The Japan-Australia Bilateral Cooperation in Archival Processing for the Wartime Seized Company Records

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【Abstract】
This paper looks at the records of Australian-based Japanese companies seized by the Australian government during World War II, and are currently held by the National Archives of Australia (NAA). By tracing the collection’s formation process and examining recent joint efforts between Japan and Australia to arrange and put these records to good use, it chronicles a definitive shift in the relationship of the two countries, whereby the records symbolize developing friendship. This paper addresses two key issues. It first discusses the actual process of how this collection of the wartime requisitioned documents was formed and transferred to the custody of the NAA, with reference to the political and diplomatic backgrounds as well as its current legal status. Secondly, it explains about a joint project of Japanese and Australian archivists and historians to arrange and utilize these records, an endeavor initiated in 2003 and still in progress. The outcomes of their work have already been utilized in the NAA activities. In the coming years, with the aim to foster shared memories and reconciliation between Japan and Australia, further collaboration is expected to take place over this collection for improvement in various fields including archival description and user access. In this sense, the paper illustrates an important shift whereby an archival collection born from an enemy relationship (wartime requisition) has become a symbol of friendship through the cooperative efforts of archivists and historians from the two nations. It also presents a remarkable example of how archivists from a country of the seized documents’ origin could be instrumental in arranging the records held by the seizing country. Through this process, we hope to show archivists playing a vital role in reconciliation between once-rival nations—and perhaps in advancement towards world peace.

【Biography】
Ms. Junko AKIYAMA's current position is Archivist at the Sapporo City Archives. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the the Ochanomizu University and finished a doctoral program in history without dissertation at Ochanomizu. She also has rich teaching experience at various institutions such as the Tokai University and the Hokusei Gakuen University. Her scholarly contributions include "Arrangement and Description of a Japanese Business Collection Held at the National Archives of Australia," Journal of the Japan Society for Archival Science 8 (2008): 2-20; and "The Establishment of Sapporo City Archives: Activities and Subjects in the Opening Year," Records Management: Journal of the Records Management Society of Japan 67 (2014): 91-103.
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Reported by: Junko Akiyama, Hanako Wada, Daisuke Ichikawa, Hisayuki Oshima, Hideyoshi Yagashiro, and Masahito Ando

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1.1 Overview of the Records

Series based on Japanese Companies
- SP1096/* Companies in MELBOURNE
- SP1098/* Companies in SYDNEY
- SP1101/1 Mitsubishi Bussan (Syd.)
- SP1099/* Yokohama Specie Bank

Japanese Companies’ Records
- Letters & Correspondences

Series No. Company’s Name Total Boxes
SP1096/1 Mitsubishi Shoji (Melb.) 97
SP1096/2 Mitsui Bussan (Melb.) 18
SP1096/3 John Mitchell 5
SP1096/4 Iida & Co. 31
SP1096/5 Mitsui Bussan (Melb.) 47
SP1096/6 Mitsubishi Bussan 324
SP1096/7 Arakel B. Co. 440
SP1096/8 Yamasita B. Co. 366
SP1096/9 Okura 46
SP1096/10 Mitsubishi Shoji 112
SP1096/11 Yano B. & Joko 45
SP1096/12 Nosawa B. Co. 180+13
SP1096/13 Japan Cotton Trading 170
SP1096/15 Kikugami 8
SP1096/16 Iida B. Co. 44
SP1099/1-247 Yokohama Specie Bank 1050

TOTAL: 3,327 boxes

Held by National Archives of Australia (NAA) Sydney (as of Sept. 2016)
- Quantity: c. 800m
- TOTAL: 3,327 boxes
1.2 Development of Japan-Australia trades and the advance of Japanese companies to Australia
- Japan-Australia trades: Wool + Various Japanese products
  - In 1889, Kanematsu began business in Australia
  - Trading Companies opened branches: Mitsui, Mitsubishi etc.
- During W.W.I, the trade environment improved:
  - Yokohama Specie Bank / Regular shipping line
  - Medium-to-small sized trading companies: Exporting various types of Japanese products
- By 1930, Japan-Australia trade relations developed significantly
  - Japanese companies: Advance to major cities all over Australia

1.3 The Outbreak of the Second World War and the Wartime Seizure
- 1941.12, the outbreak of the Second World War
- The Australian government began to seize assets of the Japanese companies in Australia
  - The Trading with the Enemy Act (1939)
  - The Executive Agency: the Controller of Enemy Property
  - National Security (Enemy Property) Regulations of the National Security Act of 1939
- The records in the office were seized as a part of the assets of Japanese companies
- 1957, the records were transferred to NAA

2. Japan-Australian Cooperative Project with the Purpose of Archival Processing and Promotion of the Use of Company Records

2.1 A History of the Japan-Australian Cooperative Project
- 2002, the research on archives in Australia conducted by Masahito ANDO
  - NAA: Introduction of the Japanese companies’ records
  - Suggestion of collaborative work on archiving
- 2003, Setting up the Japan-Australian Cooperative Project
  - Japanese Team: Dispatched a research team of archivists and historians to NAA
  - NAA: Organized a special training program on archival arrangement & description for the project members (Canberra/Sydney)

2.1 A History of the Japan-Australian Cooperative Project
- 2004-2016, the research continued every year
  - Sharing the information & descriptions

NAA
- Provision of information on acceptances & arrangements
- Cleaning & Provisional measures
- Box contents lists
- Series Descriptions

A New Project to Donate Records to & Accept at the NAJ

Japanese Team
- Research on the company histories
- A New Project to Donate Records to & Accept at the NAJ
2.2 Archiving and creating descriptions by the Japanese team

Existing Descriptions
- outline descriptions for each series
- partial description of contents — Pam Oliver (2004)
- the Agency of these series: the Controller of Enemy Property

Our Policies on Creating Descriptions
- Simple list of items for each box
- description of the series focused on
  - the characteristics of the document structure (the wartime seizure records)
  - the organizational history of each company
- Publishing by the NAA as guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Archives of Australia Japanese Company Records</th>
<th>Box Contents List (Mitsui)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company Series no.</td>
<td>Box no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</td>
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<td>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Achievements of the Cooperative Project

1) Analyzing the seizing process
- Criterion for determining the subjects of seizure:
  - Ratio of stock holding by Japanese
  - John Mitchell: actually owned by Koto Shokai — Seizure
  - Kanematsu / Ide Shoten: management transferred to the Australians — Not subject of the Seizure

2) Characteristics analysis of the documents structure
- "Swallowed" German company’s records
  - "Swallowed" British company’s records
  - "Swallowed" company’s records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series Description</th>
<th>Mitsubishi SP1098/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Creator:</td>
<td>Mitsubishi Shoji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>Mitsubishi Shoji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content:</td>
<td>Mitsubishi Shoji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent: 18.36 meters (63 boxes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Achievements of the Cooperative Project

3) Maintaining box contents lists and series description

- Box contents lists: 90% completed (as of 2015)
  ⇒ Complete all lists in 2016
- Series descriptions:
  Scheduled to complete in the coming years
- Provide to NAA & NAJ

Conclusion

- Development of Our New Friendship

2015 NAA’s proposal to transfer this collection to Japan
2016 Starting the project to donate records to & accept at the NAJ

- 2012 the unearthing of the Australians victim list of “Montevideo Maru”
- the Sharing of Wartime Records
  → Promote understanding between the two countries

References:


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- Pam Oliver “ALLIES, ENEMIES AND TRADING PARTNERS – Records on Australia and Japanese” - NAA, 2004