

His friends thought otherwise but failed to realise that politics was his life—the focal point that gave meaning to his existence. To a limited extent his writings diverted him but more often than not they served to exacerbate his political passions as his writings about Samoa invariably involved politics. Hence, if it is not his politics, it is his writings that loom large in his correspondence but seldom his family and business.

By the 1930s, Westbrook's letters had a more urgent tone about them. Realising that the end is approaching, he becomes obsessively anxious to have his personal correctness acknowledged and his work for Samoa fittingly recognised. In addition, he saw that Nelson and the Mau now regarded him as a silly old fool ready to be put out to pasture. So he stepped up his letter writing campaign. Many of the letters of the 1930s seem to be written on the spur of the moment: perhaps to compensate for being pushed to the outer edges of the political arena. Their value lies in the volume and variety, the spontaneity and the amount of information they contain. Often they are garbled, indicating the extent of Westbrook's personal distress. Now in his seventies, he carried his years heavily. The independence he was once so proud of withered under the onslaught of ill-health, financial worries and loneliness. Sometimes his efforts were rewarded and he would receive a flattering reply that momentarily satisfied his vanity. But more often than not his letters prompted no such response. One letter to Westbrook however—the final note from Marc T. Greene, an American journalist—stands out above the rest.²⁸ Greene was one of the few people who, in those final unhappy years, offered to help Westbrook solely out of a sense of common decency. He promised to see Dana and find out why *Gods Who Die* was not selling. The truth of the matter was far worse than Greene had reckoned upon but he fully shouldered his distasteful task and truthfully (but gently) told Westbrook why *Gods Who Die* was a failure.

PERSONAL PAPERS

With a few noteworthy exceptions this section is somewhat unrevealing. The financial papers, for instance, have been seriously depleted and therefore do not make clear the extent or even the nature of Westbrook's commercial interests. Neither do they enable one to follow the events leading up to his bankruptcy.

Perhaps the most important items are the few letters in folder 43 that relate to his pre-Samoan days in the Pacific. They are especially significant as they are the only surviving letters of this period and give a picture of Westbrook, the station trader, that leaves one with the impression that he was not at all successful in this occupation: an impression, moreover, that Westbrook sought to conceal in *Gods Who Die*.