S. Frank Kajewski (1904-1997?) papers, 1928-1933: Guide

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

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Descriptive Summary
Repository: Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.
Call No.: III SFK
Location: Archives
Title: S. Frank Kajewski (1904-1997?) papers, 1928-1933
Date(s): 1928-1933
Creator: Kajewski, S. Frank
Quantity: 4 linear inches
Language of material: English
Abstract: S. Frank Kajewski, a native Australian, collected plant specimens for the Arnold Arboretum between 1928 and 1932 in the New Hebrides, the Santa Cruz and Solomon Islands. This collection includes correspondence principally between Kajewski and Alfred Rehder, curator of the Arnold Arboretum and spans the five years, that he was employed by the Arboretum, Kajewski’s black and white photographs of the various islands' flora and indigenous peoples. His expense records and publications are also included.
Note: Access to Finding Aid record in HOLLIS.
Preferred Citation: S. Frank Kajewski papers. Archives of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.
Additional Material: Additional information regarding S. Frank Kajewski and the Arboretum’s exploration of this region may be found in Archives III LJB Brass, Leonard John (L.J.), 1900-1971.

Processing Information
2000 Kelly McCarthy; 2003 revised Jessica M. Parr; 2012 revised by Larissa Glasser, S. Connor. 2023 revised by Larissa Glasser.

Acquisition Information
Provenance: This collection was transferred from the Arnold Arboretum’s departmental holdings to the Arboretum’s Archives in 1984.

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Biographical Note:
S. Frank Kajewski was an Australian plantsman hired by Oakes Ames (1847-1950), Supervisor of the Arnold Arboretum from 1927-1935, to collect plant specimens in the South Pacific Islands, an area that had been little explored. He began his collecting for the Arboretum in the New Hebrides Islands on February 11, 1928, then moved on to Vanikoro (also Vanikolo), a group of several nearby islands in the Santa Cruz group, and continued to work there until March 20, 1929. From May to December he collected in the rain forests of North Queensland in the wetter parts of the Atherton Tableland, Mt. Bartle Frere, and the Daintree River and then resumed his collecting in the north Solomon Islands in April, 1930. While Kajewski was collecting Bougainville the Arboretum published "A Plant Collector’s Notes on the New Hebrides and Santa Cruz Islands." in volume 11 of its Journal. Next Kajewski sailed to Malaita, a thin, mountainous island and the most populated of the Solomons, spent a short amount of time collecting, and then proceeded to the largest island in the Solomons, Guadalcanal where he remained in the Arboretum’s employ until May of 1932.

Kajewski's correspondence, chiefly with Alfred Rehder, Curator of the Arboretum’s Herbarium from 1893-1940, often describes the challenges he faced collecting in this island environment. Uncooperative political authorities, the lack affordable, competent, help and the additional complication of drying and preserving plants in humid conditions were all obstacles to overcome. Kajewski’s communication with the Arboreum was aided by Cyril Tenison White (1890–1950) who acted as a conduit for his letters and specimens. White, a Queensland’s government botanist from 1917 until his death, was chiefly interested in the taxonomy of woody plants and had a long association with the Arboretum beginning as a correspondent with Charles Sprague Sargent (1841–1927), the Arboretum’s first director (1872-1927).

In 1933, the Arboretum published White’s "Ligneous Plants Collected for the Arnold Arboretum in North Queensland by S.F. Kajewski in 1929." in the fourth number of Contributions from the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. White named two new species for Kajewski in this publication: Garcinia kajewskii and Jasminum kajewskii. The type specimen of Garcinia kajewskii is held at the Harvard University Herbaria. The William and Lynda Steere Herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden hold the Jasminum kajewskii type specimen.

In “Botanical Collecting in the Tropics,” an illustrated appendix to White’s paper, Kajewski gives practical, simple directions on how to construct both a hot air and a steam drier box,
his solutions to drying plants in the high humidity of a tropical, moisture laden environment where ordinary techniques fail and an artificial heat source needs to be employed.

Early in the expedition Kajewski was stricken with malaria and although in an attempt to recuperate sought relief by suspending his collecting for several months the fever lasted for the duration of the expedition. In September of 1931, he informed Rehder that he had discovered a considerable amount of gold. Kajewski realized that he would not be able to collect specimens and supervise his mining interests and resigned his position as collector. To continue in his place, the Arboretum engaged L. (Leonard) J. Brass (1900 – 1971). Brass had led an expedition to New Guinea in 1925-1926 during which he had collected plants for the Arboretum. There are also letters between and among White, L.J. Brass and Kajewski after Brass replaced Kajewski. Brass continued to collect plants for the Arnold Arboretum on the second and fourth New Guinea expeditions led by Richard Archbold.

It was not until 1946 that the Arboretum published Kajewski’s final exploits “Plant Collecting in the Solomon Islands” in the Journal of the Arnold Arboretum. A note from the editor begins: “The manuscript of this article has been for some time in the possession of Dr. C.T. White, of the Brisbane Garden, by whom it was recently forwarded to the Arnold Arboretum for possible publication ....”

There is little else known about S. Frank Kajewski, but it appears likely that he was Sethric Frank Kajewski, born on July 14, 1904 in Queensland, Australia and died September 4, 1997 also in Queensland.

**Scope and Content.** The collection consists primarily of Kajewski photographs and correspondence from the expeditions funded by the Arboretum. The collection also contains receipts and a small amount of correspondence from L. J. Brass who assumed Kajewski’s role in the expedition.
Arrangement
The collection is arranged in six series:

**Series I:** Correspondence  
**Series II:** Expenditures, Receipts, Reports  
**Series III:** Photographs  
**Series IV:** Publications  
**Series V:** Biographical Documentation

Container List

**Series I: Correspondence**
Series includes letters from Frank Kajewski to Alfred Rehder, Rehder’s responses, typed on the back of Kajewski’s letters and also letters between Kajewski, White and L.J. Brass; Kajewski and Brass and Brass and White. The letters span four years, from 1928-1932.

**Box 1**  
**Folder**

1. **Kajewski to Alfred Rehder, February 12, 1928.**
   
   Recounts his arrival in Vila the New Hebrides Islands from Sidney, Australia and describes the condition of the islands His first lot of specimens had already been sent to C.T. White to be forwarded to the Arboretum. The only access he has to the local currency is through a corporation that serves as a bank and charges very high exchange rates. His plan is to start in the southern islands and work north.

2. **Rehder to Kajewski, April 6, 1928.** Typed reply on verso of 1st page of Kajewski Feb. 12, 1928.
   
   Responds that so little is known about the flora of the New Hebrides that his work will be a significant contribution and to makes as complete a collection of ligneous plants as possible, and requests a map of the islands to follow Kajewski progress and understand his references to local landmarks.

2. **Kajewski to Elmer D. Merrill, September 23, 1928 with copy of Merrill letter also sent to Rehder.**
   
   Describes facing mounting difficulties and it appears impossible to hire appropriate help. His plans are to take the Church of England Mission steamer “Southern Cross” to Vanikoro to view a stand of Kauri Pine. His financial problems continue because Burns Philip & Co. has a monopoly in the islands.

Notes his letter to Merrill which he copied Rehder and his determination to collect as much conifer material on Vanikoro that is possible.

Rehder to Kajewski, November, 27, 1928. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski, Nov. 28.

Responds to Kajewski’s concerns with encouragement and a reminder of how valuable his collection will be if he perseveres in his task and asks about the maps.


Elaborates upon how the shortages of labor, no system of transport, fever, and no help from the government are all affecting his ability to collect plants. He has had intermittent fever from malaria for six months and plans go to Australia in hopes of recovery. If he could purchase schooner he could overcome these disadvantages.

Rehder to Kajewski, April 26, 1929. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski Jan. 29.

Thanks Kajewski for the collections received and compliments him on its depth given all of the inherent obstacles and responds that the funds are not available to purchase a schooner.

5. Kajewski to Rehder, June 24, 1929.

Describes collecting on the Atherton Tableland and that White will identify and send specimens to the Arboretum. Also notes that he has been keeping expenses down as the money goes further in Queensland than in the islands, but does intend to return to the islands before the end of the year.

6. Rehder to Kajewski, August 21, 1929.

Pleased that Kajewski is collecting on the Atherton Tableland and requests itinerary of the New Hebrides, also encloses list of American importers of cabinet woods supplied by Dr. Record of Yale.


Continues to collect in Queensland. Trying to procure seeds of a tropical *Garcinia*, vegetation tropical, temperatures over 100, and excessive humidity. Refers to his Itinerary of the New Hebrides 10 February, 1928 – 20 March, 1929 which he has sent separately.

Rehder to Kajewski, January 10, 1930. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski Nov. 29.

Informs him of the decision to publish his itinerary either entirely or in part in the *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum*, his specimens are to be
identified by American and French botanists, and Rehder hopes to succeed in acquiring letters of introduction from the Colonial Office for Kajewski.

8. Kajewski to Rehder, January 22, 1930.

Details plans for traveling to Kieta and on to the Solomons. Has solved the problem of drying plants by designing his own dryer.

Rehder to Kajewski February 25, 1930. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski, Jan. 22.

Confirms that the cooperation of the Colonial office to assist Kajewski will be forthcoming. He introduces the idea of taking photographs and that White has been instructed to buy him a camera, includes specific instructions about collecting wood and plant specimens.

9. Kajewski to Rehder (undated, but prior to April 18th, 1930)

Plans to depart for Kieta, where he will be the guest of Dr. C.M. Deland [a Commonwealth’s Administrative Medical Officer] and is enthusiastic about his new hot air dryers. He offers to collect tropical fern spores and, for Rehder’s son, land shells.

Rehder to Kajewski, April 18, 1930. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski undated letter

Regrets that there are no glass houses at the Arboretum, but that he will send fern spores to Dr. E.B. Copeland in Berkley, California or to the Harvard Tropical Garden in Cuba.


Working in the Solomon Islands and has found a conifer that he believes is very rare. Not good with the camera, but trying to do his best. Has collected land shells for Rehder’s son, moss for the Arboretum, and will be collecting everything except fungi.

Rehder to Kajewski, June 20, 1930. Typed reply on verso 2d page of Kajewski Apr. 28.

Though Arboretum chiefly interested in trees and shrubs, will pass on to appropriate institutions all herbaceous material reports that the notes on the New Hebrides are to be published in the Journal of the Arnold Arboretum in July. Rehder is leaving for Europe and is to be away until September 1930.


Describes the conditions in the Australian Solomon Island of Bougainville, has made extensive notes on the uses of plants, especially at Buin, found a white azalea growing at 5,500 feet.

Is sending seeds to grow of tobacco specimens that he believes are not native and requests these be compared to the American ones.

13. Kajewski to Rehder, November 8, 1930 [2d letter, same date].

Sending a tin full of seeds of a leguminous plant that will grow in the sand. He feels that it may be useful in the warmer parts of the United States.

Rehder to Kajewski, January 13, 1931. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski 2d Nov. 8.

Has received two letters of November 8, reports both sets of seeds sent to the US Department of Agriculture and some to Harvard Tropical Garden in Cuba, has heard from White that Kajewski is now in Tulargi.


On his way to Malaita, requests that his allowance be increased as he is anticipating very high expenses on the island. The government will give him no assistance, however there is a drought, which will help his attempts at preservation of the specimens.

15. Kajewski to White, November 26, 1930 [2d letter, same date]

In Auki awaiting permission of the District Office to go inland on Malaita.


Reports going to collect specimens on Malaita and then to the Island of Guadalcanal.

Rehder to Kajewski, March 14, 1931. Typed reply on verso of Kajewski, Dec. 6.

Pleased Kajewski remaining on Solomons until May, sent additional $500.00 to Mr. White for Kajewski for a small vessel to facilitate exploration of the less accessible islands.

17. Kajewski to White, December 1, 1930.

Sending five parcels from Malaita. About to climb mountains of Gaudalcanar. No cooperation from [Solomon Islands] Government and therefore must request additional funds for expenses. These next four months will mark his final collecting trip, so this would be the ideal opportunity for the expedition to produce specimens.

18. Rehder to Kajewski, December 9, 1930.

Informs Kajewski about the publication of his notes on his plants from New Hebrides in the Journal of the Arnold Arboretum and that one set of his plants has been sent to Paris for determination and another has gone to Kew, reiterates the importance of taking photographs.

Acknowledges receipt of five packages advised in first Kajewski letter from Tulagi [December 1, 1930]. Is sorry for lack of Solomon Islands Government cooperation, had been advised otherwise and encloses a letter of referral to Secretary to the Government in Tulagi. Has also written to Rehder for increased allowance.


States Kajewski’s arrival in Tulagi from Bougainville and reminds of official’s previous reply promising assistance. Emphasizes importance of Kajewski’s botanical expedition on behalf of Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and Bishop Museum of Honolulu.

20. Kajewski to White, February 12, 1931.

Sending photos taken in creek. States he will never be a good photographer, least of all in the tropics. Solomons “a terrible place to work in” with no carriers and no Government cooperation. May explore flora close to sea, but it appears similar everywhere. Going into the bush where wonderful specimens thrive. Field conditions deplorable and expensive. Will try to make it to Tutuve region in Gaudalcanar and finish collecting. Sending four parcels of specimens.

21. White to Kajewski, February 19, 1931.

Pleased money arrived for Kajewski, delay had been due to death of E.H. Wilson in motor accident. Sending additional funds, and according to Rehder, more will follow and expedition can proceed. Hopes Kajewski will consider staying a few additional months, so he may explore higher mountains. Has safely received Mataram parcels, and is sending collection materials, photographic plates, and newspapers.

22. Kajewski to White, February 26, 1931.

Pleased with news of extra funds. Reached Tutuve Mountains under rugged conditions and after extended negotiation with natives. Difficult to recruit help from natives, leading to delays and reduced collecting. Will do his best under the circumstances.

23. Kajewski to Rehder, March 6, 1931.

Plans to remain in the Solomon Islands until the end of the year is planning to explore a mountain “Tambooded,” or forbidden by the natives. He has discovered a large amount of gold, and will not reveal its whereabouts unless the Arboretum gets a share, and has decided that he is not meant to be a photographer.


Emphasizes that Kajewski collect in the interior of the island where it is more likely to find unusual plants, his allowance is to be increased. The the New
Hebrides determinations arrived from Paris, and several were new and named after Kajewski.

24. Kajewski to White, March 6, 1931.

Reiterates lack of Government cooperation due to protected status of indigenous inhabitants. Officials fear Missionaries taking issue with natives being compelled to labor. Will stay until the end of the year and will inform Rehder. Requests metal plates instead of wood plates which are not suited to such conditions. Has found one Bougainville rare goldfield pine but it was almost dead. Proceeding to the interior. Requests no more formalin or developing material, can obtain it in Tulagi if needed.

25. White to Kajewski, April 15, 1931.

Photographs have arrived safely. Regrets he cannot send metal plates without having them custom made for the camera. Sending a second camera may not be worth expense and delay, since Kajewski has previously stated disdain for photography. Advises that J.B. McCarthy will soon take new post as manager of Malaita Company, and could be of assistance. Has sent additional funds to Tulagi along with drying papers, photographic plates, and newspapers.

26. Kajewski to White, September 16, 1931. COPY

Details his discovery of gold, insists the Arboretum should benefit because supported his being in the area, wants time of from collecting for the chance of a lifetime, asks White to send a copy of the letter to Rehder and tell him also not to send any more money. Kajewski’s last request is that utmost secrecy be kept. [This copy of the original letter, is presumably the one White sent to Rehder]

27. Kajewski to Rehder, November 26, 1931.

Asks for leave to go prospecting for gold, has not touched Arboretum funds, the news is being kept secret to protect the gold as well as the other islands that might be subject to an influx of searchers. His next planned trip is Rennell Island south of Guadalcanal.


Pleased he is going to Rennell Island, enumeration of the New Hebrides Collection is to appear in the April edition of the Journal, hopes Kajewski and the Arboretum will benefit from the discovery of gold, and with the exception of informing Oakes Ames, has kept the requested silence regarding its discovery.


Has become so involved in the gold mining that he has to give up plant collecting, all of the additional funds sent by the Arboretum are still intact, and he has written White to find someone else to continue collecting for the Arboretum.
Rehder to Kajewski, June 27, 1932 Typed reply on verso of Kajewski 2nd page, May 6.

States the Arboretum harbors no ill will, reiterates that he has done splendid work. L.J. Brass will replace him in the Solomons at the end of June after which Brass is expected to collect for the Arboretum in New Guinea with the Archibald Expedition. Whishes Kajewski the greatest success in the gold mining business.

29. Brass to White, July 17, 1932.

Preparing to leave Tulagi, Brass found Kajewski in a “rather bad way,” but very helpful and turned over about £800 of Arboretum funds, will go to Guadalcanal to pick up Kajewski’s collecting gear, then on to San Christoval for 2 or 3 months and back to Tulagi in September.

30. Brass to White, July 18, 1932.

Requests White procure an 8x10’ Japara silk tent as it is impossible to obtain suitable material for him to make one.


Attached an account of his statements since Brisbane, will summarize his Bougainville and British Solomons collecting work and include sketch maps, has met Brass and Brass’ intentions are to go to Makira or San Christoval. Kajewski’s mining going well, but the pioneering work in the bush is hard.

32. [White] to Kajewski, August 4, 1932.

Has heard from Brass that Kajewski is not well, advises him to rest and recover from his fever and suggests that the Arboretum would support his recuperation at Tulagi, raises the possibility that there might be enough funds for Kajewski to collect and recuperate in Australia.

33. [White] To Brass, August 4, 1932.

White is going to procure some of the supplies that Brass needs: a tent, camera plates, a letter to the resident commissioner and a letter to the treasurer. White quotes from a letter received from Rehder referencing turning over Kajewski’s unexpended funds to Brass, and his understanding that the Arboretum and the New Your Botanical Garden will jointly fund Brass as botanical collector for the Archbold expedition when it begins.

34. [White] to Kajewski, October 21, 1932.

Thanks for notes, dryer diagram, and map. Account of Kajewski’s collection almost complete. Has heard Kajewski may return to Queensland around Christmas and looks forward to seeing him then.
Series II: Itineraries, Expenditures, and Receipts
Folder

1. "Itinerary of the New Hebrides February 10, 1928 –March, 20 1929"

Includes cities where Kajewski stopped, methods of specimen preservation, labor issues, difficulties with indigenous people, local governments, unusual fruits, and method used in trying to cure/treat his fever. He does not consider his time in the New Hebrides a success and plans to do some collecting in Queensland and Bellenden Ker.
Typed, carbon copy, 3 page manuscript.

2. "Collecting Trip. S. F. Kajewski, Bougainville, 1930"

Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between January 17, 1930 – November 12, 1930 during his collecting trip to Bougainville. 3 pages.

"List of Native Wages Bougainville”
Separate detailed financial summary listing expenditures incurred for labor June 17, 1930 – November 10 [1930] 1 page.

Both lists handwritten.

3. “1930 Kajewski” (name handwritten)

Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between December 12, 1930 -March 9, 1931 as well as the additions from the Bursar at Harvard University. Includes 10 attached receipts.
Typed, 2 pages.


3 pages, handwritten, last page labeled: “Summary Receipts-Expenditures”
Balance sheet from June 14, 1930 – June 6, 1931.

[has curious entry in receipts column for June 6 “ Mrs. C.? Kajewski, sundials”]
5. “Rough draft of anticipated Expenses for 12 Months” Kajewski, March 6, 1931 (name and date handwritten). 1 page, typed.

6. “Statement As At 24th July, 1931 Kajewski (name handwritten)

Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between March 10 [1931] – July 24, 1931. 2 pages typed, 7 receipts attached.

7. “Statement in Regard to Mr. S.F. Kajewski’s Expenses in the Solomon Islands” Kajewski (name handwritten).

Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between July 24, 1931 – April 26, 1932. 3 pages, typed.

8. Three loose sheets, untitled:

- Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between January 1, 1931 – July 3, 1931. 1 page, handwritten, with summary amount for this period.
- Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between July 4, 1931 to February 23, 1932. 1 page, handwritten, with summary amount for this period.
- Detailed financial summary listing Kajewski’s expenditures incurred between March 19, 1932 – and April 18, 1932. 1 page, handwritten, with summary amount for this period.

**Series III Photographs**

Consists of 12, 4⅞”x6½” b&w images mounted on 9 boards and an additional 21 b&w images of the same size in sleeves, 12 are duplicates of those on the boards while the rest are not. There are also 16 Kajewski images filed in historic genera collection under their Latin binomial. Dates of photographs range from 1930-1933.

**Folder 1: Images of Solomon Islands on boards, 1931**

Images mounted on boards. Information taken from both recto, in bold italics, and verso of board, all include notation “Photo. By S.F. Kajewski”

- Pacific Islands—Solomon. Bougainville. Rainforest (Calamus sp. in foreground). Bougainville. 1931? M-1001:
- Pacific Islands—Solomon. Guadalcanal Island. Views in rain-forest, Mamassa Creek, back of Berande. 1931? M-984 and M-985 [on same board]
- Pacific Islands—Solomon. Guadalcanal Island. Views in rain-forest, Mamassa Creek, back of Berande. 1931? M-986 and M-987 [on same board]

Images of Solomon Islands, 4x6" prints, 1930-33
Images in sleeves, all include notation "S.F. Kajewski"
- M-970: Koniguru, Buin, District Bougainville Mangifera. Wild Mango this trees is about 100 ft., high. #2157.
- M-971: Bougainville, Native Drum House
- M-972: Near Bougainville. Native gathering on beach.
- M-973: Kugumaru, Buin District, Bougainville Giant leaved Laportsa.
- M-976: Bougainville Cycas.
- M-978: Karngu, Buin District, Bougainville Giant banana. #2298 Oct. 25, 1933
- M-982: Berande, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Camp in rain-forest, ridge above Mamassa Creek.
- M-997: Bougainville. Tacca pinnatifida. Forst. (on right)
• [unnumbered] Anthisturia sp. growing on large plains on northern side of Guadalcanal at sea level. Berande, Guadalcanal July 27, 1932
  Note on verso: “specimen represented by Brass 2551.” (above left)
• [unnumbered] Kugumaru, Buin District, Bougainville. Artocarpus incisa (above right)

Kajewski images filed in the historic genera collection under their Latin binomial
• M-723: Nipa palms, etc. Nipa specimen # 2291. Solomon Islands. Tidal creek at Buin, Bougainville. Oct. 20, 1930
• M-975: Metroxylon salomonense. Solomon Islands. Sago palm cultivated in Bougainville by the natives; also found growing wild. Buin, Bougainville. Oct. 30, 1930
• M-977: Metroxylon salomonense. Solomon Islands. Sago palm cultivated in Bougainville by the natives; also found growing wild. Buin, Bougainville. Oct. 30, 1930
• M-979: Heterospathe kajewskii. Solomon Islands. Palm collected at Kugumaru, Buin District, Bougainville. May 28, 1930
• M-980: Same as M-977
• M-990: Nipa fruticans. (Not nipa according to E.O.M.)
• M-991: Canarium. Solomon Islands. Nali nut or Galip nut. Collected at Kugimaru, Buin. June 7, 1930
• M-992: Areca macrocalyx var. intermedia. Solomon Islands. Wild Areca palm. Collected at Marmaromino, Bougainville. 1931?
• M-995: *Caryota rumphiana*. Solomon Islands. Fruiting stems of palm, collected at Marmaromino, Buin District, Bougainville. Oct. 1, 1930

**Series IV Publications**


**Series V Biographical Documentation**

1. Several pages from AncestryLibrary.com used to try and document S. Frank Kajewski's vital statistics.