After one hundred and fifty years, Edward Peters, ‘a native of Bombay’, finally received recognition for discovering gold that lead to the first workable gold claim in Otago, New Zealand.¹ My hometown, Dunedin was built upon this gold rush. During a community celebration at Glenore, Otago, on Easter Sunday, 12 April 2009, a striking plaque to commemorate Peters was unveiled by Sir Anand Satyanand, New Zealand’s Governor General. His heritage and that of several guests at the Glenore celebration represents the complex recentring of the Indian diaspora to the South Pacific. Satyanand was born in New Zealand but his parents had emigrated to New Zealand from Fiji before the Second World War.² His grandparents were part of the different waves of the Indian diaspora to Fiji. His paternal grandparents emigrated from Madras (Chennai) in 1911 and his grandfather was an interpreter within the colonial administration. Satyanand’s maternal grandfather sailed to Fiji in 1882 as a Girmitiya (indentured labourer) from Uttar Pradesh. Also among the official party at Glenore was Ratilal Champaneri, President of the New Zealand Indian Central Association (NZICA) that was established in 1926. He identifies with not only New Zealand Indians but also its Gujarati community that has established roots in New Zealand since

¹ Alan Williams, Edward Peters (Black Peter): The Discoverer of the First Workable Goldfield in Otago (Clutha: Clutha Print, 2009).
1902. Champaneri emigrated there in 1978 to marry Gita Bhana Naik, a third generation New Zealand Indian. Her grandfather had settled in Wellington in 1918. Other guests at Edward Peters’ celebration included New Zealand Punjabis who were indicative of the diaspora from Punjab and elsewhere to New Zealand since 1890. Don and Barbara McCabe and their daughter Jane attended the Glenore event because of curiosity about Don’s mother, Lorna Peters. She arrived in New Zealand in 1921 from Kalimpong in India and not only shared a common surname with Edward Peters, but like him was an Anglo-Indian. Other local Kiwi Indians were also present at the occasion. Equally striking was the welcome by Edward Ellison, a Kaumatua (respected elder) of Te Runanga o Otakou, and Alan Williams, a Glenore farmer and the historian and driving force behind Edward Peters’ recognition. As I chatted to local residents, I was struck by their willingness to claim Edward Peters as a local historical identity. This specific connection in southern New Zealand to an immigrant from India can be contrasted against the larger public celebrations of Indian culture held further north in New Zealand, especially the Diwali festival (Figure 3.1). We do not know if Edward Peters identified much with his Indian background. As outlined below he initially ‘stopped over’ in New Zealand but remained there permanently. This alerts us to the limited awareness of the complexities of Indian diasporas within the Pacific.

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