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**‘HOPING FOR THE BEST, EXPECTING THE WORST’:  
T. K. PENNIMAN—FORGOTTEN CURATOR OF  
THE PITT RIVERS MUSEUM**

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*Introduction*

Mixing as it does a little optimism with a considerable amount of pessimism, ‘I’m hoping for the best, but expecting the worst’ might almost be the motto of all museum staff. It was, apparently, an oft-repeated phrase of Thomas Kenneth Penniman (1895–1977), probably the least well-known of the six curators (later directors) of the University of Oxford’s Pitt Rivers Museum since its foundation in 1884.

In the last few years, a number of staff at the museum have become interested in its history and published on it. In particular, a considerable amount of work on Beatrice Blackwood, Penniman’s closest colleague at the museum, has been published (Knowles 2000, Gosden and Knowles 2001, Peers 2003). In contrast, Penniman’s contribution seems to have been forgotten or, at least, overlooked. Penniman succeeded Henry Balfour as curator in 1939, serving the museum until 1963, and he was largely responsible for transforming what had become an overcrowded, unmanageable, and disorganized institution during the final years of Balfour’s long curatorship into a productive and orderly museum and university department. In this article, we try to provide sufficient information about Penniman and his work to enable a proper appreciation of his contribution to the history of the museum. To do this, we have drawn on the museum’s annual reports, on Penniman’s unfinished autobiography held in the museum’s manuscript collections (Penniman no date), and on various documents studied in the course of our general research into the history of the museum and the work of Balfour and Blackwood.

*Childhood and Education*

Penniman was born in 1895 in Meriden, New Hampshire, USA. He was brought up in the country on the family farm and learned to plough with oxen, fell trees, and shoot and skin bison. His family were very religious, rather strict, and fiercely self-sufficient. Penniman’s later colleague at the museum Kenelm Burridge reported that:

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Once when he was a child, he told me, he and his parents went skating on a New England pond in a winter turning to spring. The ice broke and father went in up to his neck. Mother and son hurried to fetch a ladder, laid it out across the ice, and ventured forth to give father a hand. 'What do you think you are doing?' roared that patriarch. 'I will not be rescued by a woman—go fetch a man to help me out!' Which they did most swiftly, father waiting patiently in the cold.' (Burrige 1977: 530)

Penniman apparently spent his free time watching local Pennacook people making willow baskets for sale; they also showed him how to make a whistle out of willow.<sup>1</sup> They also offered to paint him and name him, making him 'the last of the Pennacooks', but his grandmother had different ideas and soon scrubbed him clean in 'a big galvanized iron bath from under my bed' (Penniman no date: 40–41)

Penniman was educated at Kimball Union Academy School, and then at Middlebury College in Vermont, where he worked in the registry and library and on nearby farms to pay his college fees and upkeep. He then spent a year as principal of a small high school near Middlebury, during which time he applied for a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. He took the exams and interview in 1916 and was awarded a scholarship in 1917, but decided to enlist in the army as, according to his own account, 'I could hardly face Englishmen as a non-combatant' (ibid.: 169). He spent eighteen months in the army, but did not see any action as he was seconded to teach 'military English' to servicemen from New York's immigrant communities.

*Early Years at Oxford*

After a short spell in Boston, teaching at a local school and studying at the public library, he went up to Trinity College, Oxford as a Rhodes scholar in 1919, reading Greats. Having graduated with a degree in classics, Penniman spent some time in the 1920s as a private tutor, based in Oxford. His interest in anthropology may have been aroused at this time through working as a private researcher for Sir James Frazer, though the evidence for this is as yet unclear.<sup>2</sup> In 1926 he registered for the University of Oxford's diploma in anthropology. The diploma provided basic training in social anthropology—taught by Robert Ranulph Marett, physical anthropology—taught by Arthur Thomson, and prehistoric archaeology and comparative technology—taught by Balfour. He was awarded the diploma in 1928 'with distinction in all three parts'.<sup>3</sup> Throughout his life Penniman retained an interest and expertise in all three aspects of anthropology as it was then taught, but his specialist area was archaeology, particularly the archaeology of the Near East. In 1928–9 he was a member of the Oxford–Field Museum Expedition to Kish in Mesopotamia. Around this time, deciding that he wished to make his home in England, he became a British subject.

From 1929, he was given a room and 'other facilities' in the department of human anatomy, located in the University Museum (of Natural History) at

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Oxford ‘for the purpose of mending the skeletal material which he excavated at Kish...and of preparing a report on the graves excavated during that season’ (Thomson 1930). Here, Penniman worked under Arthur Thomson and alongside Beatrice Blackwood, who was then the university demonstrator in physical anthropology. According to Penniman, during this time he gave ‘lectures for several weeks for Dr Marett, when he was doing the Gifford lectures, + for Mr. Balfour when he was in the Acland Home’,<sup>4</sup> proving his capabilities in all aspects of the diploma course.

In 1931, Penniman was made secretary of the committee for anthropology, at a salary of £50 a year, and was responsible for the library of the department of social anthropology. Meanwhile, he continued his work cataloguing material in the anatomy department, analysing the finds from Kish as well as material collected by Baldwin Spencer in Tierra del Fuego (Thomson 1932). He also undertook archaeological fieldwork closer to home. In 1932–3 he ‘continued work on Pleistocene and Bronze Age sites in Gower Peninsula, with the help of diploma students, and on skeletal material from excavations near Oxford, at Kish, and at Nineveh’ (Thomson 1933).<sup>5</sup>

In 1935 Penniman was no longer listed as a researcher in the department of human anatomy (Le Gros Clark 1935). In both 1935 and 1936, however, he lectured on Balfour’s behalf. Balfour was increasingly absent from the museum from the mid-1930s on, suffering from a number of ailments including rheumatic gout. Throughout this period Penniman tutored students, but he was without an official position at the university. He applied for the new professorship in social anthropology, which was advertised in June 1936, but the chair was awarded to Radcliffe-Brown, much to Penniman’s disappointment. Blackwood’s comments in a letter she sent him at this time suggests that Penniman might have been considering a career change:

I do hope something will turn up for you. I quite understand how you feel about the Pitt-Rivers job, but of course for my own sake I wish you would take it. . . . The farm labour would be all very well for a while, and doubtless you would make a first-class one, but how long would it be before you got tired of it? I suppose you will answer that you could then come back to anthropology.<sup>6</sup>

Blackwood’s reference to a job at the Pitt Rivers is puzzling. She may have been referring to an arrangement to provide Balfour with some support (his assistant had died in post in the summer of 1936), but we have not come across any other reference to a job of the sort she seems to be referring to here. In February 1937, Marett wrote to the warden of Exeter College calling attention to Penniman’s ability to teach in all branches of anthropology and requesting that he be given a lectureship.<sup>7</sup> Later in the year, presumably as a result of Marett’s intercession, Penniman was appointed by the university to lecture on ‘the interconnexions of physical and cultural anthropology, an as yet little-explored field’ (Committee for Anthropology 1937: 255).

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*Changes at the Pitt Rivers Museum*

During the 1930s routine work at the Pitt Rivers Museum had suffered considerably from Balfour's constant absences due to ill-health and the lack of any full-time assistant after the death of E. S. Thomas in June 1936. In January 1939, as Balfour's health declined, Penniman was appointed deputy curator. A month later Balfour died and Penniman was made acting curator of the museum; on 1 October he was appointed curator. Penniman described the museum as 'largely derelict' at the time of his appointment (Penniman 1940), and later described his work in terms of 'restoring' the museum to General Pitt Rivers's original plans after years of overcrowding (Penniman 1948).

There seems to have been a feeling then that under Penniman's custodianship the museum would regain some of the order and impetus it had lost during the final years of Balfour's life. Blackwood welcomed Penniman's appointment, expressing her enthusiasm in a number of letters to friends and colleagues: 'We are all very pleased about the appointment... Penniman was Balfour's pupil, and will carry on in the Balfour tradition while making advances and improvements'.<sup>8</sup> With Blackwood's help, Penniman set about improving the museum's administrative and curatorial systems. He was faced with the task of handling the enormous backlog in the day-to-day accessioning and care of the collections, which included processing Balfour's own considerable bequest of artefacts and books and another extremely large collection donated to the museum by Brenda Seligman in 1940, following the death of her husband Charles.

Penniman immediately approached the university for more financial support, submitting to the university council in 1939 a 'Report on the Present Position and Immediate and Future Needs of the Museum'. He recommended a new, permanent assistant curatorship, an increase in the number of technical staff—with higher wages, and a larger grant for running the museum. He also requested extra space to the south-east of the museum in buildings soon to be vacated by the geology department. While waiting for the university to respond to these requests, he set about instigating a number of repairs and improvements to the existing buildings. The museum's glass roof was overhauled, curtains were installed to restrict the light that was damaging sensitive objects, some open-display screens were glassed over, the heating and drainage systems were modernized, and the objects that had accumulated in the museum's working rooms were cleared so that conservation and cataloguing work could continue unhindered (Penniman 1939).

Penniman also changed the accessioning procedures. He realized that there was no record of exactly what the museum possessed, except in the accession books, which were filled in as objects arrived. He discussed the issue with Blackwood and decided to instigate two new card indexes. Each accession record would be duplicated on two index cards, one to be filed by object type and the other by geographical provenance. Together, he and Blackwood 'set out on the enormous task of putting on cards, in duplicate, all the entries from the beginning in 1881 until 1939'.<sup>9</sup>

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*Figure 1. T. K. Penniman playing a street piano (PRM 1953.1.1) outside the rear entrance to the Pitt Rivers Museum; from a photograph (PRM 1998.267.86) probably taken by a member of the Museum's staff at the time of the piano's acquisition in January 1953. The piano was made by Rissone of Clerkenwell, London, in the late 1890s and had been rebuilt and restored to perfect playing condition in 1952 by Canon A. O. Wintle before he presented it to the museum the following year. It played ten tunes, including 'Knock'd 'em in the Old Kent Road' and 'Il Trovatore'. Courtesy and copyright, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.*

This work filled the difficult days during the Second World War: 'we could not black-out the Museum, but we could, and did, pick up an Accessions book, a few packets of index cards and a portable typewriter, and take them to a blacked-out room kindly placed at our disposal by the Delegates of the University Museum' (Blackwood 1970: 12).

Alongside the new card indexes, Penniman introduced a numbering system by which each newly acquired object would be assigned a unique number. He consulted with Adrian Digby, assistant keeper at the British Museum, before instigating a system of numbering by year, month, and consecutive number.<sup>10</sup> Accessioning work continued apace during the war. New material came in as people 'turned out their attics', and with the help of a university grant Penniman also took advantage of the increased number of valuable artefacts coming on to the market (Penniman 1941). Although the

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museum's most precious artefacts—those that were not too fragile to move—were packed away for safe-keeping, most of the collections stayed in place in the galleries during the conflict, the glass roof being reinforced with strong wire netting as a safety measure. Penniman decided that the risks involved in moving the objects in such trying conditions were greater than the risk of damage by enemy action.

Blackwood took over responsibility for the card indexes, thousands of new cards being added every year. In the mid-1950s, Penniman reported that, 'work on the catalogue has so improved our knowledge of the collections that we can in the main confine accessions to new material, and especially, as opportunity arises, to objects of outstanding importance, and to collections giving a complete process or showing in full context the complete material culture of a people' (Penniman 1954). He realized the huge value of this simple system for efficient management of the collections, and just before his retirement in 1963 was able to oversee the acquisition of a microfilm camera and reader so that a copy of the cards, which by this time numbered about a million, could be kept safely in a single, fire-proof cabinet (Penniman 1962).

Although the war held up his early plans for the physical expansion of the museum's estate, in the summer of 1948 Penniman oversaw the incorporation of the old geology department annexe. The museum's library, which had benefited hugely from Balfour's bequest, was moved into this building. The annexe also provided room for a photographic studio, print and dark rooms, more office space, and a laboratory for conservation and experimental work on specimens. Working conditions in the museum continued to be cramped (Penniman mentioning the need for a new building in his next annual report), but this expansion allowed students to use the library, while staff could research, photograph, and process the collections much more efficiently (Penniman 1948).

*Practical Work*

During his first year as curator, Penniman started a 'practical museum course' for students. He ran the course with Blackwood and 'certain working models' were purchased for their classes:

Several volunteers have been found to assist next year in showing students how to make flint implements, and in teaching them to use the various appliances in use among primitive peoples. Such work is a most important preliminary to a study of their ethnological significance, and leads to a deeper understanding of peoples, especially among those being trained for field-work. (Penniman 1939).

He insisted that the museum's musical instruments should be restored to playing condition, so that the new annexe 'may be opened with a concert of these beautiful instruments' (Penniman 1940).<sup>11</sup> Students tried their hand at making stone tools, spinning, weaving, and playing music. He acquired a number of models and various pieces of equipment that gave students the opportunity to work out and practise

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basic techniques. When during the war he learned that a schoolteacher near Tring was teaching the children in her class how to spin, dye, and weave wool gathered from hedges, he arranged for her to be sent three lambs from a nearby farm. In return, the teacher sent Penniman a large scarf, made by the children from the lambs-wool, which was hung in the curator's room, 'not only for its workmanship, but as an example of a kind of training which ought to be more generally developed in schools' (Penniman 1941).

Another of Penniman's early innovations was the founding of the museum's series of 'Occasional Papers in Technology', which he edited with Blackwood. The series was designed 'to present technological processes in such a way that the reader, given suitable materials, could repeat the work and obtain the results described' (Penniman and Blackwood 1950: 3). The first paper, written by Francis Knowles and published in 1944, explored and explained the art of making flint arrow-heads using hammer-stones and pressure-flakers made of bone or antler (Knowles 1944). Later papers in the series dealt with the art of making textiles in Guatemala and Mexico (Start 1948), the techniques of prehistoric metallurgy and metal working (Coghlan 1956), and the identification of objects made from ivory, bone, and antler (Penniman 1952).

The series illustrated Penniman's belief that objects should be handled and used, and that a 'hands-on' approach was the best way of learning about technology and design in other cultures. The papers were written so that readers could try out the techniques described for themselves. Thus, the 'Occasional Papers' were a natural extension of Penniman's broader philosophy concerning the role of a museum collection. The 'Occasional Papers' were designed to introduce a much wider audience to the joys of learning about people by using the objects they used, using *things* to teach people about different ways of life.

This account of Penniman's activities within the museum may go some way to illustrating how Penniman was a teacher before he was a writer. Besides his editorial work on the 'Occasional Papers' series, he published relatively little during his time at the museum. He was a regular reviewer of books for *Man*, and published a few brief notes on specific objects from the museum's collections in the same journal (Penniman 1943, Penniman and Knowles 1941, Penniman and Cohn 1945). However, he contributed more as an editor. With Marett, he edited Baldwin Spencer's journals of his trip to Tierra del Fuego shortly before his death (Marett and Penniman 1931), as well as a volume of Spencer's scientific correspondence (Marett and Penniman 1932). He prepared for publication Makereti's text for *The Old-Time Maori*, following her sudden death in 1930 (Makereti 1930). And in the late 1940s, with Blackwood, he revised the section on material culture for the sixth edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (RAI 1951: 219–339).

His best-known publication is *A Hundred Years of Anthropology*. First published in 1935, it went into a third edition in 1974 (although the need for a second edition was hastened when much of the first was destroyed during the war). The book is a work of synthesis aimed at students. Penniman explored anthropology as a 'science

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of man', and his effort to give equal emphasis to physical anthropology, social anthropology, and archaeology was clearly a legacy from his own training at Oxford (a training which was considered by some to be out of date even as Penniman's book first went to press). Penniman's *A Hundred Years of Anthropology* reflected his belief in the importance of retaining the discipline's breadth. He strongly opposed Radcliffe-Brown's efforts in the 1930s to divide the Oxford diploma into three separate qualifications.<sup>12</sup> He saw his teaching work in the museum and that of Blackwood's as fundamentally interrelated: 'In general I deal with Archaeology or past Ethnology, what people were like and how they lived, and Miss Blackwood with present Ethnology, what people are like, and how they live now. Each helps to interpret the other'.<sup>13</sup>

Following in the foot-steps of his predecessors, General Pitt Rivers and Henry Balfour, Penniman considered archaeology and ethnology to represent the past and present of the same subject. In 1958, the department's name was changed to 'ethnology and prehistory'. The new name was more a reflection of the shifting emphasis of the discipline outside the museum than the result of changes taking place within it. The department of ethnology had been assigned to the curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum twenty-three years earlier, in 1935. By the late 1950s, the single word 'ethnology' was no longer sufficient to denote the breadth of work that went on there. Penniman seemed to resist, or at least resent, the change, writing in his annual report:

From our foundation, we were named the Department of Ethnology, because it was understood then and for many years after that Ethnology naturally included Prehistory, and dealt with the past as well as the present, as Tylor's lectures and his book *Anthropology* so clearly show. Now, however, when people desire exact designations and like to define provinces of activity, it seemed best to ask the University to translate fact into law, and we are named the Department of Ethnology and Prehistory, with the right to have Demonstrators, who are also Lecturers, appointed in both subjects. (Penniman 1958)

Penniman aligned himself more naturally with a previous generation of ethnologists, whose broad outlook mirrored his own. He was not a theoretical innovator, but he was certainly an enthusiast, who saw his role as a facilitator, helping others to learn about the diversity of human cultures, past and present, through the museum collections under his charge.

*Teamwork*

Penniman enjoyed working with other people, taking considerable time and care to ensure that other people's work was published and recognized. This is perhaps best exemplified by his work on Makereti's book, *The Old-Time Maori*. Makereti came to Oxford in 1911, and enrolled on the anthropology diploma course in the summer



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of 1927, two terms after Penniman had enrolled. They struck up a close friendship, Penniman visiting her three or four times a week over the next two years, helping her organize her writing (which began as a B.Sc. thesis), typing up sections for her, and reading drafts. Makereti died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1930. So Penniman saw the book to press, taking considerable trouble to ensure that the Arawa people in New Zealand were consulted at every stage and sending them a final draft for approval (Penniman 1938: 24–5).

Penniman's close friendship with Makereti was followed by another, equally strong, with Blackwood, the two of them seeming to take most of their decisions at the museum together. The strength of their relationship was never more apparent than during Penniman's retirement. He visited the museum every day for as long as he could, until in 1968 he moved to a residential home in Northampton where Blackwood visited him every week in her 'baby' Austin. She had the passenger seat fixed further back than usual to make him more comfortable.<sup>14</sup>

While in Northampton, Penniman worked on his autobiography and various private research projects. He and Blackwood continued to edit the 'Occasional Papers' series together and they corresponded every few days until just before her death in November 1975. She kept him up to date with events at the museum, and looked things up for him in the library, delivering books and writing materials to him when she visited. On one occasion he wrote:

I give you so many things to do, + have done since 26 January 1968, that I wonder how you find time to get on with the Catalogues of the Museum, when I seem to give you full-time...employment as Research Fellow for Education of Emeritus Curators, who left the chance of education until retirement.<sup>15</sup>

Penniman's friendship and working relationship with Blackwood was particularly close, but the annual reports he wrote during his curatorship also show how much he enjoyed working as part of a team. The core staff, which during the war comprised only three technical assistants and Blackwood, was constantly supported by a group of devoted volunteers. Penniman was always quick to acknowledge the help of volunteers in his reports, where he expressed his gratitude for their efforts and his respect for their skills. His reports were down to earth, personal, and democratic in tone, in contrast to those penned by his predecessor. Penniman carefully explained all the work going on in the museum.<sup>16</sup> Over the years, he affectionately recorded the contributions of his growing staff: technicians, demonstrators, the secretary and librarian, even outside contractors and caretakers were singled out for comment and thanks.

Despite the prevalence of this friendly, informal tone, there was another side to Penniman's character. Kenelm Burridge, who joined the museum as a lecturer in 1959, remembered that Penniman had:

a full and many-sided sense of humour but was distant, caustic, and stubbornly shielded himself from others.... Tom could unbutton himself—especially when someone, clumsy

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or uncaring, it mattered not which, mishandled his musical machines or trampled on the small garden plot outside his study. Then he unfolded. From the cramped stance suited for eye level conversation with his partner, the diminutive Beatrice Blackwood, he could swell to his full six foot four of New England bone, brawn and muscle and roar like a bull. No worse fright could any man have. (Burrige 1977: 530)

His friendships, like that he shared with Blackwood, seem to have benefited from a loyalty that equalled his capacity to 'roar like a bull'.

*Final Thoughts*

In the early 1960s, as Penniman was reaching retirement age, he was knocked down by a car. He suffered a badly broken leg and severe concussion, but as soon as he was able continued to work from his hospital bed. While he was recovering, his successor, Bernard Fagg, was appointed. Because Fagg could not take up his post immediately, however, Penniman returned briefly to the museum as 'deputy curator' from October 1963 until January 1964 when Fagg took up his post. Penniman continued to take a keen interest in the day-to-day running of the museum throughout his retirement, whether during his regular visits or through the letters he received from Blackwood. He seems to have seen his retirement as an opportunity to work on various writing projects, but the autobiography he drafted is disjointed and rambling, and his work seems to have suffered as his health declined. He died in January 1977, just over a year after the death of his close friend Beatrice Blackwood.

Penniman was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Anthropological Institute, serving on its council, as well as on the ancient metallurgy committee and the ethnomusicology committee. He was president of the Oxford University anthropology society, and served as secretary of the heads of science departments at the university and diploma secretary for anthropology for many years. After the war, he was chosen as one of the fifteen members of the national committee for co-operation with the International Council of Museums. He was a member of numerous committees within the university, including the committee for archaeology and the committee for fine arts, but he never served as a president or vice-president for any of the national societies he joined. Instead, his work was focused in Oxford and its university.

Despite his devotion to the Pitt Rivers Museum, Penniman's career has received less attention in recent years than that of his colleague Beatrice Blackwood. Blackwood, for example, has long been associated with the card index, even feeling it necessary to correct a reference, in the 1972 annual report, to the catalogue being 'originally designed' by her; she pointed out that Penniman had had the initial idea.<sup>17</sup> Much of the recent interest in Blackwood has centred on her fieldwork in North America and Melanesia, which was completed by 1938. Only her final trip to New Guinea was carried out under the auspices of the museum, and little work has been

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done on her long career at the museum from 1938 until her death in 1975. However, Blackwood made large field collections for the museum, of more than 6500 objects. In contrast, Penniman was not a prolific collector, being linked to less than 200 objects as a field collector and/or donor, more than half of which relate to his work on the Kish expedition of the late 1920s. He was interested in music, and in the 1940s oversaw the development of a collection illustrating the ‘history of automatic music’, which was designed to complement Balfour’s extensive collection of musical instruments; but this later collection did not, and does not, bear Penniman’s name. The fact that his skills were organizational and administrative, and that he neither collected much nor published extensively, has meant that his contributions to the history of the museum are less conspicuous today.

Penniman inherited a museum that had suffered a similar slow, crippling decline as its first curator had. He immediately set about the massive task of systematizing the accessioning procedures and reorganizing the displays to try and minimize the effects of overcrowding, literally clearing away a backlog of artefacts to allow for efficient collections management. He oversaw the expansion of the museum into the old geology building (which the museum only vacated in 2005 in preparation for its new extension). The museum’s library was opened to students, and the museum benefited from its first photographic studio and experimental laboratory. The staff more than doubled from five during the war, to more than ten in 1963, by which time there were—in addition to Blackwood and Penniman—two lecturers in ethnology, a lecturer in prehistoric archaeology, a lecturer in prehistory, and a librarian/secretary.

In short, Penniman transformed the museum from the personal province of a single curator into an efficient, thriving university institution. Unlike Balfour and Blackwood, Penniman did not stay in post beyond retirement age. He was able to hand over the running of the museum to his successor knowing that the new curator would suffer none of the difficulties he had inherited from Balfour. And yet, like Balfour, his devotion to the Pitt Rivers Museum was lifelong. He dedicated his unpublished autobiography, ‘Scrambled Memories’, ‘to all members of the staff of the Pitt Rivers Museum and Department of Ethnology and Prehistory in the University of Oxford living and dead, past and present, into whose labours I have entered, or have been privileged to serve’.

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1. The Pennacook are a Native American people of the Algonquian linguistic stock, living in southern and central New Hampshire, north-eastern Massachusetts, and the southernmost part of Maine.
2. Penniman's employment by Frazer is mentioned in Penniman's obituary in *The Times* (Anonymous 1977). While working on his autobiography, Penniman himself made mention of working for Frazer in a letter to Beatrice Blackwood of 17 November 1975: 'In spite of the lines under the paper, I write uphill like Sir James Frazer. He was terribly upset when I gave him some typed cards, as all of his many books had been written by hand, standing at a desk, with a common stell pen. Sometimes when I was with him, I gave Lady Frazer a spell by sitting behind + steadying him as he grew less firm on his legs. There is so much in my life that I must not write...' (original underlining; PRM MSS Collections, Uncatalogued Correspondence, 17 November 1975). It is known that, following the loss of his sight in 1931, Frazer employed a number of young researchers, but this would seem to be too late to account for Penniman's apparent employment by Frazer. We understand that there are letters from Penniman to Frazer and his wife in the Frazer manuscript collections at Trinity College, Cambridge, but we have yet to consult them (Ackerman 1987).
3. Penniman to Myres, October 1935; Bodleian Library, MSS Collections, J. L. Myres Papers, Myres 81.
4. Penniman to Myres, October 1935; Bodleian Library, MSS Collections, J. L. Myres Papers, Myres 81. Balfour, who was in his late sixties, was frequently incapacitated by illness during the 1930s and had to spend time in a local nursing home.
5. Penniman loved the Gower Peninsula in south Wales, which he first visited in 1930 and returned to whenever he could. His mother's family was originally from the area and it may be that he felt some romantic, ancestral link to that region (Penniman no date). He always stayed on a farm, where he helped out on the land and wrote.
6. Blackwood to Penniman, 7 January 1937; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, Box 19.
7. Marett to the Warden, 9 February 1937; Exeter College Archives, Marett Papers, Box 13.
8. Blackwood to Henry Devenish Skinner, 16 November 1939; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, General Correspondence, M-S.
9. Blackwood to Jocelyn [surname unknown], 6 May 1973; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, uncatalogued box 'Kew'.
10. Later replaced by the system, still current, of assigning numbers of the form: year, collection, object (e.g. 1994.44.2; i.e. the second object in the forty-fourth collection acquired in 1994).
11. The collection is no longer curated as a playing collection; it is now a research collection only.
12. Penniman to Marett, 5 February 1931; Exeter College Archives, Marett Papers, Box 13.
13. Undated note by Penniman; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, Box 21, Folder 4.
14. Blackwood to Kenneth P. Oakley, 6 October 1967; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, General Correspondence, M-S.
15. Uncatalogued correspondence between Blackwood and Penniman, 22 October 1973; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections.

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16. They were as a result very long; too long for the moment perhaps but of inestimable value for anyone interested in the history of the museum at the time!
17. Blackwood to Jocelyn [surname unknown], 6 May 1973; Pitt Rivers Museum, MSS Collections, Blackwood Manuscripts, uncatalogued box 'Kew'.

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