



# Dr Ezra Newton Drier (1871–1942) and his collection of New Zealand Mollusca

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## Abstract

In 2014, the Drier Collection of New Zealand molluscs, comprising 4,000–5,000 lots, was transferred from Museum of Vancouver to Auckland Museum. This shell collection is thought to have been assembled between 1926 and 1929 by Dr Ezra Newton Drier, who came to New Zealand in 1916 as the surgeon aboard a troop ship. He and his family settled in New Zealand until in early 1930 they embarked on a two-year world tour before returning permanently to Vancouver, Canada, where Dr Drier died in 1942. While in New Zealand, he met A.W.B. Powell, who started him on his shell collecting, and Drier is believed to have carried out most of his collecting between 1926 and 1931 in New Zealand and Australia. The collection is considered to be of high value to Auckland Museum because it will contribute additional baseline biodiversity data for the mid- to late-1920s, a period for which few dates are recorded in the Auckland Museum molluscan collections. Initially little was known of Dr Drier himself, but as part of further research to contextualise the mollusc collection, a picture of an energetic, perhaps driven man, has emerged from information held in online resources and the archives of Museum of Vancouver and Auckland Museum.

## Keywords

E.N. Drier, A.W.B. Powell, shell collecting, Auckland Museum, Museum of Vancouver, World War I

## INTRODUCTION

In November 2012, Joan Seidl, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at Museum of Vancouver (MOV), contacted Auckland Museum (AM) about ‘a large shell collection that was largely assembled between 1921–1941 by Dr. E. Newton Drier, who did the majority of his collecting between 1929 and 1931 in New Zealand and Australia’. She explained that as the MOV’s vision had shifted to focus on Vancouver and immediate environs they were seeking good alternative homes for at least some of this shell collection.

They had recruited the help of Dr Melissa Frey, Curator of Invertebrates at Royal British Columbia Museum to carry out an initial assessment of the Drier Collection. She described it as a large and diverse shell collection composed primarily of bivalves and gastropods, along with an assortment of chitons and scaphopods. The collection was thought to consist of approximately 2,500+ museum lots and over 500,000 individual specimens. The majority of these specimens (>75%) were thought to have been collected from New Zealand and Australia in 1929–1931 by Dr. E. Newton Drier. The bulk of material was deemed to be in good condition, with little evidence of infestation or decay.

All associated data, namely taxonomic identifications and geographic locations, were typed or hand-written on paper labels and stored with the specimens. Most labels included information about collection location and in

some cases, it also included the date of collection. In most cases, specimens were identified to species level.

However, none of the collection had been properly catalogued or databased, but a cursory appraisal suggested that the collection comprised thousands of mollusc species (Joan Seidl pers. comm. 2012). From later dates and annotations which appeared on some labels, there were also suggestions that the collection had been added to or worked on after Drier’s death in 1941 (Fig. 1).

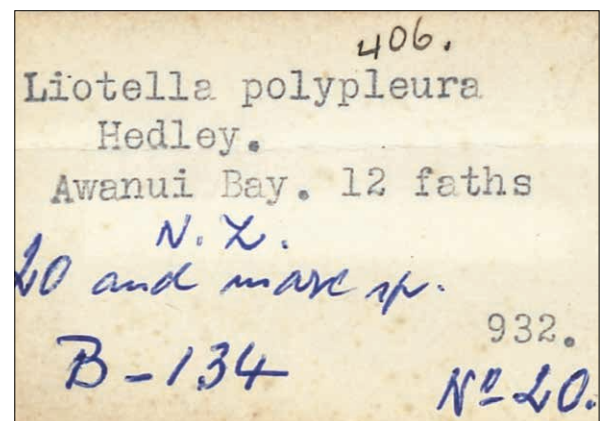


Figure 1. A type-written label created by E.N. Drier for shell specimens in his collection. The later annotations in blue ball-point pen were made by an unknown source. (Author’s image).

An assessment of AM collections in 2012 showed that out of an estimated total 135,000 lots of molluscs, there were only 402 lots from the period 1919–1929 and a mere 89 from the period 1927–1929. As our collections are about providing baseline biodiversity information to stakeholders, the acquisition of any of the Drier-collected marine and terrestrial specimens with good data would therefore significantly boost this information for the mid to late 1920s. Based on this, the Auckland Museum Collection Development Committee approved my visit to MOV for two weeks in July 2013 to evaluate the E.N. Drier Collection for scientific as well as historical and cultural value.

I estimated that there were ~15,000 lots altogether with just under 5,000 from New Zealand, just over 5,000 from Australia and the remainder from the rest of the world, including some from western Pacific islands. Collection dates for the New Zealand shells all fell between 1926 and late 1929, while collection dates for the Australian shells all fell in 1930. After my visit to MOV, I recommended that AM accept all New Zealand lots of Tertiary fossils, land snails and marine molluscs with good locality data.

In September 2013 members the AM Museum Circle approved \$10,000 from their funds to support the travel of a collection manager to MOV as well as the cost of packing and shipping the collection back to New Zealand. In March 2014 AM gave the final approval for the acquisition of the New Zealand component of the Drier Collection and in May 2014, Severine Hannam, the Marine Collection Manager, travelled to Vancouver to pack up and dispatch the Drier specimens back to Auckland Museum. At the same time, Alison Miller, Technical Officer, Malacology, of the Australian Museum, Sydney, packed up Drier's Australian-collected specimens for return to their museum collections.

In November 2019, the Conchology Section of the Auckland Institute and Museum (aka the Auckland Shell Club), which has had an association with Auckland Museum dating back to 1930, approved a \$25,000 donation from its funds toward employing a specialist technician to catalogue the Drier Collection. The Lottery Environment and Heritage Committee approved a further \$50,000 towards this in June 2020, but due to the increasing effects of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic a technician was not employed for the project until May 2021. The work is due to be finished at the end of 2023.

One purpose of this paper is to provide background to the acquisition of the E.N. Drier Collection and its compatibility with AM's collections. A second is to give context to the collector and therefore his collection. When compared to 2013, so many more resources are available in 2022. This has enabled a much more detailed and complex picture to be constructed both for the times and of Dr Drier, who appears to have been an energetic man with a great sense of purpose and someone who was determined to make his mark in life.

A second paper is intended, which will report on the results and significance of the Drier acquisition at the end of the cataloguing project.

## IN SEARCH OF DR EZRA NEWTON DRIER

### Early life

Ezra Newton (known as Newton) Drier (Fig. 2) was born in Middle Simonds (1881–1920 Marriage Registry, Woodstock, New Brunswick, Canada, available through Ancestry.com), around 20 km north of Woodstock, Carleton County, New Brunswick. There is uncertainty around the date of his birth as it does not appear to have been recorded, but his birth year is often given as c. 1871 (e.g., Find a Grave 2022). In the Canadian Census April 1891, he is listed as being 20 years old, single and a schoolteacher (Library and Archives of Canada, item 266494). He married Hope Aradine Kilbourne on 28 August 1895 and on their marriage certificate it also states he was then a teacher (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick).

Four years later, in 1899 he had graduated as a physician from McGill University (McGill University 1899: 124). After this, the Driers moved to Kelowna, a small city approximately 200 km east of Vancouver, for a year where E.N. Drier took over the practice of Dr Boyce (*The Greenwood Miner* 1899: 97). In 1902 he took a 2-month posting as the surgeon on the SS *Moana*, a passenger ship owned by the Canadian–Australian Steamship Company, which operated a trans-Pacific service between eastern Australian ports and Vancouver (*Building Vancouver* blog 2022). The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand acquired a controlling interest in 1900, and although it was not until 1911 that New Zealand ports were permanently added to the route,



Figure 2. Dr Ezra Newton Drier, possibly in the 1930s. (Courtesy of City of Vancouver Archives, item CVA 677-1041).

they were visited sporadically prior to this date (Hoskin 2007). So, it may well be that Drier had his first taste of New Zealand in 1902 while serving on the SS *Moana*.

British Columbia City Directories 1860–1955 show that by 1905 Drier appears to have established a practice in Granville Street Vancouver (Vancouver Public Library 2022) and around this time, he also had a house designed and built for him just north of the Burrard Street Bridge (*Building Vancouver* blog 2022). United States patent records show that Drier developed a surgical arm-splint ‘designed to be adaptable for either right or left arm or forearm and adjustable in size to the requirements of either youth or adult’. He filed the patent for this in September 1905 and it was granted in May 1906 (United States Patents Office 1905). In 1906 he also spent six months at Harvard University for post-graduate studies (*The Bulletin of the Vancouver Medical Association* 1941: 317).

Continuing in the same entrepreneurial spirit as before, in the same year he hired a firm to design a commercial block near downtown Vancouver. So, nine years after Drier had his house built, it was demolished, and he was involved in the development on the same site of the six storey Hampton Court apartments which are still there today (*Building Vancouver* blog 2022).

After being ill for some time Hope died in 1908 and was taken back to her native Richmond, New Brunswick by her husband and mother. On 26 January 1909 Drier married 27-year-old Jesse Townsend Reid (*Building Vancouver* blog 2022) at a quiet ceremony in Vancouver (Ancestry.com 2022). Shortly after, they left for Europe aboard the RMS *Empress of Ireland* and arrived in Liverpool on 20 February 1909 (Passenger lists, Ancestry.com 2022). Drier went on to Edinburgh to pass the examinations required to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh archives 2022).

Newton Drier then took his wife on an extended tour of Europe (*Building Vancouver* blog 2022) and along the way acquired yet another qualification, this time a Diploma from the University of Vienna (*The Bulletin of the Vancouver Medical Association* 1941: 317). On his return to Vancouver, he resumed his medical practice and a daughter, Francelle Marjorie, was born in 1910. A son followed but died on 22 May 1911 (Find a Grave 2022).

In 1914 the family moved yet again, this time into a newly built house in McNicoll Avenue, Kitsilano (Fig. 3). Ironically, this is only a stone’s throw from the present-day site of the MOV, where Drier’s shell collection would be in storage for nearly 50 years. In August of the same year, Drier was also responsible for the installation of an electrocardiograph at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver—the first such machine in western Canada (*The Daily News* 1914: 7).

However, after the outbreak of war in Europe he signed up with the Canadian Army Medical Corps (Certificate of Military Instruction available through Ancestry.com). By 1915 he was in London to help with the WWI effort as a temporary lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps (*London Gazette* 1915: 12548) and was posted to France (*Auckland Star* 1916a).



Figure 3. The Drier’s 1914 house in Kitsilano photographed in 2013. The present owner had commissioned a history of the house which confirmed that Dr Drier had been its first owner (Author’s image).

### Residence in New Zealand

An advertisement in the lost and found section of the *New Zealand Herald* of 5 July 1916 (*New Zealand Herald* 1916), asking for the return of his lost diploma from the University of Vienna, dates Drier’s arrival in Auckland as the surgeon aboard the troop ship RMS *Ruapehu* (Fig. 4). His intention to remain is made clear by a notice placed on 13 July 1916 in the *New Zealand Gazette* (1916: 2398) ‘that I intend applying on the 3rd August next to have my name placed on the Medical Register of the Dominion of New Zealand’. A further advertisement on 1 August in the *New Zealand Herald* (1916) that Dr E. Newton Drier ‘has taken over Dr B.J. Dudley’s practice while the latter is on active service’ reiterated this intention. His registration on 3 August 1916 as a medical practitioner is formally acknowledged in the *New Zealand Gazette* (1917: 60).

Presumably after the cessation of war and the return of Dr Dudley, Drier started his own practice with medical rooms in the Pacific Buildings, on the corner of Wellesley Street and Queen Street, while he and his family lived 500 m up the hill at 70 Symonds Street. This information came from a note found in the AM archives, dated 2 October 1928, from Drier to L.T. Griffin, who at the time may have been the Acting Director at AM. The note was written on a page of Drier’s medical script notepad (Fig. 5) and bore the addresses and hours of practice. The same notepads were later recycled into labels for the shells Drier collected in Australia in 1930,



Figure 4. The RMS (Royal Mail Ship) *Ruapehu*, which was built by Wm Denny & Bros, Dumbarton, Scotland in 1901, the same company which built the SS *Moana*. During WWI she was used as a troop ship on several occasions. (Image courtesy of National Library of New Zealand, PAColl-3037, John Dickie Collection, 1869–1942, Ref. 1/1-002409-G).

after he left New Zealand for good. A notice referring to the sale of the same property in the *Sun (Auckland)* newspaper of 6 September 1929 described the Drier's home as a 'three-storeyed Italian villa residence [containing] 12 rooms and offices [with] four balconies and a garage' (*Sun (Auckland)* 1929).

Although no record for their arrival in Auckland has been found in passenger lists, at some point Drier was joined by his wife Jesse and daughter Francelle, perhaps after the end of WWI when it was safer to travel.

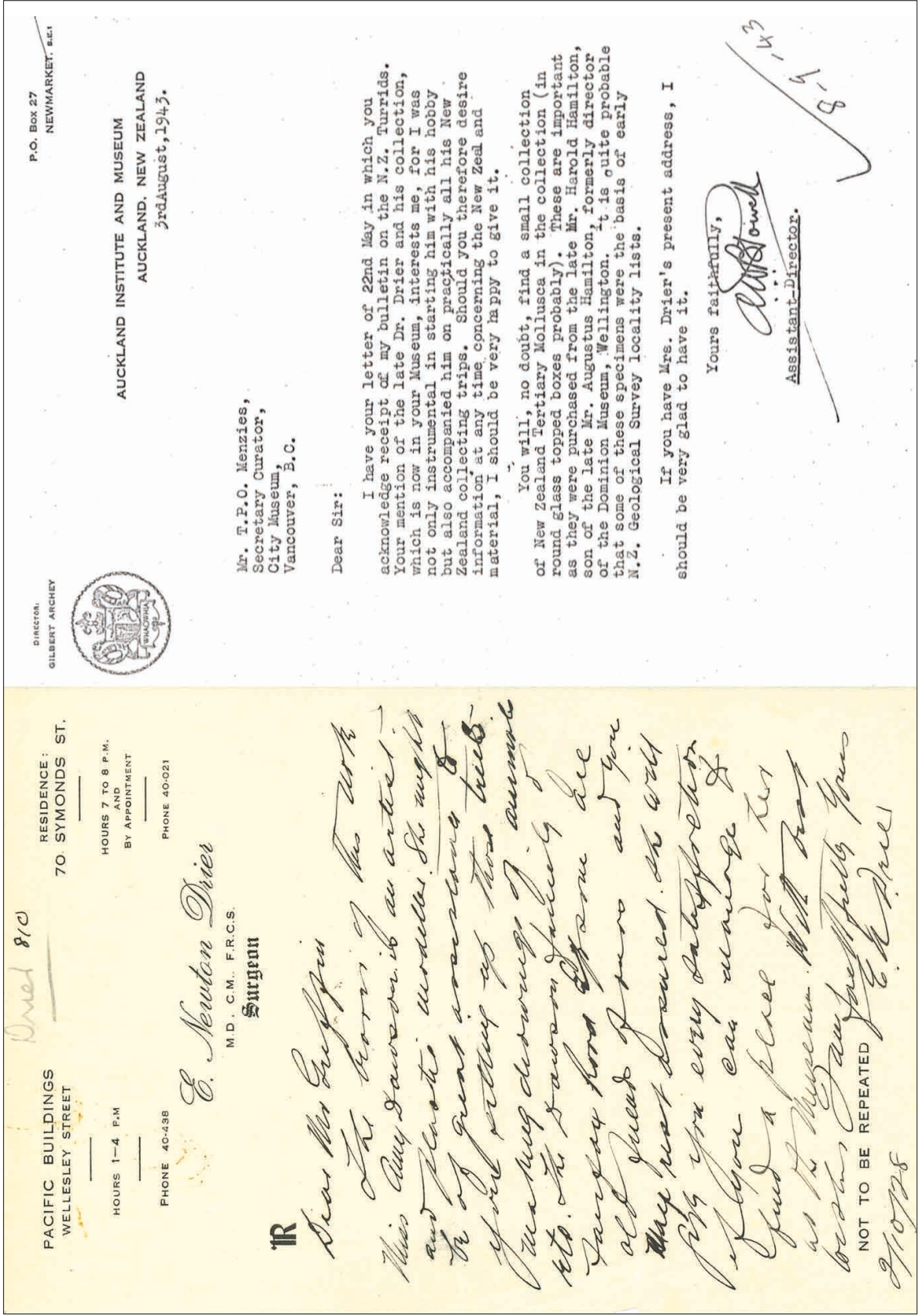
It appears that Drier quite quickly became part of the fabric of Auckland society. Only two months after his arrival he took part in debates on the nationalisation of the medical service in New Zealand—something that he was not in favour of (*Auckland Star* 1916b). In April 1918 he became a member of the United Grand Lodge of England Freemasons, Remuera (Ancestry.com 2022), although a reference to the resignation of his membership of the Acacia Lodge No. 22 in 1910 (Grand Lodge of British Columbia A.F. & A.M. 1910) showed that he had been a Freemason before his arrival in New Zealand.

Between mid-1916 and late 1929 there are numerous other references in the local newspapers to Dr Drier and sometimes his wife and daughter. Often, these refer to him in his professional capacity as a doctor or surgeon, at other times as an ordinary citizen, such as the time when he caused a 'motor car collision' because he had been driving on the wrong side of the road (*New Zealand Herald* 1919). Appendix 1 lists further examples of records in Auckland newspapers which relate to Dr Drier or his family.

There is no record of Dr Drier having collected shells before 1926, but in this year, he joined the Auckland Museum Institute (*Auckland Institute and Museum Annual Report 1926–27*: 36) where he would have met A.W.B. Powell. By this stage, Drier was around 55 years old and may have been thinking of retiring or at least slowing down. Though not officially a curator at Auckland Museum until 1929, Powell had been made Honorary Conchology Curator by T.F. Cheeseman in 1916 when he was 15 years old, and he was well-versed in shell collecting (Cernohorsky 1988). There is a letter in MOV archives from A.W.B. Powell to T.P.O. Menzies, the Secretary Curator of the City Museum, dated 3 August 1943, in which Powell stated that he was 'not only instrumental in starting him [Drier] with his [shell collecting] hobby but also accompanied him on practically all his New Zealand collecting trips' (Fig. 6).

The Museum of Vancouver has an image in their Drier Archives (labelled 'New Zealand 1925'; Fig. 7) of a 'van camper'. Although it is not recorded, it is tempting to think that the vehicle belonged to Dr Drier and was used for at least some of his collecting trips.

Perhaps contrary to current beliefs about the 1920s, it was not unusual for the time to be touring the country in a motor car or 'van camper' as New Zealanders appeared to have had an already well-established tradition of 'getting away for Christmas'. An article in the *New Zealand Herald* on 22 December 1927 stated that 'Officials of automobile associations and tourist organisations estimate that over 10,000 motor touring



*Dried 8/10*

PACIFIC BUILDINGS  
WELLESLEY STREET

RESIDENCE :  
70, SYMONDS ST.

HOURS 1-4 P.M.  
HOURS 7 TO 8 P.M.  
BY APPOINTMENT

PHONE 40-438  
PHONE 40-021

*E. Newton Drier*  
M.D., C.M., F.R.C.S.  
Surgeon

IR  
Dear Mr Griffin  
The boxes of the work  
Miss Amy Dawson is an artist  
and plastic modeller. She might  
be of great assistance to  
you in getting up those birds.  
I have drawings of around  
100. The Dawson family are  
Dawson's son & some are  
old friend of mine and you  
may meet Dawson. He will  
help you every satisfaction  
if you can arrange to  
find a place for her  
as to Museum. Will treat  
beater. I am just telling you  
NOT TO BE REPEATED  
*E.N. Drier*  
2/10/43

DIRECTOR:  
GILBERT ARCHER

P.O. Box 27  
NEWMARKET, B.1

AUCKLAND INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM  
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND  
3rd August, 1943.



Mr. T.P.O. Menzies,  
Secretary Curator,  
City Museum,  
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of 22nd May in which you acknowledge receipt of my bulletin on the N.Z. Turrids. Your mention of the late Dr. Drier and his collection, which is now in your Museum, interests me, for I was not only instrumental in starting him with his hobby but also accompanied him on practically all his New Zealand collecting trips. Should you therefore desire information at any time concerning the New Zealand material, I should be very happy to give it.

You will, no doubt, find a small collection of New Zealand Tertiary Mollusca in the collection (in round glass topped boxes probably). These are important as they were purchased from the late Mr. Harold Hamilton, son of the late Mr. Augustus Hamilton, formerly director of the Dominion Museum, Wellington. It is quite probable that some of these specimens were the basis of early N.Z. Geological Survey locality lists.

If you have Mrs. Drier's present address, I should be very glad to have it.

Yours faithfully,  
*A.W.B. Powell*  
Assistant-Director.

*3*  
*4-1-43*

Figure 5. (left) A note from E.N. Drier to L.T. Griffin showing that the former had his medical rooms in the Pacific Buildings, Wellesley Street and his residence at 70 Symonds Street. (Courtesy of Auckland Museum, MUS-1995-42-Drier1928) Figure 6. (right) A.W.B. Powell's letter to T.P.O. Menzies which stated he was responsible for starting E.N. Drier on his shell collecting hobby (Courtesy of MOV archives).

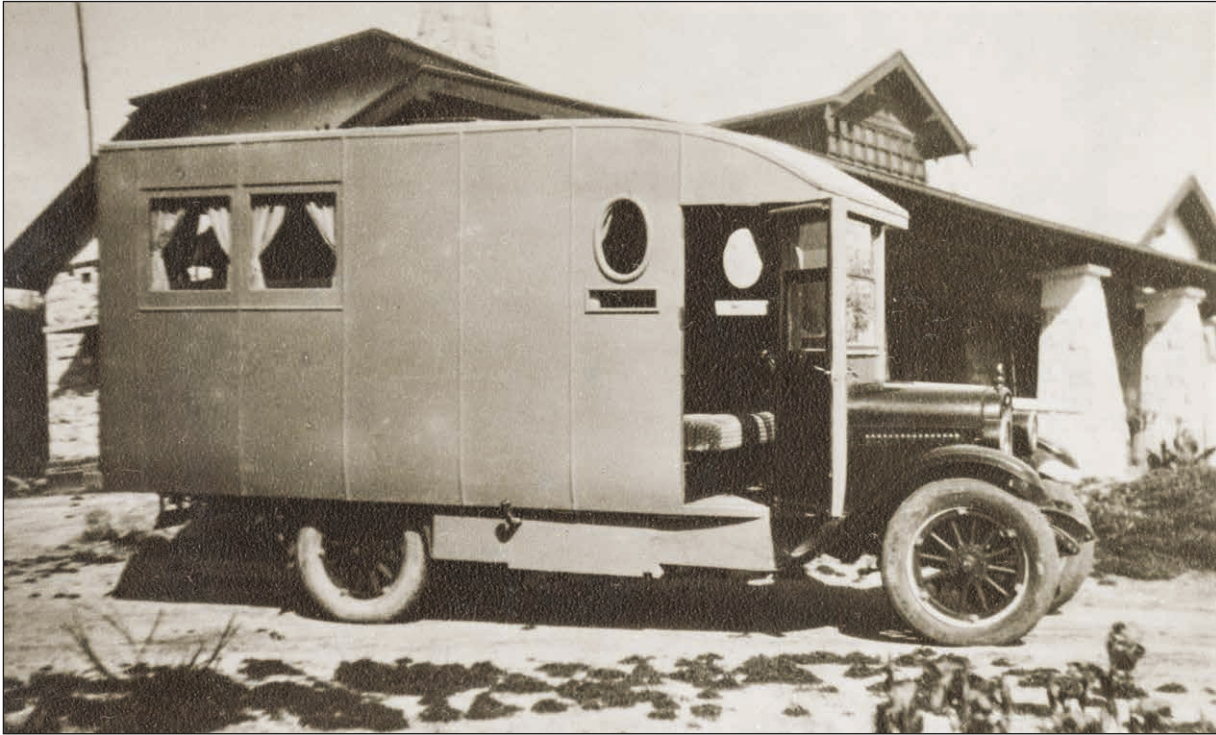


Figure 7. This image was found in the Drier archives at Museum of Vancouver, labeled 'New Zealand 1925'. It shows a 'van camper' conversion most likely of a Chevrolet one-ton commercial chassis with a locally built body. This marque was popular in New Zealand at the time and the vehicle may have belonged to Dr Drier or it may have been hired (Image courtesy of Museum of Vancouver).

and camping parties will be on the North Island roads between Christmas and New Year. The bureaux of the larger motorists' associations have been supplying information for projected tours for over a month and the Auckland Automobile Association had issued nearly 1000 itineraries by the middle of this month. Auckland motorists are venturing everywhere. A few will ship their cars to the South Island in search of new scenes, but new roads have opened up so much territory within this province [Auckland] that even the insatiable pioneers with 25 years of motoring experience may find something novel not 200 miles from home' (*New Zealand Herald* 1927).

The Driers appear to have been part of this trend as shown by a notice in the local papers on 17 December 1927 (*Auckland Star* 1927) that 'Dr Drier will be absent for some time on holidays. Dr Murphy will attend to his appointments'. A further notice in the social columns on 3 February 1928 (*Sun (Auckland)* 1928) advised readers that 'Dr and Mrs Drier and their daughter [had] returned to town from a two-months' motor trip through the North and South Islands'.

However, a year-and-a-half later, the Drier's substantial three-storeyed 'Italian villa' at 70 Symonds Street was sold at auction on 6 September 1929. Although it did not make the auction reserve 'by a small figure' it was sold through private negotiations after the sale (*Sun (Auckland)* 1929). On the following 11 November the *New Zealand Herald* carried a notice on behalf of Drier 'who is leaving New Zealand' for an auction 'today

(Monday) at 11 o'clock' at his Symonds St residence for the balance of his household, library, office furniture (*New Zealand Herald* 1929a). And on 23 November the contents of his consulting rooms in the Pacific Buildings were advertised 'to doctors, collectors and those looking for good high-class furniture' at public auction (*New Zealand Herald* 1929b).

The social pages of the *New Zealand Herald* reported on 25 January 1930 that the Driers and Dr Rose of Canada had returned to Auckland from a fortnight's fishing at Taupo (*New Zealand Herald* 1930a). In the same column readers were also informed that 'Mrs E. Newton Drier and Miss Francelle Drier are leaving by the *Maunganui* next week for a world tour'. The Drier family finally departed New Zealand for Sydney on 31 January 1930 in 'First Saloon' on board the SS *Maunganui* (*New Zealand Herald*, 1930b).

### Extended travels

The trip around the world was a leisurely one during which the Driers kept in touch with their New Zealand friends by way of the social pages in the Auckland newspapers. On 26 May 1930, the *New Zealand Herald* carried a paragraph that 'Dr and Mrs Drier and Miss Francelle, of Symonds Street, have been extensively touring Australia. They have visited Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and the country districts around Brisbane, returning to the latter city in time for the Science Congress on May 23, which Dr Drier is attending. Early in June they will leave for the Great

Barrier Reef, and after that for Cairns, the Philippines and Japan' (*New Zealand Herald*, 1930c). Although no mention has been found of a visit there, there were large numbers of New Caledonian *Placostylus* specimens in the Drier Collection at MOV. Some had labels made of Drier's recycled note pads and were dated 1930, which suggests they most probably also took in New Caledonia.

At the end of October 1930, it was reported that 'Dr. and Mrs. E. Newton Drier, and Miss Francelle Drier, of Auckland, who are away on an extensive tour of the world, spent an interesting month in Manila and from there went up to Japan via Shanghai and Hongkong [sic]. A month was also spent at Yokohama. From Singapore they went to Rangoon and Calcutta and saw India via Calcutta, Benares, Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Bombay and Madras, across to Kandy and Colombo. On November 13 they will go through to Egypt and Naples and by Christmas expect to be in Vienna, where they will stay for a month or so' (*New Zealand Herald*, 1930d).

Instead, they spent Christmas in Florence, after first visiting Naples and Rome. From Florence they then went to Venice, Milan, Nice and Cannes. From there they continued, via Switzerland, to Vienna, Berlin and then to The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and down to Spain intending to be in London by Easter 'or a little later'. They had been joined in Colombo by another peripatetic Auckland, Miss Phyllis Eady, who accompanied them for the rest of their travels (*New Zealand Herald* 1931a).

On 16 April 1931 according to the *New Zealanders at Home* column in the *New Zealand Herald* (1931b) 'Dr E.N. Drier, of Auckland, accompanied by Mrs Drier and Miss Drier, has already had many delightful travel experiences. In June they will go to Canada and the United States. Dr. Drier intends to spend some time in Canada, the land of his birth'.

In May 1931 the papers reported that the Driers arrived in London in April and that after visiting Scotland Mrs E. Newton Drier and Miss Francelle Drier, accompanied by Miss Eady, would leave for Montreal toward the end of that month. They intended to visit friends in the United States for a few weeks before again returning to London (*New Zealand Herald* 1931c).

### Return to Canada

It is not clear whether the return journey to the United States ever took place, but the 13 August 1931 *New Zealand Herald* (1931d) informed its readers that 'Dr. and Mrs. E. Newton Drier and Miss Francelle Drier, formerly of Symonds Street, Auckland, who have been on a world tour, have arrived in Vancouver from London, where they spent two months.' However, they intended to spend the summer in Vancouver and the winter in California. Miss Phyllis Eady, who accompanied them on part of their tour, expected to return to Auckland by Christmas that year.

After his return to Vancouver probably sometime in late 1931, Dr Drier sought to gift his collection of shells to the Vancouver City Museum. This is dealt with in the next section, but from 1931 on, news of the Driers becomes increasingly sparse.

There were two more communications to Drier on file at Auckland Museum. One is from Powell in February 1932 (AV2.6.30 1932D) and the other from the Director (presumably Gilbert Archey) in February 1934 (AV2.6.32 1934D). Both are clearly in reply to a letter from Drier enquiring about the non-receipt of copies of the *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand*.

On 14 July 1932, there is what may have been the final mention of the Driers in the social pages of the *New Zealand Herald* (1932), reporting that they were spending the summer at Vancouver Island and that Dr Drier had been elected conchologist of the Vancouver Museum.

Correspondence held at MOV between him and the Director, T.P.O. Menzies indicates that while at Vancouver Island he continued his molluscan research but collected only a few shells. One further letter to Menzies, dated 10 March 1936, shows that he was continuing to work on the collection, but unhappy at the speed with which the City Museum was providing cases for the display of the shells. This appears to be the last known record of Drier on file at MOV.

Dr Ezra Newton Drier was at Vancouver City Museum as Honorary Curator of Conchology from 23 June 1932 until he died aged 70 on 27 June 1941 of pancreatic cancer (*The Bulletin of the Vancouver Medical Association* 1941: 317). He is buried at Mountainview Cemetery, Vancouver, alongside the baby son who died in May 1911 (Find a Grave 2022).

### THE DRIER COLLECTION AT MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER

The Museum of Vancouver was founded in 1894 by the Art Historical and Scientific Association (AHSA). E.N. Drier joined the AHSA as a member in September 1931 and in April 1932 the MOV, then known as the City Museum, formally accepted the Drier Collection of molluscs from several countries as 'absolute property' of the Museum. In the following June Dr Drier was officially appointed as the Honorary Curator of Conchology (AHSA minutes and reports, COV Archives MSS 388).

While Drier's motivation for the donation of his collection appears to have been its public display as well as the facilitation of his own continued research, for the City Museum there appears to have been another, more pragmatic reason. At the time the Museum was in the Carnegie Building in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, and it had long outgrown its allocated space (Wikipedia, 2022). It was felt that the acquisition of a large collection such as the Drier Collection, would help the AHSA bolster their campaign for new, bigger and better premises (TPO Menzies letter on file at MOV).

However, it was not until 1968 that the Museum finally moved to its present site in Vanier Park and by this stage the Drier Collection had been without its collector and honorary curator for at least 25 years. It is not known when the Drier Collection was packed up and crated to be put into permanent storage, but at least some of it was used for a 'Gift and Giver' gallery display at MOV in 1975 (Mayer, 1991).



Figure 8. (left) The Drier Collection as it was housed at MOV, in the stacked cardboard crates on the left and at the far end of their main storeroom. (Author's image). Figure 9. (right) Four wooden trays shown inside one of the stacked cardboard crates. (Author's image).

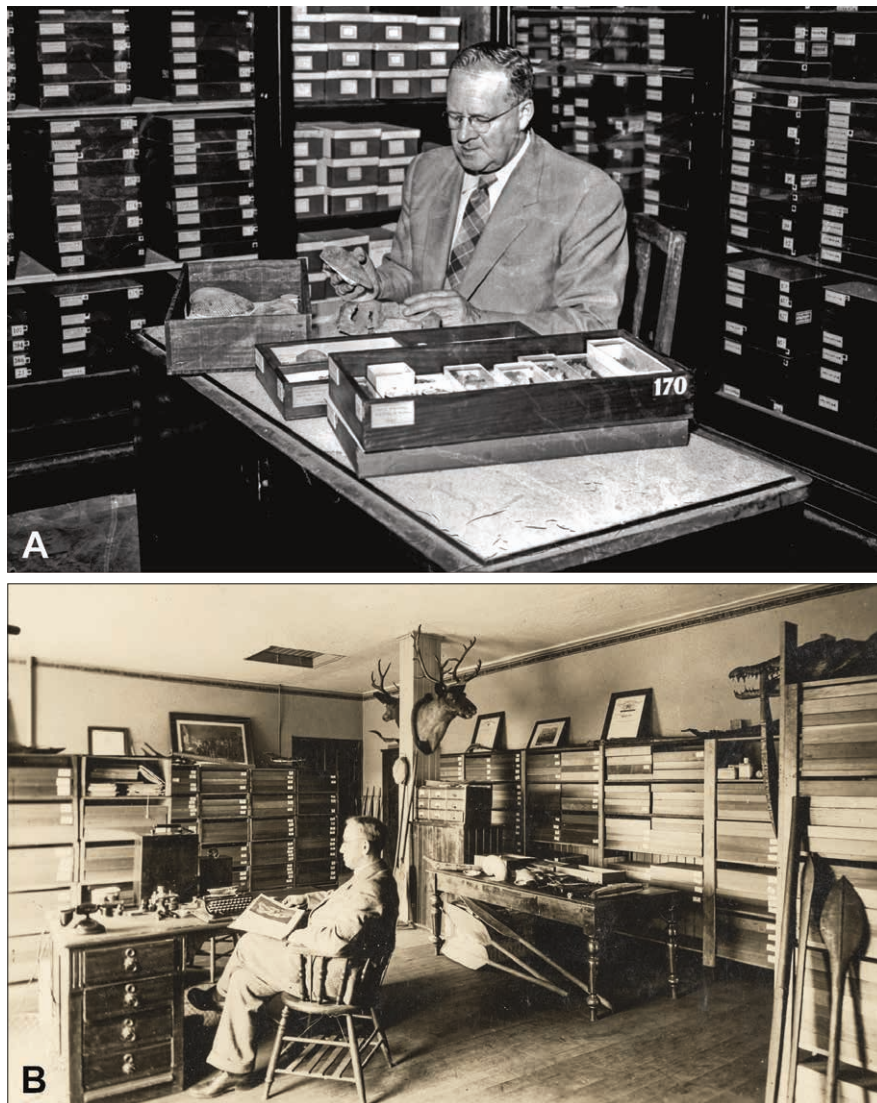


Figure 10a. (above) A.W.B. Powell in the 1950s, surrounded by some of the molluscan collection at Auckland Museum (Image courtesy of Auckland Museum, PH-NEG-NZH-H2199). Figure 10b. (below) E.N. Drier at his desk at the City Museum (now MOV) in 1934. The use of stacked wooden trays for collection storage is strikingly similar to the arrangement shown in Fig. 10a (Image courtesy of MOV)

At MOV most of the Drier Collection was housed along the walls of the main collection store in 274 stacked cardboard boxes (crates) which were arranged seven or eight high inside a frame of plywood (Fig. 8).

The collection was divided into two rough groupings. The largest group, the marine shells, was housed in 230 of the cardboard crates and the second group, consisting of land snails, was housed in the remaining 44. There was also a miscellaneous collection of shells and other invertebrates, fossils, minerals and office and conservation supplies stored in nine large wooden drawer cabinets. One of these cabinets contained a very fine collection of approximately 340 New Zealand Tertiary, mostly molluscan, fossils, many of which came from the Augustus Hamilton Collection (Fig. 6).

The cardboard crates contained an average of four wooden trays each, with a maximum of six (Fig. 9). In a randomized inventory of 33 boxes, I estimated the total collection (including the land snails) to be 12,000–15,000 specimen lots, with approximately one third from New Zealand and a third from Australia. The remainder was from all over the world, including Canada, the USA, Pacific islands, Europe and southeast Asia.

Based on an anonymous, undated handwritten catalogue (made after Drier's death) of the entire land snail collection there were ~5159 land snail lots in total, with ~536 from New Zealand, and ~217 from Australia. However, I found that some marine taxa were also mistakenly included in the terrestrial collections.

Apart from starting Drier on his collecting hobby, Powell presumably also influenced how the collection was arranged and organised by Drier in the space he was allocated at the City Museum (Figs. 10a and 10b) and much of the housing and the arrangement of specimen

within the trays mirrored that of the AM's mollusc collections in its early days.

Even some of the trays at MOV were identical in size and materials to those in use at AM after it moved to its present location in Auckland Domain. AM opened its doors in the Domain on 28 November 1929 and a letter from 'the Secretary and Curator' (presumably Gilbert Archey) dated 1 November 1929 acknowledged payment to Drier 'for the wooden trays with which you supplied us' (AV2.6.27, 1929D). So, here too Drier appeared to show his entrepreneurial spirit in the sale to AM of what may have been his surplus trays just prior to leaving New Zealand for his world tour and eventually Canada. It is, therefore, quite probable that some of the Drier trays still in use at MOV in 2013 came from the same New Zealand source as those in use at AM until a collection storage upgrade in ~1991.

Similarly, many of the individual, paper-taped, cardboard specimen boxes used to house the specimen lots inside the trays were identical to ones used in the AM collections (Figs. 11a and 11b). And as was the case at AM, for larger specimens a variety of household cardboard boxes were used. Smaller specimens were stored in a variety of containers, such as cut pipette glass, pill boxes or gelatin capsules, again displaying a similarity to the methods used by AM.

There was some evidence from fragmented catalogues, that originally Dr Drier had his collection arranged by broad geographic regions, and then taxonomically within these. However, at MOV shells were arranged inside the trays mostly alphabetically by genus and without regard to higher classification or geography. Some trays contained a mix of taxa from different families, while others contained a single family or genus. Although there



Figure 11a. (left) Small rectangular cardboard storage boxes, round cardboard 'pill' boxes, glass vials and pipette glass tubes shown inside one of the wooden trays at MOV. All were used by Drier to house individual specimen lots of shells. (Author's image). Figure 11b. (right) In the early 1990s AM's wooden storage drawers were replaced by large brown cardboard boxes, but this image shows that the smaller containers - which remained in use until they were replaced recently - were in many cases identical to those used by Drier. (Author's image).

was at least one attempt in the early 1960s to update the scientific names in the collection, by and large the taxonomy was that which was accepted in the 1930s.

Vancouver's cold winters may have benefitted the survival of the Drier Collection in good condition. Except for those specimens used for display, for most of its life the collection would have been stored in dark museum stores. Certainly, for the later part of its storage at the Vanier Park location, it was kept in best-practice, dark, climate-controlled conditions. As such, the bulk of the Drier specimens were generally in excellent condition and there was no evidence of pest infestations or activity, such as insect frass or damaged or eaten labels. There was slight foxing on a very few labels and for a small minority of the small cardboard boxes their edges or tape had deteriorated. Small shells are particularly vulnerable



Figure 12. One of the very large lots in the Drier Collection, collected in 1930 from Heron Island, Queensland, Australia. The multiple labels may indicate that this was an amalgamation of several smaller lots collected by Drier. (Author's image).

to glass-disease if stored within cut pipette glass tubes, but none in the Drier Collection showed evidence of this. Similarly, the approximately 340 New Zealand Cenozoic fossil lots, which came originally from the Augustus Hamilton Collection, were in many cases in better condition than comparable ones held at AM as the latter had often deteriorated due to pyrite disease.

There did not any longer appear to be a working Drier catalogue. A large cardboard box containing massed cards were from an original Drier card catalogue and showed that the New Zealand shells were originally

a separate collection. However, they no longer related to the trays and their organisation in the MOV store.

A second catalogue, consisting of A5-sized ring binders contained taxonomic and location information in what looked to be Drier's handwriting. It also had alpha-numeric data which seemed to relate to books for taxonomic information. However, none could be matched with specific specimen lots or trays.

A third catalogue appeared to have been started in the mid-2000s by a museum volunteer and did relate to the collection as then organized at MOV. This volunteer completed a handwritten inventory of the land snails, which listed shell lots in sequence (box/drawer/lot) and which transcribed information on labels. A similar catalogue was started for the marine specimens but did not go beyond the first few trays.

### The specimen lots

There were some very large lots, numbering tens or hundreds of shells. Some of these had a single accompanying label, while others had multiple labels showing that these were likely to have been an amalgamation of several smaller lots (Fig. 12).

### Labels

The bulk of the Drier Collection specimens had labels with at least some primary data (location information and dates), but more than 10% of lots had labels without this information and were therefore of little value to museums.

Dr Drier's labels were either handwritten (Fig. 13) or typewritten (Fig. 1). Slight idiosyncrasies in the typeface show this was the same typewriter sometimes used by Drier for his medical correspondence and therefore generated by him and not at some later date. Sometimes old labels appeared to have been replaced with new ones, whereas in other cases catalogue dates and numbers were added to original Drier labels. As shown by additional alpha numeric information on some labels (Fig. 1), at least one attempt was made in the 1960s to catalogue the collection. Many of the labels which accompanied the specimens collected while in Australia were made of Drier's recycled doctor's notepads.

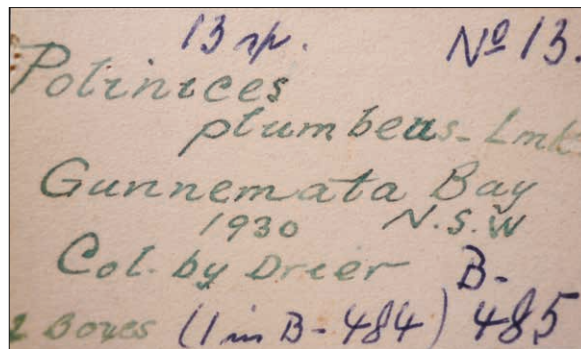


Figure 13. One of Drier's labels written in greenish ink, which appears on all the labels with specimens collected on the Australian, Pacific and Asian legs of the Drier's world tour. This ink appears to run out in 1931, when the Driers are in Europe. (Author's image).

### Collecting locations

The collection contained marine, freshwater and terrestrial specimens from around the world. The one third of the collection that was from New Zealand included marine and terrestrial shells from all over New Zealand, including offshore islands such as Great Barrier, Chatham and Stewart Islands, but with the terrestrial material coming especially from around Auckland and Northland.

The third that was from Australia came mostly from eastern and southeastern locations from as far west as Adelaide, south to Tasmania, and north as far as Queensland.

The remaining third included material from all over the world, including Pacific locations such as 'Polynesia', Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Society Islands (French Polynesia), New Hebrides [Vanuatu], Samoa as well as Japan, which the Driers may have visited on their world trip.

There were also a significant number of specimens from Ceylon [Sri Lanka], the USA (especially Florida, New York and North Carolina) and Central America (especially Cuba and Mexico) with fewer from Europe. The latter were sometimes from markets, presumably obtained when the Driers visited Europe in 1931.

### Collecting dates

We know that Dr Drier started collecting shells as a result of meeting A.W.B. Powell (Fig. 6) when he became a member of the Auckland Institute and Museum in 1926 and that he left New Zealand permanently on 31 January 1930. It is therefore almost certain that his New Zealand material is all from the period 1926–1929.

Australian and Pacific lots are all assumed to date from 1930. As shown above, the journey through Australia is well-documented and dated and those labels which are dated bear the year 1930. In addition, all Australian and Pacific labels, including undated ones, were written in the same greenish ink (Fig. 13). This ink finally appears to run out in 1931, when the Driers are in Europe. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that all shell lots which have labels written in green ink were collected during 1930 and into the first half of 1931.

Unfortunately, little else is known of Drier's collecting during his further travel, except that the bulk of his 'world' specimen lots had little collecting information and were of little museum value.

There was also evidence that after Drier donated his collection to MOV in 1932, he continued collecting and acquired entire collections from collectors or their estates. These appeared to be mostly from the USA and much of this traded, exchanged or otherwise acquired material suffered from the same lack of collecting data. Again, these have little museum value.

## DISCUSSION

One of the many functions of museum natural history collections is to provide baseline biodiversity information to stakeholders. Only a very small percentage of

specimens is ever used for public displays and their greater value comes from the information which they hold about our natural environments, both past and present (e.g., Naggs, 2022).

However, this information is often imperfect. For example, early molluscan collectors and museum curators alike frequently omitted collection dates for their specimens, and we can only date these if we are able to establish when the collectors were active. This is so for the molluscan collections at Auckland Museum. Powell brought the more than 60,000 lots in his personal collection, mostly undated, to Auckland Museum when he started there in 1929 as its Curator of Conchology and Palaeontology (Powell *et al.* 1967). However, after this date, as well as building a museum collection, he continued to add to his own collection and so it cannot be assumed that all the undated Powell shell lots attributable to him predate his move to Auckland Museum. Of more than 140,000 lots of molluscs in the AM collections only 402 are recognizably from the period 1919–1929 and a mere 89 from the period 1927–1929.

The Drier Collection therefore significantly boosts data for this period, provided the time of Drier's collecting can be determined. As shown above, Drier arrived in July 1916 and left New Zealand on 31 January 1930. His collecting therefore cannot fall outside this 14-year period. Furthermore, based on his membership of the Auckland Museum Institute and Powell's letter to T.P.O. Menzies (Fig. 6), it is almost certain that Drier did not start building his molluscan collection until 1926. The collecting period for New Zealand material is therefore reduced to less than four years—from 1926 to late 1929.

The difference in volume of digitised manuscript, newspaper and family history resources available online now as compared to 2013 when the Drier Collection was first assessed has contributed to a much more complete, though not exhaustive, profile of Dr Drier and the society in which he moved. It has exposed a potential for the Drier Collection to contribute to a social history as well as a natural history. By the time Drier started his collecting in 1926, Powell was already part of a well-established network of mollusc collectors in New Zealand, Australia and further afield (AV2.6.30 1932D). Many of these names appear in Drier's collections either as primary donors, or perhaps secondarily, via gifts or purchases from other collectors.

For these men, collecting frequently appears to have been about building large, diverse collections for both themselves and the museums with which they were often associated. They did so through not only personally collecting, but also trading with others within their network. Therefore, surplus specimens were always needed to enable exchanges.

Current cataloguing work for the Drier Collection bears this out. Drier's specimen lots are often very large, numbering in the hundreds, such as the 611 specimens of the ostrich foot, *Struthiolaria papulosa*, entirely collected from Cheltenham Beach, Auckland. The assumption is that these were all collected by (or for) Drier during the few years when he was engaged

in his shell collecting hobby in New Zealand (1926–late 1929). Even if these were the product of multiple collecting events, their numbers are in a stark contrast to today, as few, if any, of this species are in evidence at this locality now (pers. Obs., 2022).

The frequently out-size lots show that Drier's collecting activities may have been extreme, possibly even for his day, but especially when judged against modern standards. However, as a result, his collection provides us with a useful window into the past on the natural abundance that once existed within New Zealand. So notwithstanding the ethics of Drier's collecting practices, his specimens now serve a purpose which cannot have been foreseen by him.

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## APPENDIX 1

This list of *Papers Past* references represents some of the search results found in local newspapers for Dr Drier. They give a chronology and flavour of Dr Drier's nearly 14 years in Auckland. All links were accessible on 01 November 2022.

- New Zealand Herald, Volume LIII, Issue 16273, 5 July 1916, Page 1. Notice in Lost and Found, where Dr Drier, surgeon aboard the steamship, *Ruapehu*, asked for the return of his diploma from the University of Vienna, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19160705.2.3.4>
- New Zealand Herald, Volume LIII, Issue 16296, 1 August 1916, Page 12. Notice that Dr Drier has taken over practice of Dr B J Dudley, while the latter is on active service, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19160801.2.95.4>
- New Zealand Herald, Volume LIII, Issue 16303, 9 August 1916, Page 6. Drier gives post-mortem diagnosis, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19160809.2.34>
- Auckland Star, Volume XLVII, Issue 209, 1 September 1916, Page 7. More on Dr Drier's replacement of Dudley, and mention of his service in France, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19160901.2.90>
- Auckland Star, Volume XLVII, Issue 218, 12 September 1916, Page 4. Dr Drier adds his voice to the debate on nationalizing medical service in New Zealand, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19160912.2.34>
- Auckland Star, Volume XLVII, Issue 284, 28 November 1916, Page 12. Dr Drier is thanked in a birth notice, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19161128.2.97>
- New Zealand Herald, Volume LIII, Issue 16401, 1 December 1916, Page 9. Dr Drier is called to perform a post-mortem examination, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19161201.2.73>
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- Northern Advocate, 30 November 1917, Page 2. Dr Drier again as witness in a fatal abortion case, after first jury was unable to reach a verdict and dismissed, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NA19171130.2.19>
- Wairarapa Daily Times, Volume 45, Issue 13805, 9 April 1919. Page 5, Dr Drier appears in a list of leading Auckland doctors in support of prohibition, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WDT19190409.2.25>
- Auckland Star, Volume L, Issue 88, 12 April 1919, Page 16. Bereavement card in which Dr Drier is thanked for his kindness, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19190412.2.88.2>
- New Zealand Herald, Volume LVI, Issue 17275, 26 September 1919. Page 4, Dr Drier caused a motorcar accident, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19190926.2.11>
- New Zealand Herald, Volume LVI, Issue 17282, 4 October 1919, Page 7. Dr Drier is ordered to pay costs arising from same accident as above, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH19191004.2.14>
- Auckland Star, Volume LI, Issue 300, 16 December 1920, Page 7. Carpenters wanted [by Drier] advertisement, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/AS19201216.2.98.4>

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