

17 December 1999

Dear Dr. King,

Thank you for your letter of 27 November 1999.

I was sorry to read that you have had no response from either of Sir Harry's sons. I am still pursuing - so far without reward - a line that may lead to a contact with Sir Harry's sister's offspring, if she had any. I recall how fond of and close to his sister Sir Harry was. She was married to a medical practitioner and lived in Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire, England. I will let you know if anything eventuates.

As regards Ron Gatty's intervention, I do recall visiting some homes in Auckland in July 1942 with Sir Harry, but I have no memory of the content of any discussion about Amelia Earhart that there might have been.

I presume that you are aware of Bruce Brown's biography of Harold Gatty. It was first published in 1997 by Libra Books Pty Ltd, 39 Maning Avenue, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7005 - Phone (03) 6225 1479; Fax (03) 6225 0900. In it there is mention of Amelia Earhart's ill-fated journey with the "boozy ex-ship's navigator named Fred Noonan". To have made such an uncomplimentary comment I fancy that Bruce Brown must have had some papers regarding Amelia's flight with Fred, especially concerning the construction of an airfield on Howland Island, some 200 miles north of Gardner (Nukumaroro). The U.S. Department of the Interior and the State Department in Washington were heavily involved with questions of sovereignty in the Central Pacific Islands surrounding the Equator at that time, and there is reference in the Gatty biography to that.

Having had an airfield constructed to accommodate Amelia's aircraft, there must surely be available to you from the departmental archives some reference to the outcome of the ill-fated flight and, perhaps, mention of the sextant and bones.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Thomson.

(Ian Thomson)