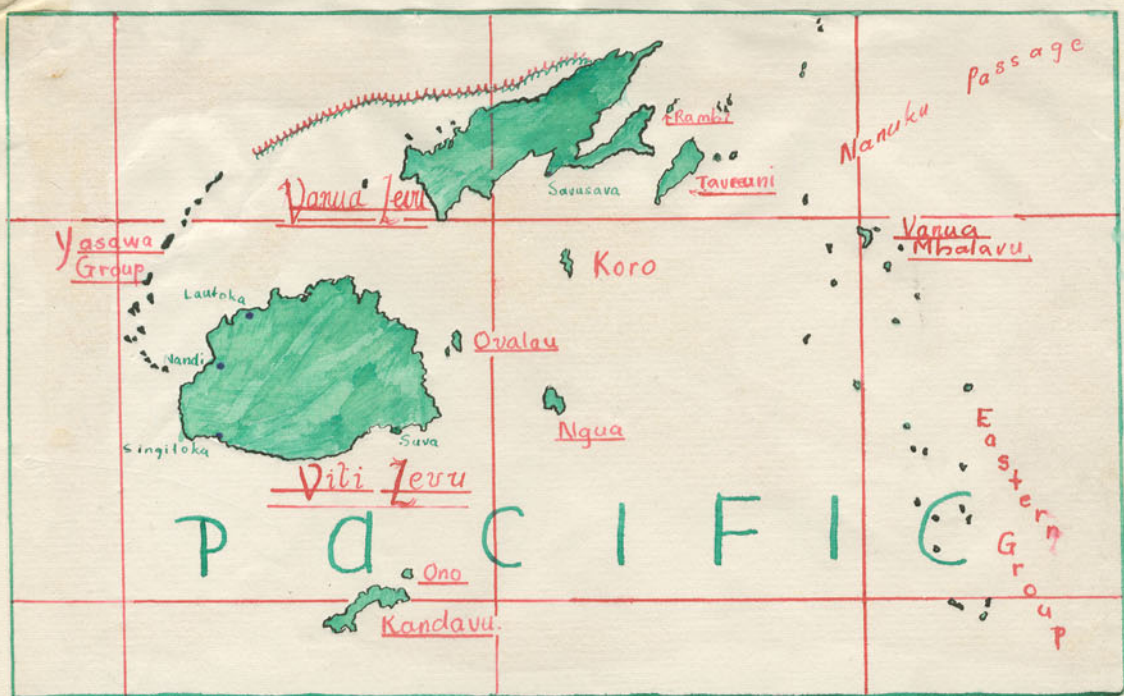




FIJI

Name : C. F. A. Mason.  
Address : 7 Dorchester St.,  
Remuera,  
Auckland, S.E.2.  
School : King's School  
258 Remuera Rd.,  
Remuera.  
Age : 12 years, 11 months.

## The Life in Fiji.

An exotic little island group lies a thousand miles north of Auckland, New Zealand. These islands form a "boys paradise". They are the Fiji islands. For a boy, or a girl, Fiji is just right, because all boys hate to wear too many clothes, and nearly every boy likes sunshine and fresh air.

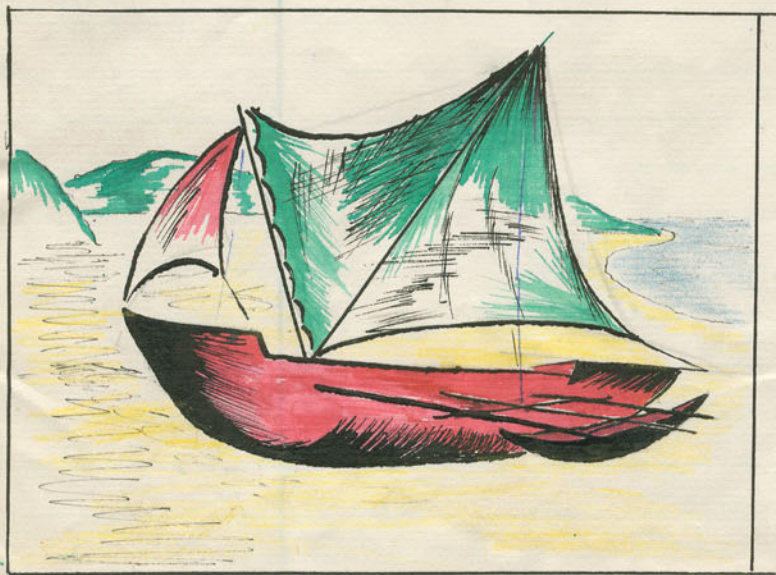
In Fiji, there is sunshine galore, and most boys just wear a pair of shorts and some loose sandals, or

bare feet.

Of course, when they go to school, they would have to wear a shirt or bush-jacket and have footwear of some kind. But, in leisure time, life is free and easy, and clothing is at a minimum.

That is one reason why, if I was able to change places with a boy of another commonwealth country, I would choose Fiji.

On the Fiji islands one is left with a life almost different from any other. To pass a little spare time, there are all the sports one could wish for: rugby, soccer, cricket, basket-ball, tennis, soft-ball, swimming, fishing, boating, sailing,



**A**N OUTRIGGER  
CANOE - FIJI

water-skiing, cycling, and mountain climbing. To list all the sports and pastimes possible in Fiji would be like a futile attempt to read a dictionary backwards.

For this, the temperature is just perfect. It is never cold. The temperature on the whole is hardly ever lower than sixty degrees, and the daytime temperature is seldom below seventy two degrees. But, even in the height of the hot season in Fiji the heat is not so unpleasant, because the temperature seldom rises above ninety degrees.

Even though this may be an advantage, however, this neutrality does make Fiji a little depressing and humid, but the gay life one may come across makes up for any disadvantage of the weather.

Here a confession must be made, that sometimes Fiji does receive a great deal of rain, but as it is still warm, nobody bothers much about getting wet, at any rate, not boys.

It is a most fascin-

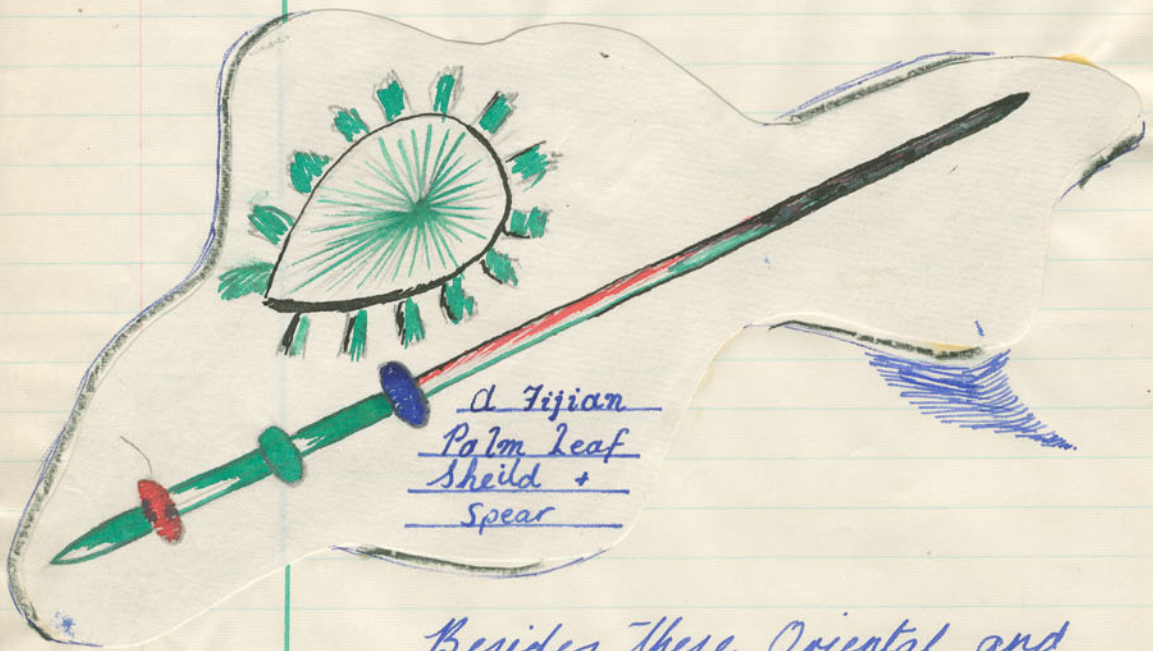
ating experience to live in, or even just stay in for a few days, Fiji because one would learn so much about other races - their culture, their customs, their religions and their language

In Fiji, there are the natives, some of whom, less than a hundred years ago, were still barbaric head hunters of remarkable traditions, but, of course, no person would have to be afraid of being eaten now! In fact, the Fijians are most hospitable and receive any kind of visitor with much ceremony and dignity

Then there are the Indians, with their separate and colourful religions of Hinduism and Mohammedanism with their turbanned, bearded sikhs.

Also there are many Chinese, and, like the Fijians and Indians, they have their own private customs, traditions and religions. The Chinese in Fiji are famous for their colourful fire work displays which are just exhilarating to

watch and hear.



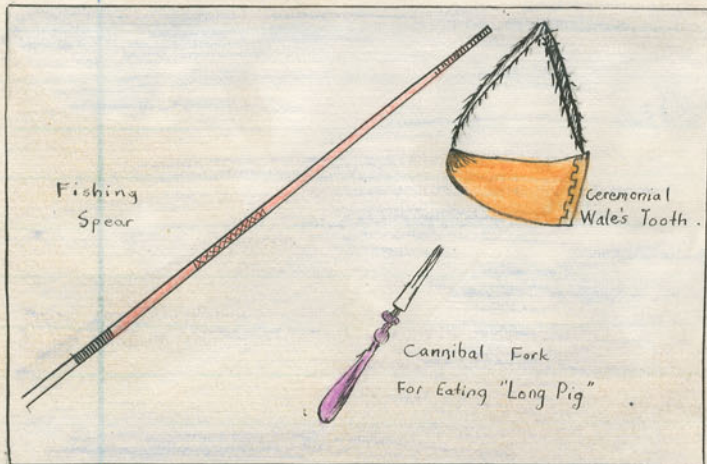
A Fijian  
Palm Leaf  
Shield +  
Spear

Besides these Oriental and other races, British, Australians, and New Zealanders form the majority of the white population, but, there are, of course, also Americans, South Africans, Frenchmen, Germans, Swedes, Dutch, and many others.

There is also quite a large percentage of people of mixed blood, who are really locally known as part-Europeans. These are usually people of mixed European and Fijian, or Europeans mixed with Indian blood.

As well as these, there are also many people that have

"migrated from other Pacific Islands, such as the Solomons, and the New Hebrides.



About schooling - there are schools for Europeans and part-Europeans; the Fijians, Indians and Chinese. But, when the top level is reached, which is just below University standard, all children, of all races, learn and study together.

Fiji has no university or its equivalent, so the children who have reached the University Entrance stage, and wish to enter, have to travel to either New Zealand or Australia for University Education.

There are so many

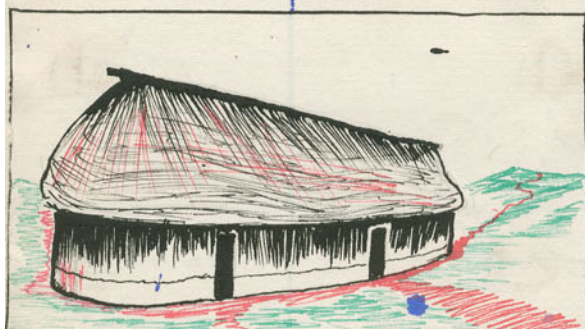
places to go in Fiji. The group consists of three main islands: Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and Taveuni. These islands have many smaller ones scattered around them: Mbengga - the island of the firewalkers and Koro, Ovalau, Thikombia, Vanua Mbalavu, Thitha, Talemba, the Yasawa Group, and many other smaller islands with peculiar Melanesian and Polynesian names.

On the biggest island, Viti Levu is Suva, the capital of Fiji, which has 37,500 people. Outside Suva, Lautoka which has 8,000 people, and Valukoula which has 5,000, there are no places anywhere in Fiji which have more than 2,000 people in them.

In each of the big cities there are pleasures to satisfy the most exacting taste. The streets are much like the streets one would find in New Zealand or England, except that there are a large number of Indian shopkeepers, whose windows are bright with gaily coloured Indian ladies saris.

Also, there are many Chinese shopkeepers. The roads and pavements are all well constructed except in the rural villages which are very small, most of them with only 200-300 inhabitants.

But even these little villages have their enchantments. There are the well built native huts which are called *buris*



A NATIVE FARMER'S  
HOUSE



In these little places, usually the whole village gathers together on a picturesque evening of darkening velvet with blues and reds in the heavens, and in the dancing shadows from the bright fires on the well-tended lawns of the square, they sing and dance to the tunes of the plaintive ukelele and the conch shell trumpet. There, then is a very lovely sight, one of



A FIJIAN CONCH  
SHELL  
TRUMPET



the simple folk of the villages  
 truly enjoying themselves  
 Most of these little  
 villages are scattered  
 on a river bank so the  
 folk have access to water  
 for swimming and washing  
 There are some  
 delightful beaches, but, I  
 must confess also some very  
 far from delightful sharks.

B.

A

Although these are not as fierce or voracious as the ones in Australia, they occasionally kill or cripple unwary swimmers who venture too far out to sea. Many of these beaches

are sheltered and smooth kept so by the coral reef's which are pounded by the ocean fury.

In Fiji, prosperity was quickly gained by marketing the produce of the islands. The main product is coconuts from which we get copra and many useful articles. Another is sugar, and this is why the Indians were sent to Fiji - to work on the sugar plantations.

Besides sugar, there are rice, and pineapples - there are bananas; but the coconut palms are the main source of wealth.

Also the Fijians have taken up gold mining. It is a great privilege to be allowed to go down the mine, and it is a great pleasure to be shown round the factories that produce the refined sugar and pineapples.

This brings me to another point. Fiji has many quaint little places and interests like the open air theatres, and the fine walkers - men who walk over hot ashes. One feels uneasy when watching the native ceremonies, but, of course, there is nothing to fear.

Of course, there are some minor drawbacks to a perfect stay in Fiji. One is the small biting insects which are slightly uncomfortable, but Fiji is lucky to have no malaria-carrying insects or snakes. Another drawback I have already mentioned before are

the sharks. The only other annoyance are the noisy dogs at night, but, as the government is taking steps to get rid of these, and any home can be wired against mosquitoes one could truly say that any holiday in Fiji would be a pleasure.

Fiji has become the stepping-stone to many idyllic places, and has a romantic and historic life of its own, that I would gladly exchange for my own here in New Zealand. A life which shows a person simplicity and easiness - it shows the personalities of other races - it shows the pleasure in the versatile hours which one can spend in so many ways. All this adds up to my original contention: if I was able to change places with a boy in another commonwealth country I would choose Fiji to enjoy this life of vivid and unforgettable pleasures.