in the formation of the history collections.

In this chapter I explore the issues, themes and discourses materialised through the childhood objects in the Auckland Museum and Te Papa collected. I discuss the history of these museums as related to the development of the childhood collections, historical and museological changes, and the impact of specific museum employees on the collections. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the collections around the thematic groupings that emerged. I discuss changing ideologies about the child's place in society, parenting methods, global impacts, and industrial or manufacturing developments that have had an impact on the material culture of childhood. I analyse the extent to which the collections represent children, the history of childhood in New Zealand or the actual experiences and lives of children, and whether the voices of children are heard through museum collections.

The discovery of New Zealand history and the history of childhood

In chapter one I explored the key historical events and museological trends leading up to 1950 and the beginning of collections that contained objects relating to New Zealand's colonial settler history. The New Zealand Centennial Exhibition and other centennial celebrations had a significant role to play in the 1940s and in many cases this event sparked interest in local New Zealand history (McLean, 2000). Between 1950 and 1990 there were major changes in the way New Zealand history was perceived, taught in University and addressed by museums. By the 1950s and 60s New Zealand history had become a popular topic of interest (Belich, 2001; Phillips, 2001; Labrum 2007). Evidence of the growing public awareness of New Zealand history was reflected in the increasing numbers of historical societies and publications about New Zealand history (McLean, 2000). In addition there was a host of new government initiatives that aimed to protect the history and heritage of the 'nation'. For example:

in 1957 the National Archive Act was established which aimed to put the care and custody of the nation's archives on a sounder footing, the National Geographic Board was created which focused on protecting historic places, and there was the establishment of the Historic Places Act 1954.

(McLean, 2000, p. 32)

Following this period of growing interest in New Zealand history, New Zealand underwent a process of 'decolonisation', at which time society experienced a major

crisis of identity that further fuelled an increasing focus on local cultural history (Belich, 2001). The 1980s therefore became a crucial decade in New Zealand cultural history because it encouraged the exploration of a new independent sense of identity in many different fields (McCarthy, 2007, p. 165). Questions about biculturalism, Maori rights and nationhood all had an important impact on museums.

During these decades the Dominion Museum responded by making two significant changes. Firstly, in 1968 the Dominion Museum appointed its first history curator, David Millar, to the position of 'Curator, Colonial History' (Te Papa Archives, MU000148/005/0005). Millar was closely followed by Michael Fitzgerald in 1971, who continues to work as a history curator at Te Papa in 2008. Fitzgerald recalls that 'it wasn't until 1968, partly as a response to a revival of public interest in early New Zealand history and lobbying from various interested societies and groups around the country, that the Department of Internal Affairs finally decided to fund a dedicated curator for colonial history' (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Secondly, in 1972 the Dominion Museum changed status and became the National Museum. The museum had now been renamed several times, from the Colonial Museum in 1865 to the Dominion Museum in 1907 and then the National Museum. Each new title reflected the social forces shaping the museum at different times. The National Museum's new title reflected a desire by Pakeha to explore the question of national identity and to recast their colonial past (McCarthy, 2007, p. 118).

The teaching of history in New Zealand universities also underwent some major discursive shifts between 1950 and 1990. Jock Phillips explains that early New Zealand historians aimed to closely associate themselves with British and European history. By the 1950s research was being done on New Zealand. He writes that 'about half the tenured staff of history departments had published or would publish in New Zealand history, and there were about a dozen theses in New Zealand history being completed each year' (Phillips, 2001, p. 328). From the 1980s social history gained academic status mainly because of an increased desire to understand what it was to be a New Zealander. This led to new intellectual developments and 'a fascination with social and cultural history which had once been the profession's poor relations' (Phillips, 2001, p. 331). There was a proliferation of social history research and publications that were ignited by emerging political and social movements.

New social movements like women's liberation paved the way for the study of women and the family, and a new consciousness among indigenous peoples provoked questions about patterns of racial dominance (Phillips, 2001, p. 331). Since the 1960s social historians have unleashed a stream of new topics ranging from welfare, sexuality and medicine, to recreation, the body and popular culture (Dalley & Labrum, 2000, p. 1-2). University courses in New Zealand started to include information about the perspectives of children in history, especially those about welfare, education and social history. For example, David Thomson at Massey University incorporated childhood as a subject into courses on family history. However, the history of childhood was not established as a distinct topic in New Zealand universities until the late 1980s when Jeanine Graham's course, which explored the history of childhood at the University of Waikato, was the only one of its kind starting in about 1989 (J. Graham, personal communication, October 30, 2007).

Dugald McDonald, a sociologist, wrote one of the earliest historical overviews of New Zealand childhood in the 1970s. In it he 'adopts a social values' approach and encapsulates 'the dominant attitudes toward children in four separate periods from 1840 to 1970' (McDougall Gordon, 1991, p. 114). Although some aspects of McDonald's research have now been superseded by new theories and empirical studies about childhood in New Zealand, it is still a significant piece of research and is referred to by many historians doing research in this field. Publications in the 1990s reflect a historical focus on children with regard to education, health and welfare. For example Margaret Tennant (1994) reveals the history of children's health camps in New Zealand, Helen May (1997) explores the history of early childhood education, and Bronwyn Dalley (1998) writes about the history of child welfare in twentieth-century New Zealand. These publications reflect a growing interest in childhood as a serious topic of study. However, whilst each of these publications provides an in-depth analysis and discussion about a particular aspect of New Zealand childhood, there is yet to be written a full and comprehensive publication about the entire history of New Zealand childhood (McDougall Gordon, 1991; Graham, 2003).

Despite the lack of academic interest in the history of childhood, museums have collected significant numbers of childhood objects from as early as the 1940s and

1950s. As will be shown, museums are influenced by academic discussions and movements, but they also have their own agendas. History collections have primarily developed organically based on what the public choose to donate rather than through a process of active or directed collecting, and largely separate from academic discourses.

Museum history and influences on the collections

Since 1920 the idea of an Auckland War Memorial Museum had been officially adopted (Stead, 2001), giving the museum a particular mandate and position within New Zealand. Following World War Two the museum began receiving significant ‘relics of actions’ from the Pacific (Stead, 2001, p. 17). There was a huge drive to raise funds for an extended Hall of Memories, which was completed in 1960 along with increased exhibition space in the original building (Stead, 2001, p. 17). In order to focus on the war collections the museum employed a Curator of War Relics, Trevor Bayliss (Wolfe, 2004, p. 58). These developments had an influence on the way the museum and its collections developed and understandably war and objects associated with war were a high collecting priority. The material culture of childhood was not.

The number of child related objects collected by the Auckland War Memorial Museum between 1950 and 1990 was relatively low and certainly a lot less than what was collected at the Dominion / National Museum. One possible explanation for the low numbers of childhood objects at the Auckland Museum was its focus on military history following World War Two and its status as a War Memorial. The focus on war appears to have occurred at the expense of other important historical events and stories, but this was not a situation unique to the Auckland Museum.

Museums throughout the world have traditionally focused on the major events in history, with war history and histories that focus on the powerful men of war a dominant feature. Museums that focus on this type of dominant or ‘foreground’ history tend to neglect the more subtle ‘background’ histories of everyday people and children (Ames, 1994). Mary Daly, radical feminist philosopher, defines foreground history as a history that emphasises ‘the conventional world of orthodox patriarchy, the world of hierarchy, competition, and fragmentation, of prejudice, hostility, and violence, of obsession with greed, domination, and control!’ (Daly as cited by Ames,

1994, p. 34). By concentrating on this type of history the risk is that the subtle, background historical perspective of children is excluded. As Ames puts it:

Orthodox history celebrates some people but demeans others, enshrines some values but denigrates others, underlines the accomplishments of some but completely erases the accomplishments of others. Orthodox history glorifies and perpetuates the values and ideologies of the dominant groups in past and contemporary society.
(Ames, 1994, p. 33)

The Dominion Museum also underwent some key changes in the immediate post-war years. Dr Robert Falla was the newly appointed director in 1947. Under Falla there was massive collection growth in general but also in the history collections area including objects relating to New Zealand's colonial history, costumes and technology (Dell, 1965, p. 22). These collection categories have now all been incorporated into the 'history' collection at Te Papa, but it is important to note that the material culture of childhood was included and collected within these groupings.

In addition to these immediate post-war changes, there were several other significant developments at both museums that had an impact on the collections and the way museums engaged with and perceived children. In 1964 the Auckland War Memorial Museum had a change in directorship from Gilbert Archey to Graham Turbott. Both of these men came to the museum with the usual scientific background. Archey achieved 'international recognition for the museum in ethnographic and natural history publications' (Stead, 2001, p. 15). Turbott had formerly been part of Archey's scientific staff, and also Assistant Director of the Canterbury Museum (Stead, 2001, p. 17). Even though Turbott continued to focus on maintaining the museum's reputation in scientific research he also made significant advances in School Services and Special Exhibitions programmes (Stead, 2001, p. 17), both of which were important developments for children. There was a 'Children's Room', later known as the 'School Room', established in 1969 and a system of circulating loans and display panels that reached hundreds of children in city and country schools in the Auckland area (Wolfe, 2004).

Similar developments occurred at museums throughout the country. At the Dominion Museum, Falla carried on the museum's educational mission (McCarthy, 2007, p. 104). The formal education service was established at the Dominion Museum in 1957 (Dell, 1965, p.18). The emphasis on an education service for children was encouraged by the New Zealand government and was part of a range of new initiatives that aimed to rebuild the nation in the post-war era. At this time the focus was on supporting families and the development of children and youth (Tennant, 1994; Dalley, 1998; Graham, 2003).

A shift occurred in the way children were valued by the family and society. They were no longer of economic value but were now regarded as emotionally priceless (Tennant, 1994; Dalley, 1998). As we saw in chapter one, New Zealand followed international trends and introduced children's education initiatives in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and there was a significant increase in the number of preschool education centers in the 1950s (May, 1997). New education and display initiatives in museums were also part of the shifting emphasis on investing in children's intellectual and cultural improvement. In the 1970s society was further prompted to consider the needs of children, and along with women's liberation and other human rights issues, children's civil rights were debated (McDonald, 1978, p. 51). This movement was highlighted by the International Year of the Child in 1979 and the National Museum responded by developing a small display about children at the museum (Figure 2.2).

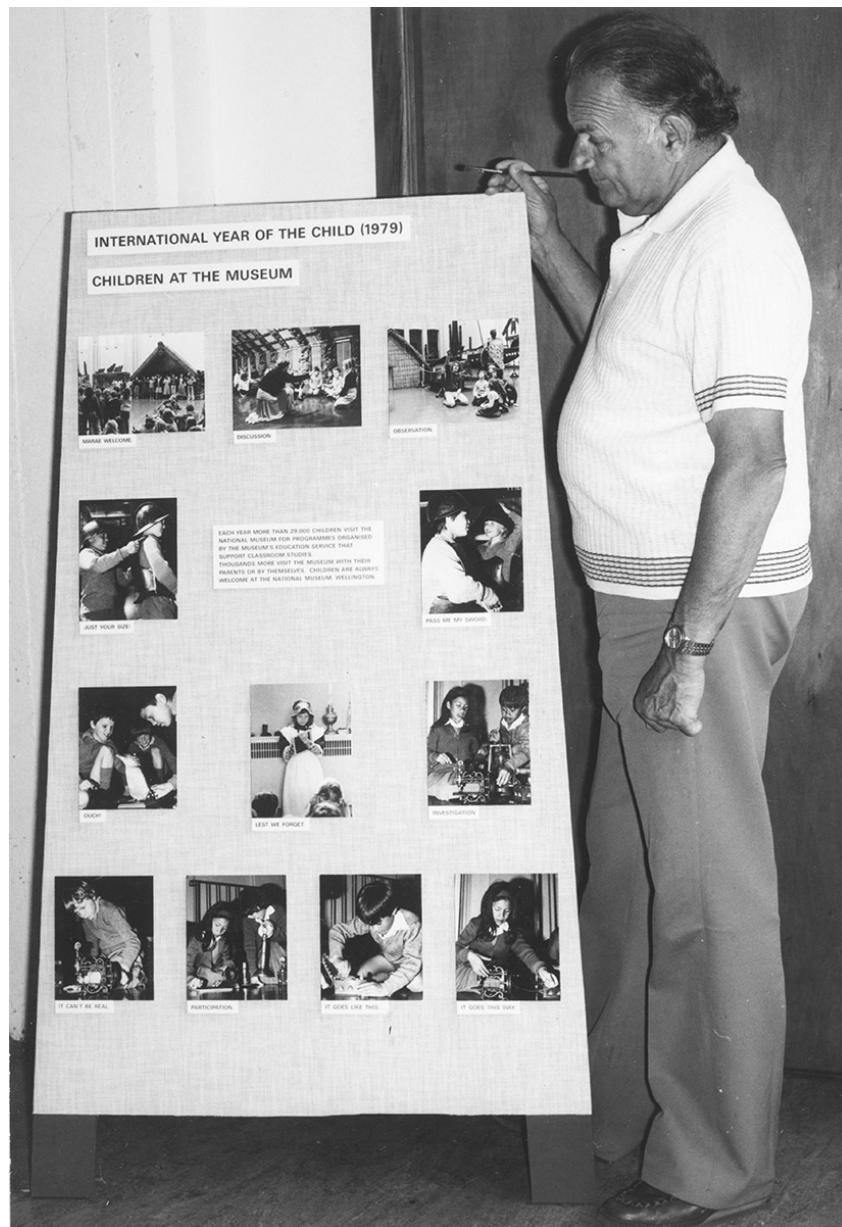


Figure 2.2 International Year of the Child, Display Panel at the National Museum, 18 December 1978.
Photograph by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, F 852/7.

In addition to the heightened educational focus of the Auckland Museum in the 1960s, another development occurred that affected the way the childhood collections evolved: the establishment and growth of the applied arts collection. The Disney Art Trust was established in 1967, which specifically aimed to continue to build up the collection of applied arts (Stead, 2001; Wolfe, 2004). One of the most significant and highly valued acquisitions during this time was the Fenton gift of English Pewter in

1969. The establishment of the applied arts collection became a highly influential force behind the way the history collections developed at the Auckland Museum. When the history collection was established as a specific collection area, objects were sorted and split according to their perceived association with ethnology, applied art or history. A certain amount of ambiguity existed between the collections and objects could arguably be categorised depending on the perceived need or priorities at a particular point in time. Rose Young, who was the museum's first full-time history curator, appointed in 1992, said that objects coming into the museum were reviewed and sorted by the applied art staff. She recalls that, 'the joke was that if it was pretty it went to applied arts, if it wasn't it got put over into the colonial register'. Unfortunately, this became the basis of the history collections (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007).

At the Auckland Museum the applied arts collections remained a separate collection, but at Te Papa most of the applied arts or decorative arts collection (as they are currently named) became part of the history collections. Examples of childhood objects that could be included within the decorative arts realm included clothing and textiles with embroidery or lace and ceramics, and objects made of silver, gold or other precious metals. The material culture of childhood was dispersed across a range of museum categories. It was not collected because of its association with children but rather because of its relevance to other collecting categories such as decorative arts or technology.

During the 1960s there was a significant increase in the number of childhood objects collected in both museums. Apart from the new public and academic interest in New Zealand's colonial history, this was probably due to the fact that both museums were starting to focus on exhibitions that highlighted regional, local and colonial or settler history. In Auckland;

Gallery developments proceeded on a number of fronts, but in 1965 the programme experienced a major diversion. The Museum had received an invitation from department store Milne and Choyce to assist with the installation of the planned 'Centennial Street' exhibition of Auckland in its Queen Street store. In addition to considerable staff involvement, that display included material from the Old Colonists' Museum, which had now been handed to the Auckland Museum by the

City Council. After its successful showing downtown, 'Centennial Street' was donated by Milne and Choyce to the Museum and adapted for permanent installation in the second floor front hall vacated by the Library, reopening there in October 1967. (Wolfe, 2004, p. 58)

Objects for this exhibition came from three sources: the ethnology collections, the Old Colonists' Museum and new donations or loans (Young, 1994). This exhibition is still in existence today and includes childhood objects in several display cases such as the 'M. & C. Milne Drapery and Millinery' store, 'Harris's Cavendish House - Toy and Fancy Goods' store (Figure 2.3), and in displays showing a colonial parlour and a bedroom scene.



Figure 2.3 Harris's Cavendish House, Centennial Street Exhibition. Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2007. Photograph by the author.

Exhibitions of this kind occurred throughout New Zealand in this period. Many museums set up 'Street Scenes' and 'Period Rooms', and at the Dominion Museum a Colonial Gallery with a 'Children's Bedroom' was established in 1967, which included toys and children's clothing. There is evidence to suggest that displays and exhibitions prompted the public to donate similar types of objects to those seen on display. Exhibitions provide a framework by which the public can understand what the museum values and what is considered collectable or important in the museum context. Michael Fitzgerald, history curator, explained how this occurred at Te Papa. In 1985 the National Museum put on a small exhibition about the 1940 Centennial Exhibition based on a collection that had been acquired a few years earlier. This generated further donations that led to the 1998 Te Papa exhibition called *Exhibiting Ourselves*, of which the 1940 Centennial Exhibition was a major part of it (M. Fitzgerald, personal communications, April 11, 2007). Further donations were again offered and now the history collection has a significant number of objects relating to the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition. As will be shown in chapter three this phenomenon also occurred at the Auckland Museum after the installation of the *Wild Child* exhibition.

Another influential factor in the way the history collections developed during this period was the work of specific museum staff. In terms of childhood objects, some of the museum staff and exhibitions had a major impact on the nature of the collections today. In chapter one I discussed the impact of the work of Nancy Adams who, when she was employed in the 1950s, took a personal interest in documenting and recording some of the earliest textile objects collected. Fitzgerald (personal communication, April 11, 2007) recalls that her main unofficial interest was needlework, embroidery and textile history in general. She saw the need in the 1950s to try and get the museum's textile collection 'in some sort of basic order' because after the war, when the museum was closed down and occupied by the military, there was quite a backlog of accessioning, recording and an effort to get some decent housing organised for quite a range of historical material (M. Fitzgerald, April 11, 2007). Adams was actually employed as an illustrator or artist but the usual practice, and limited budget at the museum, meant that many people employed by the museum had multiple roles. The diversity of her work was recorded in her obituary in the New Zealand Botanical Society's Newsletter:

Her artwork for 'The Natural History of Cook's First Voyage' in the Bicentenary year of 1968 was a tour de force, and the Parade of Colonial Costumes during the Museum's centenary in 1965, for which she selected the costumes and wrote the script, lives on in the memories of all those old enough to have witnessed it. Her work with the Museum's costume collection, and with the Wellington Embroiderer's Guild, eventually led to the appointment of the Museum's first full-time textile conservator.

(New Zealand Botanical Society Newsletter, 2007)

The multi-dimensional aspect of the roles of museum workers in this period was further explained in interviews conducted for this research. Fitzgerald described himself as 'a one man band', and said that 'the old Dominion Museum was quite seriously understaffed, there was no such thing as collection managers and all staff used to chip in and do what we used to call lifting and shifting' (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Furthermore, Fitzgerald recalls that the history department was much more closely aligned to the 'foreign ethnology' department, which basically consisted of Maori and Pacific collection items. This team of people would assist each other with collection management duties (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007).

Two other key people had a significant impact on the development of Te Papa's history collections between 1950 and 1990; Valerie Carson, a textile conservator and Rosanne Livingstone who was employed as a full time assistant to Michael Fitzgerald in the 1980s. Fitzgerald notes that Valerie Carson, her team of volunteers, and Rosanne Livingstone spent a great deal of time documenting and rehousing the textile collection in the 1980s (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Fitzgerald recalls that this type of work was 'almost unheard of until then'. The museum registers reflect the input of Livingstone and Carson, then in the late 1980s and 1990 they initiated additional records and documentation of the collections. Livingstone began object files in the 1990s, and Carson instigated specialist 'Conservation Reports' in the 1980s. Together these files provide a great deal of information about the textile objects and also some of the dolls and toys in the collection. Their focus was on the materials used, techniques and the construction of the objects, and specialist information about the significance and manufacturing history of the dolls and toys. There are also examples where additional and more

detailed provenance is recorded. Carson and Livingstone showed a great deal of interest in the material culture of childhood, most notably dolls, toys, children's clothing, embroidery and other examples of textiles that demonstrate fine needlecraft. Most importantly, their early documentation and research on history objects marked the beginning of this type of collection development.

Many childhood objects collected during this period were acquired because of their quality, rarity or collectability in the antique or doll and toy collector's market rather than for their value as social history objects. One example is a German bisque doll (PC1369/1) manufactured by Kammer and Reinhardt of Waltershausen, Germany c1890 (Figure 2.4). The doll was acquired by the museum in 1966. In a conservation report completed in 1988 by doll expert Kerry Carman, it was recorded as a 'delightful top quality' item. Carman assessed the doll according to its trademark and quality noting that the doll was a luxury export item of its time, especially for the American market. The report typically makes conservation and storage recommendations, but there is also some information about the doll's provenance that provides insight into how it fits into the schema of New Zealand childhood.



Figure 2.4 German Bisque Doll, made by Kammer & Reinhardt, c1890. Photograph by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PC1369/1.

Carman reports that the doll was purchased by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan of New York as a Christmas gift for Miss Gracie Christie (Mrs Grace Tomlin) who eventually donated the doll to the museum. Mr John Pierpont Morgan (1837 - 1913) was one of the great financiers of his time and built his family fortunes into a vast industrial empire (Te Papa Object File, PC1369). Much of the doll's provenance and associated social history is missing from the records. For example, what was the connection between the donor and John Pierpont Morgan? Was this doll played with or was it stored away for special occasions? Even so, it is rare to have this amount of detailed information recorded at this time. Examples like this were the exception rather than the norm; they indicate a change in museological practice. As will be shown in chapter three, from the 1990s museum curators at Te Papa and the Auckland Museum placed a great deal more emphasis on recording an object's provenance and detailed associated social history. In the late 1980s museum professionals at the National Museum were starting to recognise the importance of contextual information and were responding to an emerging new museology by creating object files and records that contained contextual information about the objects and sometimes the donors. This was likely to have been prompted by the museum's impending redevelopment.

By the end of the 1980s the National Museum had seen major intellectual and philosophical changes and was about to undergo a process of restructuring. In 1984 the new Labour government appointed a project development team to explore the idea of a new National Museum (Oliver, 2004). In a report produced in the 1980s, the Museum of New Zealand was conceived as:

a forum for the nation to present, explore, and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order better to understand and treasure the past, enrich the present and meet the challenges of the future. (Oliver, 2004, p. xi)

This marked the beginning of a new era in the museum's development. The ideas expressed in this report were already having an impact on the history collections but the main changes were to occur in the following period explored in chapter three.

The collections and New Zealand childhood

My research at Te Papa and the Auckland Museum has shown that between 1950 and 1980 the acquisition of childhood objects grew substantially. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 visually illustrate the numbers of childhood objects collected in each decade. I have also included, as a point of comparison, the number of objects collected in the previous one hundred years. As discussed in chapter one, the numbers were minimal. In fact, the Auckland Museum acquired thirty childhood objects and the Colonial / Dominion Museum acquired seventeen.

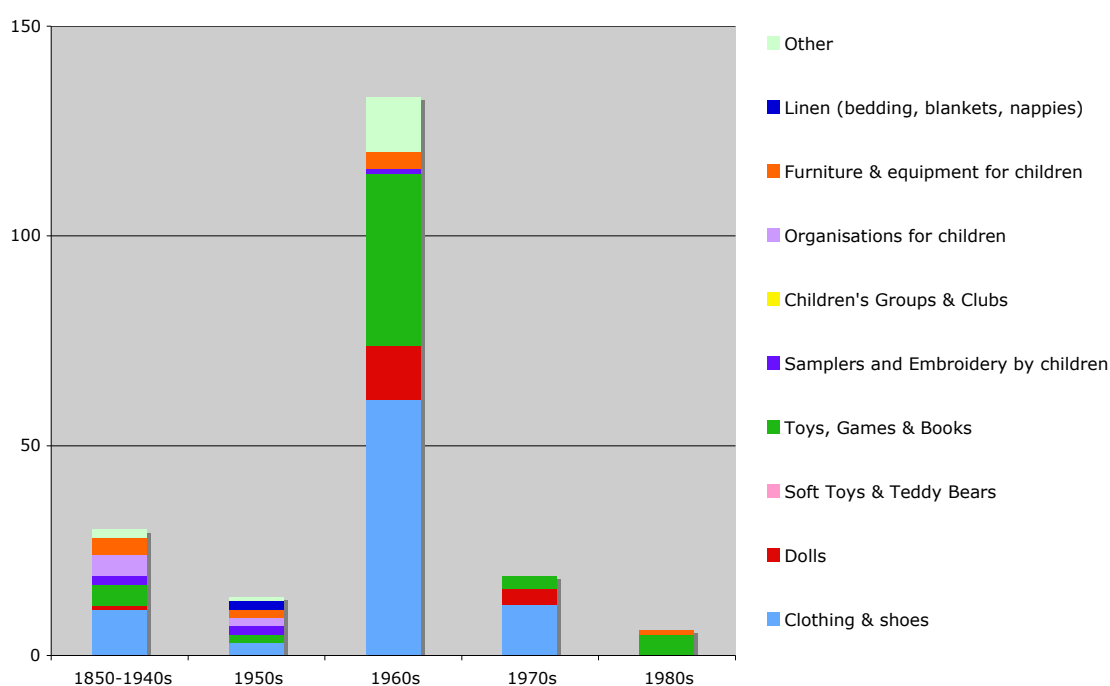


Table 2.1 Auckland War Memorial Museum, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 1980

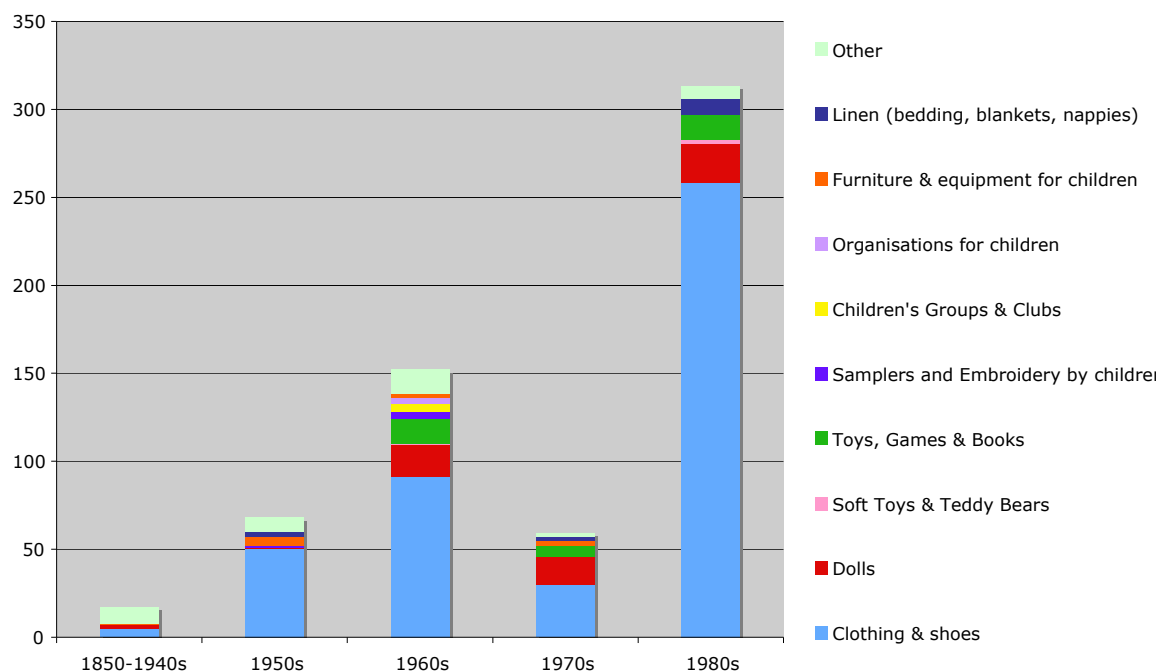


Table 2.2 Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 1980

Between 1950 and 1990 the number of childhood objects collected at the Auckland Museum was consistently and significantly less than at Te Papa. In the 1950s, the Auckland Museum acquired 14 childhood objects, then there was a substantial increase in the 1960s to 133 childhood objects collected, followed by 19 in the 1970s and six in the 1980s. I argued earlier that the low numbers of childhood objects collected can be explained by the museum's preoccupation with military history, and the collection of applied arts was another area of focus. However, the dramatic increase in the number of childhood objects collected in the 1960s demonstrates the museum's sudden interest in New Zealand history. The Auckland Museum's *Centennial Street* exhibition, which opened in 1967, was the physical manifestation of the museum's interest in colonial history. New acquisitions required for this exhibition explain the sudden increase in the volume of New Zealand colonial history objects.

In contrast, Te Papa's collections show a much larger number of childhood objects collected per decade with a pattern of steady increase in volume throughout this period. In the 1950s the museum collected 68 childhood objects, then in the 1960s it

collected 152, in the 1970s there was a slight decrease in numbers with 59 childhood objects collected, followed by a significant increase in the 1980s with 313 childhood objects collected by the end of this decade. The decrease in the number of childhood objects collected in the 1970s is surprising and unexpected. At this point in time the museum had already appointed a specialist history curator and the museum was committed to collecting and displaying New Zealand history. Furthermore, 1979 was the International Year of the Child and as pointed out in earlier discussions the museum had put effort into celebrating this event in the form of a display panel. One possible explanation is that after two decades of sorting and cataloguing a backlog of acquisitions museum staff had an understanding of what was already in the collection and were being more selective. However, when questioned about the drop in numbers in the 1970s, Michael Fitzgerald who was the history curator at the time, was unable to offer an explanation.

Most of the objects collected fall neatly into nine main classifications, with the remainder grouped together as a category entitled 'other'. The main categories into which the majority of the childhood objects were grouped were: children's clothing, toys, games and books, dolls and soft toys, and children's furniture. Other smaller but common categories of objects include: organisations for children (the Plunket Society, schools, kindergartens and dental nursing), children's groups and clubs (Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and dance groups), samplers and embroidery by children, and linen, bedding and nappies. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate the volume of each category collected in each decade. In the following discussion I explore the broad issues highlighted by my research findings and also focus on some specific examples of objects that demonstrate the way material culture can emphasise unique aspects of childhood in New Zealand. The childhood collections present a complicated and sometimes contradictory picture that does not necessarily represent a history of childhood that pertains to the linear or sequential written history of childhood, but rather is a reality that has emerged passively and in an adhoc manner.

The main categories of childhood objects that emerged from this research were categories that were commonly used in museums throughout the world. Shepherd (1994) is critical of the way museum classifications reinforce nostalgic and stereotypical ideas about children. He argues that collection classifications are an

important factor in the way museums consider childhood (Shepherd, 1994, p. 70). He points out: 'Almost inevitably access to information pertaining to childhood in this type of museum is to be found through objects classified as dolls, games, juvenilia, children's clothing, and the like' (Shepherd, 1994, p. 71). By using these narrow fields of classifications and collecting along the lines of these types of objects museums risk 'entrenching stereotypes, constructing social myths and masking rather than revealing the social issues that surround the development of young people and the environment in which they are raised' (Shepherd, 1994, p. 71). Currently the collections at the Auckland Museum and Te Papa conform to this type of collecting. They contain the material culture of childhood without any information, and they reveal very little about individual children. Furthermore, the information collected is superficial and in most cases the objects and information reflect the interests of adults rather than the lives and experiences of children. This is further reinforced by the tendency to orientate the information around the object rather than the experience of a child. It therefore becomes difficult to find information and objects that explore the social, economic or political experience of children, their work-life, home-life or recreational-life. Even so, while I have argued that Te Papa and the Auckland Museum conform to the conventional style of collecting the material culture of childhood, there are some exceptions and a few objects that provide a glimpse into the lives of specific children.

The National Museum for example acquired a 'Walking Doll' named *Christie* donated by Frances de Lisle in 1986, GH3513 (Figure 2.5). This doll carries two social histories, both of which have been recorded. Family history recalls that the doll's wooden torso and flexible legs were made by the Returned Services Rehabilitation Centre following World War One. It is important to note that this doll is identical to the Harry H. Coleman mechanical walking doll, patented as the 'Dolly Walker' in America and made by Wood Toy Co., between 1917 and 1923 (Coleman, 1968, p. 170). It therefore seems more likely that this doll was either a replica of the Coleman doll or was repaired by the Return Services Rehabilitation Centre. Even so, the post-war rehabilitation story is an interesting one. Hundreds of soldiers returning from war would have been involved in rehabilitation but the creation of this doll appears to be fairly unique. However, details about the soldier that made this doll are not known and therefore an important part of the history is missing.



Figure 2.5 Christie the Walking Doll, made by Wood Toy Co., c1920. Composition head, wood, metal, leather, cotton and rubber.
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH 3513.
Photograph by the author.

The other story associated with this object relates to the donor, who was given this doll for Christmas in 1920. When Frances de Lisle donated the doll she explained that when she was a child, she and her cousin were ‘crowd stoppers’ as they walked the doll down the street in Whangarei. This is an unusual but charming childhood story that has multiple layers of meaning. On one level it is a story about two children playing together with a much loved doll. On another level it illustrates the way childhood has changed throughout time. By the 1920s children were raised with more rules and controls than their colonial predecessors (Sutton-Smith, 1981; Belich, 2001). The supervision and control of children’s play and recreational activities were increasingly implemented in schools. Supervised play during school breaks meant that there were fewer rough and tumble games. Boys were encouraged to be less physical in their play but girls were encouraged to participate in more physical outdoor activities (Sutton-Smith, 1981). However, while there was increasingly more supervision and organised leisure time for children between 1900 and 1920, children were still relatively free and as this story demonstrates parental supervision was often from a distance. Frances and her cousin were therefore able to parade their walking doll up and down the street in Whangarei entertaining crowds of strangers. In this story the children have relative freedom compared to children now, when children are closely supervised and most parents are acutely attuned to safety issues and child abduction (Graham, 2003). This story provides an interesting contrast and shows that it was not uncommon for children to be out playing unaccompanied by an adult.

One of the strongest themes and the largest volume of childhood objects collected between 1950 and 1990 relate to New Zealand’s early colonial history. A large percentage of these objects were children’s clothing. At Te Papa the history collection currently contains approximately 607 sets of children’s clothing and 429 sets of children’s clothing were collected between 1950 and 1980. One large collection of clothing that demonstrates the extent of this type of item was donated by M. Dart in the 1950s. In this collection there are baby and infants’ clothes, including embroidered baby gowns, shirts, dresses, and jackets. There are also a few toys, domestic items and samplers. These objects are generally part of a wider European nineteenth century material culture and provide few examples that demonstrate aspects of the New Zealand situation. Objects like these, especially when used in period rooms and street scenes, provide no real sense of place, of people, time, society

or daily life. Young (1994) discusses colonial objects on display in the Auckland Museum's *Centennial Street* exhibition. She says that these objects were primarily domestic material that falls within most people's frame of reference, and were valued because of their nostalgic appeal. Furthermore, they provide a romanticised view of the past that is not representative of society. These issues are also true for childhood objects, which as already mentioned, were remembered, valued and enjoyed for nostalgic reasons.

Closely associated with the collection of colonial or settler material culture are a large number of objects that are categorized as high-end or decorative arts. This was an important collecting priority in this period and includes the best and most valued or precious family heirlooms. This group of objects include christening gowns of which there are numerous examples in museums throughout the country (Butts, 2007), children's clothing with beautiful examples of lace and embroidery, furniture, silver christening mugs and presentation cradles. In Britain, museums of childhood and museums with displays about children have been criticised for creating exhibitions that present a 'one-sided cosy nostalgic middle-class perspective on childhood' (Roberts, 2006, p. 158). The Victorian and Edwardian nursery scene filled with expensive dolls and toys prevails (Roberts, 2006).

In New Zealand the equivalent was the *Centennial Street* exhibition at the Auckland Museum and the *Colonial Gallery* at the National Museum. Childhood objects that were displayed by these institutions included items that were predominantly from wealthy or middle-class families and are typically elaborately embroidered baby gowns, lush and expensive examples of children's clothing, toys and dolls. These middle-class scenes, which include the material culture of children, are comfortable and idyllic, and the objects are mainly from the high-end collecting category. These objects are an integral part of the material culture of childhood and make up a large percentage of the childhood objects collected during this period. However, it is important to note that they only represent a small portion of the history of childhood in New Zealand. A great deal is missing including childhood objects from the working classes and less privileged children.

It is difficult to know what the child's experience was when the provenance and child's perspective is missing from the records, but what these objects do provide is a glimpse into the way some New Zealand colonial children spent their time. Both museums have samplers in their collections that were either made or brought to New Zealand by early settlers. Samplers were used to teach girls their letters and numbers, as well as to give them practice in needlework (Kevill-Davies, 1991, p. 234). Te Papa has two samplers by Sally Cann and these 'are the earliest known New Zealand-made samplers' (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004, p. 196). One sampler (PC 1651/1) was made in Nelson in 1853 when Sally was 10 years old and the other in 1855 (PC 1651/2). They both contain religious verse, letters, numbers and illustrations. The second sampler 'displays a great deal more skill' (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004, p. 196), which would have developed with age and practice. The samplers are important because they demonstrate the continuation of this British Victorian girls' activity in New Zealand. These samplers were donated in 1968 over 100 years after their creation, at a time when wider, and not just familial, value was becoming clear.

Other examples of traditional European needlecraft by children survive in the collections, sometimes with a strong Maori theme. These objects demonstrate the cultural exchange occurring between Maori and Pakeha at the time, and illustrate one of the ways Pakeha children were exposed to and interacted with Maori culture. An embroidery by Alice Clapham, made in 1880 at Mrs Murray's school in Thorndon Wellington, beautifully illustrates this. This embroidery (PC798) depicts a Wanganui river scene with a group of Maori dressed in feathered cloaks, a waka and whare. Framed in kauri it uses silk thread, feathers, glass beads. This object is described as a uniquely New Zealand example of the English Art Needlework movement where the subject is treated in a naturalistic manner (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004, p. 206). It thereby has an additional dimension to it in that it demonstrates the way some New Zealand children were influenced by and involved in this global art and craft movement.

There are also a few dolls dressed, decorated and themed in traditional Maori costume. These dolls were designed to resemble Maori rather than being dolls played with by Maori children. On one level they represent Maori / Pakeha interaction and on another level they represent a uniquely New Zealand style of toy. These dolls were collected by the National Museum at the end of the 1980s. The information associated

with them is focused on how they were made, the adult who created them and the material they are made from, rather than the child's experience. One of the dolls was made by Bessie Murray, a well-known New Zealand doll maker who patented her designs and whose history is well documented (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004; Te Papa Object File, GH3664/PC4224). Another group of four Maori tourist dolls were acquired from an auction. Interestingly both the subject and the designated user are missing from the recorded provenance. This again highlights a characteristic of this collecting period, the silencing of background history and the fact that minority groups were often not given a voice in the museum (Sandell, 2003; Sandell 2004).

Like Alice Clapham's embroidery, children's material culture can reveal much about changing technologies and techniques, industrialisation, and the availability of certain materials. The embroidery shows how New Zealand was influenced by an English craft movement but many of the toys and dolls in the collection also provide examples of evolving technology and the development of new materials. By the end of the nineteenth century when new machines and factories were introduced in Europe, Germany was the world's most extensive producer of toys and exported seventy five percent of its output (Cross, 1997, p.18). Many German made dolls found their way into the collections of New Zealand museums, including Te Papa and the Auckland Museum.

Alongside the rise of the toy industry was the introduction and availability of new and cheaper materials (Cross, 1997). Developments in the nineteenth century had an impact on the way toys and dolls were produced and therefore made them less expensive and more accessible to more children. For example, the invention of sheet metal stamping machines in 1815 led to the mass production of tin toys, papier-mache and rubber, and simple moulding machines were in use by 1850 which lowered the cost of dolls (Cross, 1997). The materials and manufacture of dolls is particularly informative: porcelain doll heads were manufactured from the 1840s and bisque from 1870, composition (a mixture of wood fibre, bran, and glue) started to replace china and other clay materials for dolls' heads in 1895 (Cross, 1997). In addition the clothing and accessories of dolls reflected changing fashions, materials and construction, or decorative techniques like lace making and embroidery.

The growing availability and changing materials of toys is one side of the story. Alongside this was the increasing commodification of childhood and commercialisation of the toy industry. Homemade toys have been gradually replaced by manufactured toys, but ‘changing attitudes toward children were also required to persuade parents to purchase toys and to give their children opportunities to play’ (Cross, 1997, p. 18). Cross reminds us that:

Essential for this change was the view that children were distinct from adults and required a sheltered environment and special tools and activities to mature into effective adults.

(Cross, 1997, p.18)

As outlined earlier, adults in New Zealand introduced new educational, health and welfare initiatives based on the belief that for the development of a better society children need to be nurtured into adulthood. During the twentieth century there have been several key changes in the ‘ideal’ way to bring up children. Toy makers have targeted, promoted and sold toys based on these wants, needs and parental ideologies. The desires and hopes for their children ‘became refracted through and materialized in the emerging toy culture of the twentieth century’ (Cross as cited by Cook, 2004, p. 12).

As working-class children were gradually liberated from direct production over the first third of the twentieth century, middle-class childhood increasingly became a site for morally mediated consumption.

(Cook, 2004, p. 9)

By the 1930s a number of industries arose that produced goods specifically for children including; toys, furniture, nursery ware, books and clothes. They were specifically targeted at middle-class children who no longer worked. Toy departments, playrooms, and age-differentiated clothing departments were in standard use. The toy box had changed dramatically from that of colonial children who enjoyed a mix of toys both homemade and occasionally purchased, to being increasingly purchased and mass produced. Along with the mass production of toys came thematic global impacts and influences and a growing American influence was seen in New Zealand toys. Several examples made it into the collections at Te Papa and the

Auckland Museum including teddy bears, whose name was originally taken from the American president Theodore Roosevelt, and toys with an American Cowboy and Indian theme.

Some of the objects in the collection reflect changing parental and institutional ideas about the needs of children. Both Te Papa and the Auckland Museum have examples of slate boards and children's books that illustrate changing technologies and methods for teaching children. The content of children's books demonstrates changing ideas about the appropriate subject matter for children. Between 1950 and 1980 the Auckland Museum collected a variety of children's books that reveal a strong religious theme emerging from books published in the early twentieth century. One collection of books contains the following titles; *A Round of Sunday Stories*; *True and False Friendships*; *Little Faith*; *The Book of Common Prayer* (COL2278).

Educational toys and toys that aimed to prepare children for the adult world were also found in both collections. Such toys became popular first among wealthy families in the late Victorian period, and then for the general population in the early twentieth century as mass marketing made toys more affordable (Cross, 1997). The toys reflect a belief in a child-centred approach to preparing children for the adult world and therefore toys were specifically created for play (Cross, 1997, p. 8).

In this period children had become society's 'social capital' and it was believed that the success of future generations was directly related to the degree of care given in childhood (McDonald, 1978). Toys that would encourage children to grow into useful and productive adults became important. Some examples of toys that reflect an educational focus include a Victorian Noah's Ark at Te Papa and some elaborately decorated wooden blocks in the Auckland Museum's collection. Toys with a domestic theme are in both collections including toy kitchen weigh scales at Te Papa, a toy kettle at the Auckland Museum and both collections have children's tea sets that were traditionally used by girls to enact domestic tea parties.

Conclusion

Between 1950 and 1990 the volume of childhood objects collected by the Auckland Museum and the Dominion/National Museum was significantly greater than in the previous one hundred years. These objects were collected passively and were included

alongside a generalised interest in collecting human history. The large volume of childhood objects from the colonial era reflected the growing interest in New Zealand's local settler history. There was also increased emphasis on social history toward the end of this period. This was highlighted by the fact that by the 1980s staff working with the collections at the National Museum started to record more information about the donor and in a few cases the child's perspective was also recorded. In this period Valerie Carson and Rosanne Livingstone took a strong interest in many of the childhood objects at the National Museum and as a result they started collating specialist information about dolls and toys. In contrast the main focus at the Auckland Museum was on developing the war and applied art collections. Even so, a large number of objects relating to New Zealand's settler history were included in the 1960s, when the Auckland Museum became involved in the development of the Milne and Choyce *Centennial Street* exhibition.

In this period most objects were acquired without any thought or planning about the history of childhood or in terms of the strategic inclusion of the experience of New Zealand children. Despite this, there are some strong and important thematic groupings of objects that demonstrated the changing nature of childhood in New Zealand as well as broader social, global and industrial developments. There are examples of objects that demonstrate changing technologies, industrialisation, changing parenting ideas and methods, objects that represent an interaction between Pakeha and Maori, and objects that illustrate some of the leisure activities of New Zealand children. As expected there are large gaps in the childhood collections of both museums and the majority of objects reflect the material culture of the wealthy and middle classes.

Absences in the collection of childhood objects are particularly revealing of the way ideas, techniques and priorities have changed in collecting practice. A large percentage of the objects lack any historical context and there is little evidence of the social reality they came from. Knell (2007) argues that this makes it difficult to use objects for historical research. But as Young (1994) explains, through further research and documentation many of the colonial objects collected in the past could carry much greater historical weight. In this thesis I argue that material culture has its own qualities and historical relevance. Objects are the material fragments of the past and

provide a rich source for history. Although many of the objects lack information, they are not devoid of meaning. There are certainly gaps in the collections but the material evidence has been preserved, and an element of the child's perspective in history with it. The following chapter will consider the context in which social history and the 'new museology' became a dominant influence, and in which many more examples of individual childhood histories were preserved. Although there was a continuation of many of the collecting trends of the past, new priorities dramatically changed the type of childhood object collected.

Chapter Three

Story Time at the Museum: Collecting Between 1990 and 2007



Figure 3.1 School locker - year 2000, with Pocket Collection. *Wild Child* exhibition, Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2007.
Photograph by the author.

In 1999 the Auckland War Memorial Museum acquired a 'pocket collection' (Figure 3.1) from a ten-year-old boy who at the time attended a Kura Kaupapa (total immersion Maori language school) in the Auckland region. The collection consisted of two Star Wars cards, a Superman Candy Sticks packet, plastic Dracula teeth, a blue

plastic pencil sharpener, a felt tip pen lid, part of a seashell, blue glass marble, yellow marble, white plastic button, golf tee, metal screw and a piece of plastic Glad Wrap. This collection of thirteen objects highlights many of the changes in collecting since 1990. During this period both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa acquired a much greater variety of childhood objects than in previous decades. These included some remarkable and exciting objects that are historically significant for children and record the subtle aspects of New Zealand history. Many of these objects were singular examples, but there were also a large number of collections of childhood objects acquired, like the pocket collection.

The fact that the pocket collection was acquired at all marks a significant change in collecting practice during the 1990s. In stark contrast to objects acquired in the previous decades, this group of objects are not rare, financially valuable or representative of the best of the decorative arts. They are everyday throwaway items that individually appear to have little value or collection appeal. The pocket collection illustrates how museum curators began to place more importance on an object's associated history and its ability to tell particular stories and represent aspects of social history. Museums were also increasingly interested in representing a wider range of society and the experiences of New Zealanders from all socio-economic backgrounds, cultures and ages. This pocket collection represents the introduction of new museological ideals, including a desire for museums to be more socially inclusive.

The pocket collection is also a simple but poignant artefact of New Zealand childhood at the end of the twentieth century. These objects, along with the child's personal and social history, are very revealing about childhood in New Zealand in 1999: the popularity of swap and bubble gum cards, the interaction and influence of the film industry, and that film and television are now a common everyday aspect of children's lives. While plastic is a commonly used material in children's toys, glass marbles are still valued and played with by children. 'Glad Wrap' is used to wrap food in school lunches. Finally, the fact that children pick up and keep in their pockets odd bits and pieces like shells, buttons and golf tees is an important aspect of childhood to document. Equally of interest is that this child attended a Kura Kaupapa. This is an important part of the child's personal and social history that was documented as part

of the acquisition. It reflects a changing aspect of New Zealand childhood and demonstrates the increasing bicultural nature of New Zealand society. The gathering of this sort of information has become a significant aspect of history collecting and, as this thesis suggests, it provides the means by which the material culture of childhood can make visible individual childhood histories, the history of childhood in general, and wider social changes.

This is a key aspect of collecting childhood because it highlights the way groups of objects can provide a look into the hidden, unknown and elusive world of the child. Children are often unable to articulate their ideas, thoughts or feelings (Shepherd, 1994). However, even though the exact reason these objects were chosen is not known, collections of objects are informative about the child and the material world they are interacting with. The content of a pocket collection would obviously change over time, reflecting the changing material world, but this collection underlines the elements of childhood that stay the same. Play and the experience of childhood is typically difficult to capture through static material culture (Jordanova as cited by Shepherd, 1994, p. 72), however as Shepherd (1994) explains it is possible when objects are juxtaposed together with the interpretive elements of display. Collections and groups of objects, like the pocket collection, represent one way of capturing the experience of childhood.

The circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the pocket collection emphasise another museological shift in this period. A great many of the new acquisitions were actively sought out to illustrate concepts and themes in new exhibitions at both Te Papa and the Auckland Museum. There was, however, one key point of difference between the two museums in this period that had a huge effect on the way the childhood collections evolved. The Auckland Museum developed a specific exhibition about the history of New Zealand childhood – *Wild Child*. The pocket collection was initially gathered as part of the exhibition development process and like many of the objects collected by the museum at this time, it then became part of the permanent collection.

It has been well established that collections become what they are through a range of influential discourses. Both collections and exhibitions embody ideas and values and

objects have shifting relationships and meanings depending on their historical contexts and their use (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.3). This chapter explores the influence of the evolving scholarly historiography in New Zealand and relates this to developments at the Auckland Museum and Te Papa between 1990 and 2007. My analysis of the childhood objects in the collections reveals several key collecting trends that will be explored in detail. First, there is an increasing academic and public interest in New Zealand's social and cultural history. Second, personal stories and social history form a large component of new exhibitions at both museums and this influences the choice of acquisitions and collection development. Collecting practice changed significantly during the 1990s as the 'new museology' was adopted. Curators gathered increasingly detailed information about the objects and their associated social history. For the first time history curators start recording information about the childhood experience and to some extent the child's perspective in history is captured.

New Zealand historiography, social history and the 'new museology'

Social history has become a firmly established and accepted form of historical enquiry at university level in New Zealand. From the 1980s there has been increased public interest in New Zealand history and the 'emergence of a sizeable educated audience at home for New Zealand history' (Phillips, 2001, p. 330). New historical topics, especially branches of social history, continue to be explored including the history of women and the family, labour and health (Phillips, 2001). By the end of the 1990s publications and academic studies that focus specifically on the history of childhood were breaking new ground.

In the 1990s key publications that explored the experience of New Zealand children focused on health, welfare and education. The most significant of these were authors that include: Helen May (1997) who explored the history of early childhood education, Margaret Tennant (1994) who revealed the history of children's health camps in New Zealand, and Bronwyn Dalley's (1998) publication about the history of child welfare in twentieth-century New Zealand. These publications demonstrate the growing interest in the history of childhood as a serious topic of study. In 2003 Jeanine Graham wrote an overview of the history of New Zealand childhood for the *Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*. Although this is a

brief overview of New Zealand childhood Graham highlights some important contemporary issues. In addition, in 2006, the *New Zealand Journal of History* produced an issue that focused on childhood, delving into a variety of specialist topics about New Zealand's childhood history.

The increasing use of material culture in historical research is another important development in historical enquiry that relates directly to museum history. This has brought the research of museum curators and historians closer together and has important implications for historians researching the history of childhood. Historians are now turning to new sources and are 'determined to get beyond the written document' (Phillips, 2001, p. 331). Oral history, photographic evidence and more recently objects held in museums have become important sources for researchers. In *Looking Flash. Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Labrum, McKergow & Gibson, 2007) many of the authors focus on items of clothing from museum collections and explore the social, cultural and historical implications. Labrum writes that: 'Much of the material evidence in this book relies on the initiative and foresight of museum curators and conservators' (2007a, p. 7). Museum curators and other specialists have joined academic historians in exploring New Zealand's cultural and social identity, especially through the close exploration of objects and their associated history.

However, there are still a great deal of under-researched areas to be explored including aspects of New Zealand's history that can provide a greater understanding of New Zealand culture and identity. Phillips (2001, p. 336) suggests: 'We need to understand sub-cultures of locality, gender, class and ethnicity, and also super-cultures of international fashion and influence'. Histories that focus on children provide fresh insights into history and culture (Graham, 2000; Fass, 2003; Stearns, 2006), however the stories and perspectives of New Zealand childhoods have only just begun to be recorded.

Alongside the growing academic and museum-based exploration of social history there was an evolving 'new museology' calling for museums to be socially responsible, relevant and inclusive. Museums became concerned with exploring the multiple perspectives of the communities they served, changing from being inward looking and self-serving to being outward looking and socially inclusive, embracing

the needs of their visitors (Karp & Lavine, 1993; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Weil, 2004). Museum professionals have advocated the inclusion of ethnic minorities, women, the gay community and disabled people. However, the inclusion of children and the experiences of childhood have not been a major or conscious part of this movement, even though children are an important group in society. Children have traditionally been underrepresented and deprived the opportunity to make themselves heard in the museum.

The United Nations estimated in 1998 that 30 per cent of the world's population was experiencing childhood (Schwartzman, as cited by Roberts, 2006, p. 154). At Te Papa the manager of 'Visitor and Market Research' reported that children consistently made up 30 percent of the visitor numbers (M. Harvey, personal communication, January 14, 2008). Children and the experience of childhood statistically make up an important volume of the museum's audience both in terms of the actual number of children visiting the museum at any point in time and also in terms of the fact that childhood is a common experience that all adults have been through. As Roberts (2006) explains:

This becomes significant when it is considered that for museums to be popular with and relevant to their audience, they need to be something that their visitors can relate to and find meaningful. To the extent that people are conscious of their common experience of having been a child, the inclusion of children and childhood in museum displays could well provide such a link. (Roberts, 2006, p. 154)

Furthermore, in contemporary New Zealand society children are considered to be a pivotal and a central component of the family and the community. With the emergence of what Stearns (2006) describes as the 'modern model of childhood' children are no longer an economic unit that can contribute an income to the family but rather children are to be nurtured and educated. Children are valued, treasured and even idealised by their parents. In New Zealand the care, safety, educational needs and welfare of children are continually being addressed and questioned by the government, agencies of childcare and welfare, and by the news media. New Zealand's high rate of child abuse, youth suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy, and criminal offending are matters of widespread public concern

(Graham, 2003). The rights of the child, both internationally and in New Zealand, has been an important topical and contentious issue since the 1970s (McDonald, 1978; Dalley, 1998). In this chapter I assess the extent to which Te Papa and the Auckland Museum have responded to the changing position of children in society and whether this has influenced childhood collecting. I consider institutional changes as well as the impact of individuals working in the museum.

Historical developments at Te Papa and the Auckland Museum

Planning and development work for Te Papa started in the 1980s with the new Labour Government appointing a project development team to plan for the new national museum. In a report produced in the 1980s, Te Papa was conceived as:

A forum for the nation to present, explore, and preserve the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order better to understand and treasure the past, enrich the present and meet the challenges of the future. (Oliver, 2004, p. xi)

In 1992 the former National Museum and National Art Gallery merged to become the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. The Museum of New Zealand, now commonly known as Te Papa, opened in a new building on the Wellington waterfront in 1998. The development of Te Papa occurred at a time when the ‘new museology’ was a dominant influence, embodying many of the ideas physically in the architecture of the building (McCarthy, 2007, p. 170), and engaging in a consultative and inclusive style of exhibition development. This was evident in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992, which proposed a multidisciplinary approach and bicultural partnership. The functions of the museum were also clearly set out and included three directives specifically aimed at the collections: that collection development should occur; that the collections be made accessible; and that the collections should be cared for (About Us, 2003). The fact that the Act specifically stated that the collections were an integral part of the museum’s function is important because according to the new museology, objects and collections were arguably less important than exhibition concepts and storylines. Heumann Gurian (2004, p. 270) argues that the essence of a museum is not to be found in its objects but rather in it being a place that stores memories, and presents and organises meaning in some sensory form. Other new museums, such as the Museum of the Diaspora in Israel,

‘decided to tell the complete story of five thousand years of Jewish migration without using a single authentic artifact’ (Heumann Gurian, 2004, p. 276). However, a key point of difference from Te Papa and an important part of the rationale behind this decision was that the museum’s collections could not ‘accurately and comprehensively’ tell the story (Heumann Gurian, 2004, p. 276).

Te Papa already had substantial collections, acquired over the past one hundred and fifty years. Even so, new exhibitions that would ‘tell our stories’ (Oliver, 2004, p. xi), were not to be driven by the content of the existing collections, but rather were derived from a conceptual and narrative based approach. Multidisciplinary teams including curators, concept developers, interpreters, education staff, an exhibition team manager and designers were established to create exhibitions. The intensive exhibition programme would eventually require the employment of several history curators. By 2007, four full time and one part-time (myself) history curators were employed to work on history exhibitions and collections.

The establishment of Te Papa saw major and rapid internal changes. The museum was immersed in a process of adopting tikanga or Maori customary practices and an official policy of biculturalism (McCarthy, 2007, p. 156). For example Te Papa was to be led by a CEO (Cheryll Sotheran appointed in 1993) and a Kaihautu or navigator of the canoe (Cliff Whiting, who was appointed in 1995) (McCarthy, 2007, p. 176). At this time the museum carefully considered cultural and ethnic inequalities in the museum, particularly in relation to Maori, but many other aspects of social inclusion and the history of minority groups that make up a significant part of New Zealand society were over looked. The 1992 Act, states that Te Papa should endeavour to ensure that the museum is a source of pride for *all* New Zealanders, and that it should have regard to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of New Zealand (About Us, 2003). However, Te Papa’s collections and exhibitions still contain unequal representations of the history and perspectives of gay and lesbian people, disabled people, women, children and youth.

According to Conal McCarthy: ‘The call for social inclusion drove many of the new audience-focused exhibition practices adopted by the Museum of New Zealand project in the early 1990s’ (2007, p. 174). Clearly Te Papa considered the needs of

children in terms of making the content of exhibitions intellectually accessible and engaging for children. The extensive use of interpretive devices in exhibitions is evidence of this. In addition Te Papa developed four child and family focused *Discovery Centres* specifically designed for children aged 7 to 12 years old, each with content that paralleled nearby exhibitions, and *StoryPlace* for preschool children. Each *Discovery Centre* included hands-on interactive components as well as displays that included objects from the collection.

However, the exhibition needs of the *Discovery Centres*, and therefore children, were not a major consideration in the acquisition of new objects. Their inclusion mainly continued passively rather than actively. It was only in 2008 that there was one major acquisition proposed as a direct result of an exhibition in the *Inspiration Station Discovery Centre*. A large collection of archaeological material that came from a historic house built in 1855 in Wellington, known as the Randell Cottage, was on display in *Inspiration Station* for several years. These objects were originally on loan but are currently being considered for permanent acquisition. This collection includes some rare and unique childhood objects including everyday clothing, combs, hatpins and clips, and a range of small toys. The most exciting aspect of this collection is that there is also a body of research that identifies family members and each of the ten children that lived in the house. This research, completed by the dependence of the original Randell family, also links specific children with specific objects giving the collection a rich social history context. Furthermore, one group of objects provides a rare glimpse into the private and secret world of childhood, because they were hidden away in one of the walls of the house. As a group they represent the material world this child engaged with, and insight into the types of everyday objects colonial children treasured in the mid nineteenth century, just like the pocket collection discussed in the introduction to this chapter.

Along with the *Discovery Centres*, the museum continued to provide an educational service for school-aged children and university groups. The new education service, *Leisure Pleasure Learning*, established programmes around exhibitions and the school curriculum. However, to a large extent this is where the focus on children ended and the inclusion of the history of childhood or historical perspectives of children in exhibitions continued to be marginalised. The history of childhood and the

perspectives and experiences of children has never been the main focus of exhibitions at Te Papa.

During the 1990s the Auckland Museum also underwent some major changes that incorporated the 'new museology', including an interactive, child-friendly approach to their public spaces. As with Te Papa, these developments had an impact on the way the museum dealt with children and the way the history collections grew. A new strategic plan devised by Dr. Lindsay Sharp, previously director of Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, promised to transform the museum for the new millennium (Wolfe, 2004). The museum was to develop new exhibitions that utilised the 'latest in hands-on and interactive approaches' (Wolfe, 2004, p. 70). During the 1990s the museum opened new and redeveloped exhibitions. These included a refurbished *Centennial Street* which, as previously discussed in chapter two, contained a great deal of the museum's childhood objects, and in 1993 the *Weird & Wonderful Discovery Centre*. This was the museum's 'first permanent major development catering especially for children' (Wolfe, 2004, p. 71). Like the Discovery Centres at Te Papa this centre combined the display of collection items with a hands-on learning environment that was specifically designed to engage children and youth.

In 1992 the Auckland Museum employed its first history curator, Rose Young, an initiative that was to have a dramatic impact on the way the history collections developed. Young was also part of the new Museum of New Zealand planning team (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). She brought with her many years of curatorial experience from the Waikato Museum and a well-established interest in New Zealand's social and cultural history, including an interest in the history of childhood. Her area of responsibility included collections and exhibitions relating to New Zealand at war and New Zealand social history, with a focus on the Auckland provincial area and Auckland city (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007).

So finally, by the early 1990s, there was a designated curator to develop the history collections and focus on New Zealand's social history at the Auckland Museum. In past decades objects included in the history collections were often historical objects that had been rejected by other departments. Prior to Young's appointment, most of

the New Zealand history objects coming into the museum were assessed by the applied arts curator who would decide whether they were appropriate for the applied arts collection and if not would 'pop' them in the colonial register (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). A curator whose main responsibility was applied and decorative arts will naturally be concerned with the development of this collection and sacrifices are likely to be made in other collection areas. Once the museum appointed a history curator, the history collections benefited from specialist knowledge, experience and attention.

At Te Papa the situation was slightly different because from the late 1960s, when the first history curator was appointed, the history collections were all inclusive of decorative arts, costume, furniture and ceramics. The old classification system continued and is still evident in the catalogue numbers whereby PC is for period costume, CG is for ceramics and glass, PF is for period furniture, and NU is for numismatics. Then in the 1990s the installation of a new database system called Te Kahui occurred. This forced the standardisation of the classification system for the history collections. All of the new objects accepted into the history collections were numbered GH for general history, bringing the collection classification system in line with the intellectual thinking in the museum.

Michael Fitzgerald explained that previous collection titles generally covered the main collection areas that the museum was interested in (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). Furthermore, he explained that this was also reflected in the policy documents and that the 'umbrella headings' used in Te Kahui, like economic and social history, technological history or decorative arts, reflected the strategic thrust of collection development. Of collecting the history of New Zealand childhood, Fitzgerald notes that the categories are broad enough to embrace childhood, 'if you take the over-riding principle that you want to collect material which illustrates how people lived in the past, the life of children is a valid part of that' (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). This point is important because it demonstrates the way such a large number of childhood objects were passively included.

The categorisation and collection divisions within museums shape how collections develop, grow and change, and how objects are used in exhibitions. My research has highlighted the fact that history curators currently employed at both Te Papa and the Auckland Museum were aware of the politics of collection development and work within these discursive fields on a daily basis. Angela Lassig, the senior history curator at Te Papa, has a background in decorative arts and design, dress and textiles. She recalls, when working in the decorative art department at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney between 1984-8, that there was a lot of conflict about the use and interpretation of objects. This was especially prevalent when the museum was establishing an exhibition about women's work, called '*...never done*': *women's work in the home* (A. Lassig, personal communication, May 17, 2007). The outcome was that objects from the decorative arts collection were used in the exhibition but:

There were philosophical battles about which I was aware but my loyalties lay with the decorative arts department. Even though I had good training in the context of historical and social objects, I wasn't working in a particularly social history way because of my mentors there. (A. Lassig, personal communication, May 17, 2007)

An important element in the way collections develop is affected by changing fashions in scholarship, and internal politics (Dunn, 1999). Despite the divisions and tensions between museum departments, at both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa, objects relating to the history of childhood have mainly been included in the history collections. Collecting strategies and policies are important markers of the strategic direction and the thrust of collecting, however two other factors are highly influential in the way collections develop. First, exhibition development has proven to be the most important and influential event in the collecting of childhood objects and second, as will be shown in the following section of this chapter, the personal interests and background of the curators were crucial.

During the 1990s the Auckland Museum embarked on an exhibition programme that focused on New Zealand's social history. *Scars on the Heart* (still on display), an exhibition about the social history of warfare, *City* (now closed) about Auckland's urban history, and *Wild Child* (still on display) on New Zealand childhood, opened in 1999. Rose Young was the curator responsible for finding, acquiring and selecting

objects for these new exhibitions but the *Wild Child* exhibition concept was developed by historian James Belich. A great deal of this exhibition was based on his theory about the wild New Zealand child. Belich (2001, p. 357) argues against existing models of New Zealand childhood which, based on international theory, describe the New Zealand child of the nineteenth century as a 'Chattel Child' and then in the twentieth century as the 'Cherished Child'. Belich argues that this view of childhood is extreme and does not reflect the New Zealand situation. He explores aspects of New Zealand childhood that present a slightly different picture including the fact that 'colonial parents had at most half the time for child control as their twentieth century successor' and the fact that even in large towns clusters of houses 'were interspersed with empty sections, patches of bush, gullies and creeks' meaning children had more space to play and explore away from 'prying eyes' (Belich, 2001, p. 360).

Wild Child explores the idea that a shift in control occurs between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Parental control in the nineteenth century was more intensive but less extensive than in the twentieth century. The control of childhood went from being parent and home-based, to extending into schools, recreational activities, and then as the century progressed, through radio, videos and computer games (Belich, 1999, p.2). The exhibition is divided into three sections: the home, school, and a space in between which is conceptually the route between home and school. The exhibition contains many aspects of New Zealand childhood that reflect the changing experience of children in history. It includes objects and stories about school, play, childcare and organisations that provide childcare services, like the Plunket Society and the School Dental Service, as well as British and American influences on the toy industry, globalisation and the increasing consumer society. Both historical and contemporary stories are included.

The exhibition development process began with this concept which was revised and refined with curatorial input and discussions about potential objects. Daniel Smith's museum studies thesis on the process and politics of exhibition development, analyses and critiques this process and the relationship between the concept developers, James and Margaret Belich and museum curator Rose Young (Smith, 2003). Smith concludes that in the development of *City*, an exhibition that was simultaneously created alongside *Wild Child* using the same process, historical scholarship was not

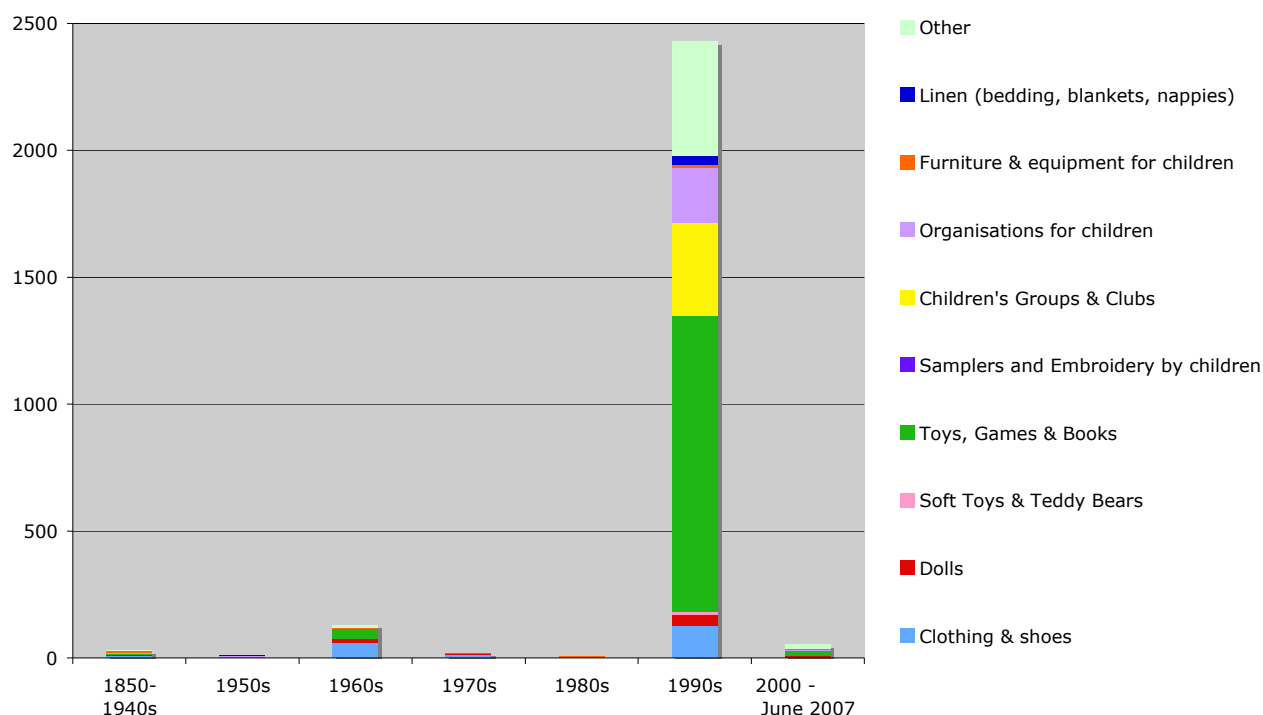
realised to its full potential. Another critique of the social history exhibitions at the Auckland Museum, including the *Wild Child* exhibition, claims that the concept was obscure and untested (Wright, 2006, p. 135). Wright (2006, p. 98) argues that the *Wild Child* concept is lost on the public and concludes that the exhibition's narrative failed because it is based on 'shaky historical foundations' (Wright, 2006, p. 136).

Despite the outcome of the exhibition, the critiques of Smith (2003) and Wright (2006) fail to explore the ramifications in terms of the permanent collection. For the first time in one of New Zealand's major museums an extensive exploration of New Zealand childhood has occurred and this has had a significant impact on collection growth and on the variety of childhood objects collected. Collecting based on the needs of this exhibition meant that a broad range of childhood objects were acquired covering some important topics in the history of New Zealand childhood. Table 3.1 clearly shows the increase in the number of childhood objects collected specifically for *Wild Child*. However, as this chapter suggests, the diversity of objects collected is also an important outcome, as is the inclusion of the child's perspective in history, and both positive and negative childhood experiences. The exhibition therefore made a significant contribution to the history of childhood in terms of collecting historically significant material culture and many important childhood memories and experiences. The museum succeeded in capturing and preserving a great deal of this. Furthermore, the *Wild Child* exhibition and related collection growth is evidence that even when museums are focusing on exhibitions, the collections benefit because new acquisitions inevitably occur.

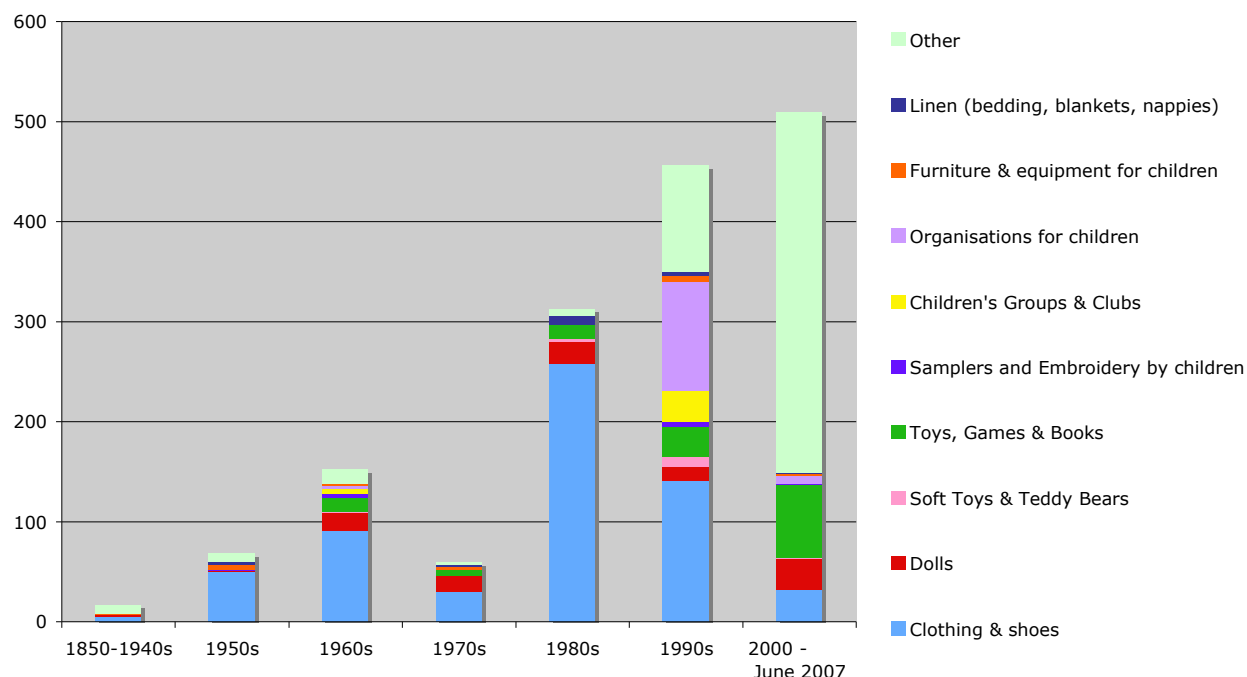
The collections, the objects and the stories

At Te Papa, one of the key aims in the 1990s was to 'move away from being a self-serving collection-based organization to being audience-orientated' (Harper as cited by McCarthy, 2007, p. 175). Both Te Papa and the Auckland Museum advocated a hands-on interactive approach to exhibition development. Despite this, museum collections continue to grow and objects continue to be central to the business of these museums. Spalding (2002, p. 9) argues that objects are what make museums more than just high-tech interactive theme parks. The number of childhood objects collected by Te Papa and the Auckland Museum has continued to increase dramatically between 1990 and 2007 as shown by Tables 3.1 and 3.2. In the 1990s,

when the Auckland Museum was developing *Wild Child*, it collected about 2430 childhood objects. Te Papa's numbers are also impressive with 454 childhood objects collected in the 1990s. The early twentieth-first century provides a different picture with the Auckland Museum's total dropping to 55, an expected trend after the extensive collecting carried out in the previous decade. However, Te Papa's total continued to rise between 2000 and 2007 reaching a total of 509. These figures indicate that objects are still the most desired and poignant way of illustrating and preserving the historical stories and themes explored in these museums.



**Table 3.1 Auckland War Memorial Museum
Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 2007**



**Table 3.2 Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
Childhood Objects in the History Collections: 1850 to 2007**

The acquisition of objects for exhibitions has been an important element in the way Te Papa and the Auckland Museum's collections have developed since the 1990s. However all three of the curators I interviewed at Te Papa expressed concerns about this type of collecting. Michael Fitzgerald observed that 'since Te Papa was established a lot of the collecting has been exhibition driven, which is not necessarily for the best because after the exhibition closes you end up with a collection that to some extent is a bit of an orphan' (M. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 11, 2007). However, in terms of the inclusion of childhood objects and the child's perspective, collecting and research based around exhibition development has proven to be beneficial in terms of the number, the variety, depth and quality of childhood objects collected. I also found that there was a much larger group of objects that did not fit into the usual categories such as toys and games, dolls, clothing and furniture, and to a large extent, new acquisitions from the 1990s related to childhood experiences and organisations for children. Some examples include the Boy Scouts,

Boys Brigade, marching girls, school dental nurse equipment, the work of the Plunket Society, health camps and kindergartens.



Figure 3.2 Kindergarten gift set, made by Milton Bradley Company, Massachusetts, 1900s. Wood and printed paper. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH4089. Photograph by the author.

A large number of objects collected during this period were acquired because of their value as social history objects and the stories they could tell in exhibitions, rather than their aesthetic appeal. Even if objects were not collected for a specific exhibition, the current exhibition style has had an impact on what was collected and what information was recorded. For example, in 1993 Te Papa acquired eight sets of kindergarten blocks (Figure 3.2). The blocks are very plain, made of wood, and are contained within a small wooden box. Many of the boxes look well used and showing signs of wear and tear. They provide an interesting contrast and point of comparison to the brightly coloured toys children play with today, but the main reason they were included in the collection at Te Papa was because the blocks came from the

Wellington Free Kindergarten Association and had been used by children in some of Wellington's early kindergartens. The sets of blocks called 'gifts' were part of the philosophy and methodology for teaching young children developed by German educationalist Friedrich Froebel. He believed that play was the best means of developing children's potential and produced the *gifts* to engender this. Froebel's theories and the use of *gifts* formed the basis of New Zealand's early kindergartens. In the acquisition proposal the curator argued that the significance of the blocks lay in their relationship to the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Association, the introduction of the philosophies of this movement to New Zealand, the Association's relationship to early childhood education in general and its aim to make poor children respectable citizens (Acquisition Proposal – History Department, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH 4084 – 4091, 1993). The objects were acquired under the collection category – New Zealand Social and Political History.

In this collecting period, traditional childhood objects like the blocks, dolls and other toys, were expected to have an additional dimension or social history focus that contributed to the reason they were collected. A beautiful pull-along toy horse (GH 3812) collected by Te Papa in 1991 was actually used by the children of the Guard family of Kakapo Bay in the Marlborough Sounds. The story of the Guard family, a early settler family who established New Zealand's first shore-based whaling station, is notorious in the history of early contact between Maori and Pakeha (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004, p. 192). In 1834, when the family was returning to Sydney, a group including Betty Guard and her two children were ship wrecked on the Taranaki Coast. The group were attacked by Ngati Ruanui, twenty-eight men were killed and the rest were captured including Betty Guard and the children (Icons Nga Taonga, 2004, p. 192). The story is complicated and contested, but the event was significant in New Zealand history: socially, culturally and politically. The rocking horse's association with the Guard family and implicitly this event, was a key factor in the reason for its acquisition.

Furthermore, exhibitions have provided the opportunity for curators to undertake additional research both on social history topics in general and objects in particular. Much of this type of research had been incorporated into object files up until the 1990s but by 2000 it had become the usual practice to record this information on the

electronic database system. The introduction of new electronic databases and the refinement and establishment of new record keeping are significant historical developments in New Zealand museums in the 1990s. Object and topic files are still created at both museums but new acquisitions are now recorded electronically. Both museums are involved in a continual process of updating and upgrading object records. Both systems, Vernon at the Auckland Museum and Ke Emu at Te Papa, allow curators to record and categorise objects according to subject and experience.

The electronic systems have provided the opportunity to record a new range of categories, which are regularly being used for childhood objects, including 'Children playing', 'Childhood & youth', 'Children reading & writing'. Shepherd (1994) is critical of museums for using collection classifications that cause childhood to be entrenched in stereotypical categories that do not allow for the experience of childhood. However, in my observation of the collections at Te Papa I have found that from the late 1990s curators were cataloguing objects according to a variety of experiential criteria.

An object's value in relation to people has been an important aspect of museum collecting between 1990 and 2007. Drawing out the emotions and meanings associated with the object provides an opportunity to find the child's voice in history. Curators who have been concerned with the development of socially inclusive collections have increased the level of documentation associated with objects and now look at the context and historical meaning associated with it. While curators continue to collect traditional childhood objects like toys and dolls, christening gowns, and other elaborate children's clothing, there has been a move away from valuing objects purely because of their aesthetic or physical appeal. Curators at Te Papa and the Auckland Museum are now recording multiple stories, making objects more multidimensional, and enabling objects to be interpreted in many ways. As Hooper-Greenhill points out:

It is an old but persistent museum fallacy that objects speak for themselves, and that the task of the curator is limited to presenting the object in as aesthetic, tasteful and ideologically neutral a fashion as possible for visitors to interpret the objects for themselves.

(Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 49)

A dramatic paradigm shift has occurred concerning the object. In this period objects were valued for the memory they evoked, the associated history, or the stories that could be told through them. A Donald Duck toy collected by the Auckland Museum in 1998 illustrates this point, as it has several layers of meaning and different stories to tell. The maker of this soft toy, Ralph Bernard Joyes, was a soldier in World War Two, and he made the toy as part of his occupational therapy when returning to New Zealand on a hospital ship in 1945. The toy then became a gift to his youngest sister Judie (Auckland Museum Object File, 1998.018.1). The toy is also evidence of the early influence of film on the toy industry in general and of Walt Disney productions in particular. This object embodies multiple stories, including a war story, a family story, a childhood story, and a global commercial story.

Increased curatorial input and a commitment to a new museological philosophy has had a direct impact on the type of objects collected and the type of information recorded. Curators working in the 1990s and 2000s have either come through museum studies programmes, were academic historians who were influenced by the growth in social history as a topic at university, or have been exposed to the ideas and thoughts expressed through these disciplines. By 2007 there were five history curators working at Te Papa, including myself. All of the curators I interviewed were familiar with the 'new museology' and were committed to collecting objects that preserve New Zealand's social, cultural and political history. Especially important were everyday objects and objects that tell the stories of everyday New Zealanders. However, each curator also had a slightly different perspective and specific areas of interest. The impact of individual curators, their interests and passions can be seen in the collections and are therefore an important factor in the way collections grow and develop. If no one curator is interested in the perspective and histories of children then it will become an underdeveloped part of the collection. Stephanie Gibson, a history curator at Te Papa, confirmed my thoughts about curatorial input saying 'I really think interest, experience and taste have a huge impact on what we collect' (S. Gibson, personal communication, March 21, 2007). She explained that there is a couture, fashion and dress interest from Angela Lassig, but she (Gibson) is interested in collecting what she called 'the low end'. 'That's more where anything's up for grabs, any little remnant of everyday life has potential' (S. Gibson, personal communication, March 21, 2007).

Te Papa's largest collection of childhood objects was collected by Gibson in 2005/6. It is a collection that is mainly throwaway items from everyday life. The collection came from the Megget family in Wellington and it was acquired by the museum because it was an important representation of the childhood experience in New Zealand in the 1920s and 1930s, and then the 1950s and 1960s, although there are some objects that date back to 1909. The collection consists of over 100 objects and includes paper dolls and paper doll's clothes (Figure 3.3), party hats and whistles, masks, decorations, scraps, bubblegum swap cards, hairclips, Christmas cards that had been coloured in by children, musical toys, books and other ephemeral items.



Figure 3.3 Paper doll 'Ruth' and clothes, maker unknown, c1958. Printed paper. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH11542/1-16. Image courtesy of Te Papa, Collections Online.

The story about how these objects were sourced is also indicative of what happens to many childhood objects. When Gibson called to see them, the party ephemera, hats and whistles and other objects, had been saved and were shown to her by the family, but most of the paper dolls and their clothing had been thrown in a rubbish skip

outside. Gibson recalls that the house had been packed to the ceiling with ephemera, a great deal of which had been thrown out including many of the objects Te Papa eventually acquired. Gibson said, 'They (the Megget family) confessed to me while I was there that they had thrown out the paper dolls. And I got really excited and jumped into the skip and got them out' (S. Gibson, personal communication, March 21, 2007). The fact that the family, in their sorting process, had thrown the dolls out is significant because they had thought that the museum would not be interested in collecting them. Gibson had the foresight to investigate further, finding a rich source of material culture that was extremely revealing about New Zealand childhood in the early to mid twentieth century. As had become the accepted practice by 2005, a detailed provenance and brief family history was recorded. But the most exciting and important aspect of the acquisition was recording the donor's childhood memories. In doing so Gibson was able to capture some rare childhood experiences from the family to contextualise the objects. In relation to the paper dolls that belonged to Drusi Megget, Gibson recorded her childhood recollections.

Paper dolls – I do remember them and playing with them. I enjoyed dressing them, designing clothes for them and think they playacted domestic dramas. One of the things I remember – naming them was very important to me. One time (at least) I made sure I had a full alphabet of names, eg. Anne, Barbara, Clare... In this game teddy bears and ordinary dolls were roped in too. Q for Queeny was important, as Queeny was the only girls name starting with Q that I knew of. Other drawing and daydreaming / scheming games I played were a Girls Detective Agency called GDA for short. I drew lots of uniforms for them to wear. There was a red and brown uniform and a black and lime green for swimming, walking, office work, riding horses (however I was not much interested in horses), adventuring and so on.

(Te Papa Ke Emu Record, GH11542, April 2007)

These objects have provided the means for recording and preserving a historical childhood experience. The vivid recollection of Drusi Megget makes the collection of these objects all the more vital. However, as is often the case, this recollection has been filtered through the memories of an adult. Historians focusing on the history of childhood acknowledge that it will always be difficult to capture the perspective of the child in history. However, as has already been highlighted, child-centred source material produced by children themselves is relatively rare and because of the nature

of childhood most of the evidence draws heavily on adult perceptions (Graham, 1999).

Another large collection of objects acquired by the Auckland Museum in the late 1990s provided the opportunity to collect multiple experiences from two generations of the same family. This was a collection of objects relating to the donor's childhood in the 1940s and 50s, and then her children's childhood in the 1960s and 70s. Most of this collection was acquired specifically for *Wild Child* and it makes up a large proportion of the objects on display (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). Glenys Stace was born in about 1945 and has been living in the same house since 1969. Objects donated from Glenys's infancy include cloth nappies and a baby shawl. As an older child Glenys's mother had wanted her to be like Shirley Temple and so she learned tap dancing. Glenys also donated tap dancing outfits, prizes, medals and trophies that she won in tap dancing competitions. There are also objects relating to Glenys's Catholic Confirmation including a range of little religious trinkets, and a collection of photographs including many images of Glenys's birthday parties. From the next generation, Glenys's children, the museum collected objects relating to their infancy including baby blankets (some had never been opened from their packaging), one daughter's confirmation dress, tonsils, a baby tooth, and from a later period objects relating to sewing in a school manual training class.

Glenys Stace and the Stace children were also collectors themselves and the museum acquired several collections that went on display in *Wild Child* in a section about children as collectors. One group was a collection of Weetbix cards, originally gathered together by the Stace children in the 1970s. Glenys collated a beach collection that included pieces of rock and parts of dead crabs, and other things picked up off a beach. She also collected lacy handkerchiefs.

Her mum had a drapery, haberdashery shop and in the early 1950s she bought in plain handkerchiefs, and there was an elderly woman who lived nearby who used to put fancy edging on them and then they would get sold in the shop. Glenys loved them so she had a collection of pretty handkerchiefs.

(R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007)

Curatorial enthusiasm and passion for this large and diverse childhood collection had a significant role to play in its acquisition for the history collection at the Auckland Museum. However, one of the issues with this large acquisition, and with many of the objects acquired for the *Wild Child* exhibition, was that frequently not all the provenance and related social history was recorded. A team of people were working with Young to gather together the vast amount of objects required for the exhibition. Time and budget constraints meant that it was not always possible to record all of the detail. Young explained that she was still in the process of updating records, transferring information from the 'History Cataloguing Worksheets', which were paper based worksheets used to record information about incoming objects, to the electronic database. Young said one of her future aims was to interview Glenys Stace and to record Glenys's thoughts and recollections about the objects, thereby fleshing out the details of the family history (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). This again shows a desire to record and capture social history, and in this case childhood history, in perspectives and experiences from two generations of the same family.

The *Cyber Kids* section of *Wild Child* is a further example of the Auckland Museum's attempt to present the child's perspective in history. The exhibition included three spaces designed to represent a typical contemporary child's bedroom. Each case represented a different age group: one was based on a four year olds room, another based on an eight year old girl, and another on a twelve year old boy. To decide on the content of each space, information was obtained from the parents of several children through discussions, itemised lists and photographs. Some of the objects used and collected were donated from the children, but with *Cyber Kid 4* which was based on information about Katherine Atafu Mayo, most of the content came from a garage sale purchase.

In the development of the *Cyber Kids* displays, the team did not actually interview any of the children (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). In terms of the history of childhood and the desire to capture the child's voice in history, this was clearly a missed opportunity. The *Cyber Kids* cases were based on the content of an actual child's bedroom, but what was put on display and collected was a mock up or compilation rather than a genuine collection of objects from a particular child.

Collecting for *Wild Child* involved a range of techniques and initiatives to ensure the museum had all of the desired objects. A massive collecting drive was carried out for over a year but even then some objects were elusive, including historical homemade toys. The exhibition team worked with school children to recreate homemade toys, typical of the early to mid twentieth century. These were based on the toys their grandparents or great grandparents would have made (R. Young, personal communication, June 13, 2007). The toys included tin can telephones, wooden stilts, wooden swords, wooden spoon dolls, yarn dolls, a conker, string games, shanghai, bow and arrows.

A dynamic and educational part of the process was that the children were able to experience and connect with an aspect of childhood from the past and learn new skills. This type of museum practice has occurred in other situations when rebuilding knowledge and skill was an exhibition requirement. For example, a small raupo whare *Makotukutuku* was recreated at Te Papa by a group of Maori working alongside museum archaeologists Janet Davidson and Foss Leach (McCarthy, 2007, p. 181). The process was concerned with iwi development and relearning and reconnecting with the ancestors of the past. Children working on the toy project may not have had the same depth of cultural and emotional investment in the outcome, but many of the children would have gained a new understanding and a deeper appreciation of past childhoods including the experiences of their grandparents. The toys were put on display in the *wild space*, a fantasy area dominated by a tree hut in *Wild Child*. They were also accessioned and are now part of the permanent collection. Details about the child and how the toys were made were recorded, making the acquisition yet another example of how the museum has captured childhood experiences.

In chapter two I discussed the way exhibitions encourage specific types of donations by showing the visitor what the museum is prepared to collect. After *Wild Child* opened the museum was offered two historical homemade toys: a wooden sword and a little toy jeep. The exhibition has thereby continued to shape the history collections at the Auckland Museum. Now with such a large collection of childhood objects, the Auckland Museum is able to carefully select new acquisitions that will strengthen the

collection. The most current collecting strategy document reflects this and highlights the areas that the museum aspires to further develop.

By 2007 both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa had strategic collecting plans demonstrating the museum's general collecting direction and preferences. Auckland Museum's collecting plan for social history revealed that the priority should be the social and cultural history of Auckland city and region. Alongside this is the strengthening of collections of twentieth century material, consolidation of existing collections of historical significance to reflect the achievements of Aucklanders, and a focus on the 'home-front' and domestic history that supports the military history and objects required for the museum's exhibition and research programmes (Auckland Museum Policy & Procedures Manual, 1994). In 2004 Young's draft working document suggests the continuation of these strands. She specifically highlights that the museum should continue to develop the childhood collections, strengthening the work initiated by *Wild Child*. Since the opening of *Wild Child* several objects have been collected, as shown in Table 3.1. These objects or collections of objects fill gaps in the collection, such as the homemade toys, or in some cases strengthen existing collection themes, such as puppets.

At Te Papa the 'History and Pacific Cultures Acquisition Plan' for 2007/08 specifically mentions children and the history of New Zealand childhood for the first time. It was developed by the curatorial team with input from myself as a history curator interested in this aspect of collecting. The plan states that the: 'Collection of objects that relate to New Zealand children's history and experience has not been strongly developed by Te Papa. It needs attention to ensure that it is developed in a cohesive and significant way'. Broad areas are then identified for development:

- Toys, games, puppets and playthings for children that were designed and manufactured in NZ
- Objects that illustrate and represent the interests, clothing, events and activities of NZ children
- Objects that are or have been commonly used by children in NZ
- International objects that have had a significant impact on the life of NZ children
- Childhood objects that were owned by iconic New Zealanders, either as adults or as a child

(History and Pacific Cultures Acquisition Plan, 2007/08)

Collection development in the 1990s and 2000s had generally developed along these lines despite the fact that the acquisition plan was not written until 2007. The plan goes on to state that:

It is intended that the juvenilia collection will both add to and complement the existing history collections, and also be built up as a representative collection of New Zealand childhood. Further development will be progressed in consultation with history and other specialists dealing with New Zealand childhood and liaison will include the identification of key objects or groups of objects to target.
(History and Pacific Cultures Acquisition Plan, 2007/08)

It is difficult to know the extent to which the plan directs collecting or whether it reflects already occurring practice. It would be another thesis topic to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic collecting documents. However, the 'Acquisitions Strategy' for 'New Zealand History and Heritage' at Te Papa provides a broad and inclusive strategic direction. It states that, 'Acquisitions will reflect the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of New Zealand's historical development', an important statement that is inclusive of childhood history. Furthermore, some recent acquisitions at Te Papa reflect of the museum's aim to collect iconic objects of national significance. The Acquisition Strategy provides for the collection of:

Items that relate to significant events in New Zealand's history and to the development of concepts and symbols of national identity, including items that reflect the lives and achievements of selected iconic New Zealanders.
(Acquisitions Strategy, 2007/08)

Two groups of childhood objects collected since 2000 demonstrate this focus. Toys from the Play School television show, produced and shown in New Zealand for over thirty years (Figure 3.4), and a Buzzy Bee toy, c1945 (GH11665), along with other toys manufactured in the series including a Mary Lou doll (GH116911) and an Oscar Ostrich (GH11671). These toys are iconic objects. They have certainly had an impact on the life of New Zealand children. The Play School television show continues to be shown although it is in a slightly different format and produced in Australia. The Buzzy Bee has become an extremely popular feature in the toy box of a large number

of New Zealanders. It has reached Kiwiana status, a term which refers to objects that are either unique to or iconic in New Zealand, and it has featured in the New Zealand Post Kiwiana series and in a book about Kiwiana.



Figure 3.4 Play School Toys, Humpty, Manu and Big Ted, made or modified by TVNZ, about 1970. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, GH14510, GH14509, GH14511. Photograph courtesy of Te Papa, Marketing Department.

Conclusion

During this period both the Auckland Museum and Te Papa significantly increased the volume of childhood objects in their history collections. Te Papa's collection mainly grew passively but at the Auckland Museum there was an intensive period of active collecting for the *Wild Child* exhibition, resulting in a collection of childhood objects that is rich and diverse, covering many aspects of the history of New Zealand childhood. Objects collected during this period include those that represented childhood activities both at home, at school and in play. This included homemade toys, as well as a vast array of commercially produced toys both New Zealand made and imported. Some important global trends were also incorporated including an American influence, especially cowboy and Indian style toys, Disney and other film and television inspired toys. The growing commercialisation and commodification of childhood through the toy industry were important themes explored in *Wild Child*. Contemporary as well as historical perspectives have been included and the material

culture collected reflected this. The Auckland Museum's childhood collection is now extremely comprehensive. This occurred as a direct result of exhibition development. At Te Papa, collection growth was also heavily influenced by exhibition developments even though there was not an exhibition that specifically focused on childhood. The need for material culture to represent personal aspects of history in exhibitions became an important aspect in the way objects were valued and included in collections.

However, it is important to note that, to a large extent the type of childhood material culture collected did not diverge from the traditional types of childhood objects, such as toys, dolls, games and clothing, it was the perception and interpretation of these objects that changed. In the 1990s curators gathered increasingly detailed information about the objects, provenance, associated social history and remembered childhood experiences. At the Auckland Museum *Cyber Kids*, the pocket collection and the Glenys Stace collection are examples of the way museums captured the child's perspective in history. At Te Papa, by 2005 curators were recording information about childhood experiences, and the child's perspective through adult eyes had been captured, the Megget collection is an example of this.

So to what extent do the objects collected between 1990 and 2007 represent children's history? Are children seen and heard in the museum? The answer is a qualified 'yes', but even though curators go a long way towards capturing detailed information and a childhood perspective in relation to objects collected, they fall short of capturing the child's voice – a child's point of view at a particular point in history.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the extent to which museums represent children in their history collections, with a focus on the Auckland Museum and Te Papa. This research has addressed gaps in the literature of both history and museum studies. It has presented a fresh perspective on the way museums collect and interpret the material culture of childhood in New Zealand, and this had led to new insights on collecting practice. Due to a dearth of data on this topic my initial research task was to ascertain what was in the collections and then collate this information in the form of graphs that demonstrated the main statistical changes in the number and types of childhood objects collected in each decade from 1851 to 2007. I also focused on the contextual information that was recorded when objects were acquired, how this changed over time. I considered my findings within the historical context in which they were collected and reflected on the museum practice of that period.

I found that there were three distinct periods of collecting, and each was characterised by a different set of ideological discourses that framed the period and influenced collecting practice and the acquisition of certain types of childhood objects. The first period, 1851 to 1950, concentrated on the early days at the museums now known as of the Auckland Museum and Te Papa. This was a period in which museums focused on scientific collecting which mainly included natural history, ethnographic and Maori 'artefacts'. Then in the late 1940s, when New Zealand history started to become a more prominent area of interest, the first objects relating to the history of New Zealand childhood were included in the collections. Between 1950 and 1990, an era of massive collection growth, historical objects that represented New Zealand's colonial settler history predominated. These included childhood objects of the same genre, mainly colonial dress, and objects that represented an interest in decorative arts. Childhood objects were included because they were the best and finest examples of clothing, toys, dolls, christening gowns and silver christening cups, samplers and embroidery. By the third period, 1990 to 2007, an emerging 'new museology' and the growing impact of social history were key influences. Collections continued to grow at an accelerated pace, especially at the Auckland Museum where an exhibition about the history of New Zealand childhood, entitled *Wild Child*, was developed. At this

point in time childhood collecting at the Auckland Museum by far exceeded that of Te Papa, not only in the number of objects collected but also in terms of the variety of objects, the breadth of themes covered and the inclusion of the child's perspective in history. At both museums, museum practices developed with objects collected to both illustrate and invoke personal histories and curators recorded more detail about the donor and associated stories. Alongside this, both institutions initiated a focus on everyday objects. The intrinsic value of objects was no longer the most important aspect of collecting. Much of this change has been exhibition driven and evolved out of a need for museums to be more engaging and relevant to the community. Exhibition driven collecting has proven to be one of the most important factors in developing a comprehensive and detailed collection of childhood objects. This is an important finding and contradicts the commonly held curatorial belief that acquiring objects for exhibitions is not the best way to build collections.

This finding highlights the necessity for curators to critically analyse the history and nature of our collections and the reason behind their formation. As Pearce (1994) argues this will enable us to better appreciate the assumptions behind curatorial knowledge. Furthermore, Shepherd (1994) suggests that by analysing the people that make the selections and classifications of children's objects, a deeper and more significant evaluation may be achieved. In this thesis I have shown that the practice of museum professionals and the influence that particular people have significantly shaped what was collected. The work of Nancy Adams, Valerie Carson and Rosanne Livingstone was particularly instrumental in the development of the early childhood collections at Te Papa, especially with regard to the collections' documentation. More recently, my interest in the history of childhood has led to a commitment to develop a collection that is reflective of New Zealand childhood experiences and perspectives. Strategic collecting documents written in 2007 provide a mandate for this.

By the 1990s all curators at Te Papa were committed to collecting everyday objects and objects that represent personal stories and multiple perspectives, including childhood objects. Stephanie Gibson has instigated the acquisition of several large groups of childhood collections, and she has also recorded detailed recollections of New Zealand childhood from their donors. At the Auckland Museum Rose Young was the first history curator to be appointed in 1992. The history collections benefited

from the attention of a dedicated curator. Her involvement in *Wild Child* meant that the exhibition was richly illustrated with many unique childhood objects and stories. At this time childhood objects were collected, detailed records were made and in many cases a glimpse into the lives of New Zealand children was recorded and preserved. Young was also committed to collecting everyday objects and objects valued for the memories and stories they invoke.

The influence of broad discourses, ideologies and changing museum philosophies has proven to be a key factor in determining which childhood objects were collected during each period of time. Equally influential was the scholarship of academic historians and an evolving general interest in New Zealand history. Alongside this changing ideas about the way children are viewed and valued in society has also been significant. One of the first indicators of this was the introduction of exhibitions that aimed to educate the public. This encompassed the introduction of an education service for children prompted by government concerns for the future of the nation and improvements to the health and education of children.

Changes and developments in museum history are often inter-related with academic history. However, in this thesis I have also argued that the way museums make history is a distinctive form of creating history in its own right. My research has shown that museums have always included childhood objects in their collection and therefore a particular aspect of childhood history has been preserved. This occurred even though academic historians in New Zealand had only just begun studying the history of childhood in the 1980s (Graham, 2003). Even so, the most important issue here is not about who was doing childhood history first, but rather that the history made in museums has its own relevance and should be critiqued from a different set of standards to that of academic history. The material culture of childhood embodies a reality and historical perspective that cannot be captured solely by words and in text. Objects provide both intellectual and poetic possibilities: they provide a link to the external world and to the original context (Knell, 2007). Through their tangible presence, objects have a power to fascinate, not only through what we say about them, but by the way they look, feel, sound and smell (McKergow, 2000).

Knell (2007, p. 8), argues that ‘decades or even centuries of resource-starved keeping and ‘miscuration’ can leave just about any collection of objects decontextualised and historically unreliable’. In the 1990s curators at the Auckland Museum and Te Papa were committed to ensuring objects have context. They recorded detailed information for new acquisitions and up-dated records from past acquisitions when possible. Most of the childhood objects collected between 1990 and 2007 have associated personal and intimate childhood stories recorded in their acquisition files. At Te Papa, *Christie* the walking doll (GH 3513) collected in 1986 is one early example, and the Megget childhood collection, acquired in 2005-6, together with the recording of Drusi Megget’s childhood memories of playing with the paper dolls. At the Auckland Museum Glenys Stace’s collection, acquired in 1998-9, incorporated the inclusion of two generations of childhood memories, bringing to life a unique and intimate aspect of New Zealand childhood.

Despite my findings about the way museums have included and collected the material culture of childhood, the broader context shows that large institutions have traditionally marginalised children and the history of childhood. Like other minority groups the perspective of children was underrepresented, they were often excluded and they lack the power and authority to ensure their perspective was included. Although the material culture of childhood has been collected, their thoughts, feelings and ideas have not. This is a complicated and problematic relationship in terms of representing an accurate and balanced account of children’s experiences in history. The experience of childhood is always changing and depends on a range of factors like historical period, urban or rural location, economic conditions and other sociological differences. Furthermore, ‘childhood has a tendency to be revered and romanticized by adults in our society, and it is often viewed with a sense of nostalgia, as it comprises our own fond memories of when we were children’ (James et al. as cited by Roberts, 2006, p. 154). The collections at the Auckland Museum and Te Papa are full of toys, games, dolls and beautiful clothes, all representing pleasant, happy or privileged childhoods. However, New Zealand society has always contained unhappy childhoods and the reality for many New Zealand children is far from the idyllic picture commonly presented by museums.

A broader scope for collecting the material culture of childhood is required. Hawes & Hiner (1985) provide a comprehensive framework for considering the issues and experiences important to the history of childhood. They suggest five key questions that provide a coherent focus for enquiry. First, what have been the attitudes of adults towards children and childhood? Second, what have been the conditions that shaped the development of children? Third, what has been the subjective experience of being a child in the past? Fourth, the influence of children on adults and each other. Fifth, what have been the social, cultural and psychological functions of children? More recently added to this list is the recommendation that there should be further investigation into the institutions that have been important in defining children's lives and experiences, the inclusion of the theme of the universality of childhood and of children as members of families, as members of a distinct population group, as producers and consumers, and as cultural and political symbols (Graham, 2006).

Museums have in their history collections material culture that can engage with many of these questions. Some examples include objects from New Zealand schools, kindergartens, health camps, and dental nursing. But an important link is missing: how can museums make their collections more relevant and accessible? Shepherd (1994) recommends that in order to make the experiences of childhood available museums should include classifications that specifically focus on childhood experiences including play, school-life, home-life and working-life. This became possible for New Zealand museums in the late 1990s and 2000s when new electronic databases were introduced that contained fields for recording these types of subject headings and associations.

It is impossible for museums to be encyclopaedic and all-inclusive in their collecting (Gardner & Merritt, 2002). Storage space is increasingly constrained and there is a need for museums to be more strategic about what they collect (Anderson, 2004; Simmons, 2004). However, I believe this must be done within the context of including multiple perspectives from all factions of society. Sandell (2003, p. 58) concludes that 'it is likely that the underlying demands for museums to become more responsive to changing socio-political agendas and to adopt a greater degree of social responsibility will continue'. It is therefore significant and timely that the history of childhood and childhood perspectives in history are carefully and strategically considered. Children

make up a large proportion of society and they traverse all cultural, ethnic and minority groups including disabled and homosexual people. Children's history is everyone's history. To leave the child's perspective out is to seriously diminish reality and sacrifice an exciting aspect of New Zealand history. Furthermore, I believe museums have a social responsibility to include childhood perspectives. Sandell (2003, p. 45) argues that museums have the potential to empower individuals and communities and to contribute towards combating multiple forms of disadvantage. Museums, as advocates for children and the inclusion of multiple childhood perspectives, have the potential to give the child a voice in the museum environment and therefore power in the community.

Recent museum practice has rendered the preservation of a few stories of childhood and the childhood memories of adults. However, one aspect of collecting the history of childhood is still underdeveloped – the contemporary child's voice in history. The child's perspective from a particular point in time has not been recorded or collected. My research has indicated that this is an opportunity for future development. The only way of collecting a childhood perspective or the child's voice in history is by actively pursuing it and recording the child's thoughts, when they are a child. This is difficult and raises complex issues such as privacy and the rights of the child, but I believe it is possible and worth pursuing. Museums now have the capacity and opportunity to collect objects that provide the material evidence of New Zealand childhood, including childhood perspectives, experiences and the child's voice in history. I would like to conclude by challenging museums to collect a far more diverse range of childhood objects, and record the happy and the sad memories. In doing so a considerably more poignant and diverse childhood collection will emerge. It is time to ensure that all childhood perspectives are seen and heard in the museum.

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This list is set out under the following headings:

Primary Sources

1. Unpublished Interviews
2. Museum Registers and Databases
3. Museum Documentation

Secondary Sources

1. Books, Articles and Conference Papers
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