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"Insiders and Outsiders"

**A Social History of Fishing in the Chatham
Islands circa 1910 to 1975 Focussing on the Crayfish
Boom**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey
University

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents Allen and Vivienne Nielsen and my children Thomas and Stephanie. In memory of the “mothers” in my Chatham Islands family; sisters Solvejg and Ester (Denmark), and my grandparents Cyril and Frances Curties (née Carrell), Lyttelton.

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the crayfish boom on the Chatham Islands (which occurred between 1966 and 1969) cannot be studied in isolation in order to understand its effects upon the islanders. Rather, it must be placed in the wider context of relations between the Chatham Islands and New Zealand. To this end, it analyses the social history of fishing from 1910 to 1975, identifying a number of themes in the development of the Chathams fishing industry that resurfaced in the crayfish boom. Two recurring complaints were that the government repeatedly ignored requests to improve the Islands infrastructure and implement conservation measures. It suggests that the fishermen shared many of the characteristics of a “tight working class” group (as opposed to an upper class capitalist group) and that this may have influenced the perceptions of government officials towards the islanders, particularly during World War Two. Class issues and perceptions of continuing neglect are put forward as underlying factors in the ongoing tensions between ‘insiders’ (those who lived on the island) and ‘outsiders’ (those who came from outside the island, particularly fishermen and government officials). These tensions were particularly evident in disputes about employing Italian fishermen in the 1950s and clashes between locals and ‘outsider’ fishermen during the crayfish boom. The thesis demonstrates that the crayfish boom raised serious issues including: repeated (yet unheeded) calls for conservation measures, pollution caused by eviscerating crayfish at sea, and the social issues arising from inadequate infrastructure, piracy, violence and marine safety. It demonstrates that failed conservation measures coincided with conservation debates in the 1972 New Zealand election, the same year in which the long-awaited Economic Survey of the Chathams was conducted. The change of government that year led to hopes that the social and environmental issues raised during the crayfish boom would finally be addressed. Although some progress was made, it is argued that many issues remained unresolved. At a wider level, the thesis investigates the relationship between the Chatham Islanders and the government of New Zealand. It demonstrates that, despite government actions, islanders’ perceptions of themselves as being geographically, economically and politically marginalised endured.

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GLOSSARY¹

Berry (in berry): females berrying attached eggs.

Body: see carapace

Body meat: meat from the carapace, from the claws and from the legs.

Bonanza: literally a large output. A term used in this thesis to describe the developing phase of the utilisation of a rock lobster fishery, for example, the South Western bonanza of 1951 to 1958 and the Chathams bonanza of 1966 to 1969.

Carapace: the rigid shell containing the head and body.

Catch or Nominal Catch: The live weight equivalent of the landings.

Landings: The weight of fish and fish products brought ashore, for example, the actual weight of the quantities landed.

Common crayfish (*Jasus edwardsii*) or red rock lobster - The Rock Lobster Regulations 1969 marked the official recognition of the name change of crayfish to rock lobster, made because it was recognised in international commerce under the name rock lobster.

C.P.B: Catch per boat.

CRA 6: The Chatham Islands commercial rock lobster fishery.

Crustacean: A class of aquatic arthropods, including shrimps, prawns, crayfish, lobsters, crabs, which in general have the head fused with the thorax, possess legs that are divided into two branches, and two pairs of antennae.

Crayfish Tail: That part of the crayfish that remains after the head and carapace, including the internal organs and appendages, attached to the carapace, has been removed.

Depletion: Reduction of the fullness of a resource.

Dressed Fish: The state in which the fish has been headed and gutted, pectoral fins removed and the tail removed.

¹ The sources for this glossary include: the glossary in the Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-1971, I. 14.
Glossary of aquaculture, URL retrieved 22 May 2009, from <http://www.fao.org/fi/glossary/aquaculture/>
 Clement and Associates Limited, *The Atlas of Area Codes and TACCS*, 2008/2009, URL retrieved 22 May 2009, from <http://www.fishinfo.co.nz/clement/gms/main.html>

Ecology: The study of organisms in relation to their environment.

Evisceration: The body is cut across having some still attached to the tail and able to be measured.

Exploitation: In the fishery context, exploitation means the taking or putting to human use of fishery organisms.

Fishery: A human enterprise designed to exploit a fishery resource for food, profit, or pleasure.

Hard Shell: a crayfish is in the hard shell when the hardened shell fully moults.

FoB means Free on Board which includes the product and all other costs incurred in getting the product to the port/airport, but does not include any costs after it leaves the port/airport (such as transport, insurance, and so forth).

Green fish: Fish that is fresh and has not been processed.

Green crayfish: pack horse *Jasus verreaux*, or rock lobster.

Green weight: the weight of fish prior to any processing or removal of any part of the fish.

Gutted: The state in which only the internal organs of the body cavity have been removed, whether or not the gills have been removed.

Mainland: all of New Zealand, excluding the Chathams.

Moult: shedding or casting of the old shell.

New shell: the stage immediately following the soft shell stage which has followed the moult.

NZFCF: New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen

NZFIB: New Zealand Fishing Industry Board. In 1964 a Fishing Industry Board was established to develop the New Zealand fishing industry.

NIWA is the trading name of the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Limited.

Pot: the trap, cage or basket in which crayfish were normally caught. It may have been beehive shaped, made from supplejack, cane, or wire, or square or rectangular, made of welded mild steel mesh, plain or galvanised, or of a mild steel or timber frame covered with wire netting.

Primary industry: The term in general usage that refers to industries based on exploitation of natural living resources, for example, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Primary sector: In respect of the fishing industry, this is the catching sector: the secondary sector is the processing operations, and the tertiary sector, distributing, marketing and provision of services.

Quota Management System (QMS) was introduced in 1986 to manage and conserve New Zealand's major commercial fisheries. The QMS is based on limiting the total commercial catches from each fish stock while allowing quota owners to buy, sell and lease their quota or catching rights, and to choose the method and the time of the year they harvest their catches within these limits.

Scrubbing: removing unhatched eggs from females.

Soft shell: a rock lobster is in the soft shell stage immediately after it has shed its old shell and before the new one has hardened.

South-western (fishery): the rock lobster bearing coastlines of south Westland, Stewart Island, and the majority of Southland within which waters tailing at sea was permitted and from which the catch was landed principally at Bluff and Stewart Island, and also Dunedin, Greymouth, Westport and Milford Sound.

Whereas, tailing at sea was illegal in the Chatham Islands fishery.

Tail: the flexible but shell-enclosed appendage to the body. The tail was the principal item of commerce in the crayfish boom.

Tailing: Separating the tail from the body.

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is set for each fish stock managed under the QMS.

Wet Fish: all the ordinary fish caught by all methods of fishing, but excluding whitebait, shellfish, crustacean and sundries.

ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*

CRA 6 The Chatham Islands commercial rock lobster fishery

DNZB *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*

EEZ Economic Exclusion Zone

MP Member of Parliament

NIWA National Institute of Water and Atmospheric
Research Limited

NZJH *New Zealand Journal of History*

NZPD *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*

WTU Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

INTRODUCTION

This MA thesis examines fishing in the Chatham Islands from 1910 to 1975, focusing on the effects of the crayfish boom between 1966 and 1969.² Although general studies of commercial fishing in New Zealand have been done, there have been no local studies on fishing and the environment in the Chathams, within this time frame.³ As one of New Zealand's off shore islands, the Chathams offers a regional study of a completely different nature to mainland New Zealand, dependent primarily on fishing and farming for its economic and social well-being. Because the Chathams fishing community has not received a lot of coverage in the past, my intention is to shed light on the importance of Chathams fisheries to New Zealand.

This thesis also investigates whether overexploitation of fisheries occurred there in the past: an important issue in light of present debates on the conservation of marine resources for the future. Hence, fishing was particularly important in sustaining a viable economy and better socio-economic conditions for the Chatham Islands people. The main questions with which this thesis is concerned are. What was the relationship between the Chathams fishermen and the New Zealand government between 1910 and 1975? Did cod fishing sustain an adequate livelihood? What was the relationship between fishing and land rights? Did the government heed the views of the local people and impose fishing restrictions? Did the introduction of outsiders as labour raise tensions between islanders and outsiders? Second, what were the socio-economic effects of the crayfish boom upon the Chatham Islands? How did the renewal of tension between islanders and outsiders differ from previous resentment? How was the

² The Chatham Islands is the name given by Pakeha to these Islands, Rekohu by Moriori, Wharekauri by Ngati Mutunga. These include: Chatham, Pitt, South East and Mangere, and the smaller islands of Little Mangere, the Sisters, Star Keys, the Pyramid and the Forty Fours.

³ David Johnson, completed by Jenny Haworth, *Hooked: the Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2004. See Rhys Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, Canberra: Roebuck, 1982 for a history of sealing and whaling in the Chatham Islands during the nineteenth century, See also Rhys Richards, 'American Whaling on the Chathams Grounds: viewed from an Antipodean perspective', *Nantucket Historical Association*, Nantucket: Massachusetts, 1971.

overexploitation of crayfish linked to wider environmental concerns within New Zealand? How was the crayfish boom used as a morality tale for the conservation movement? How effective were the Marine Department's safety regulations? What were the government's proposals for economic development in the Chathams leading up to the 1972 general election?

Background - Historical and Personal Context

The Chatham Islands are geographically isolated from New Zealand situated in the Pacific Ocean, about 800 kilometres east of New Zealand, at latitudes forty-four degrees south. It has a unique oceanic environment being close to a Subtropical Convergence of ocean currents subject to both tropical and subantarctic influences.⁴ Consequently, both an abundance and diversity of marine life prevail.⁵ Also, the Chathams lies in the path of the Roaring Forties; a belt of continuing gales, making the weather conditions very unpredictable.⁶ Although these factors give Chatham Islanders a strong sense of distinctiveness, they have felt on the periphery of New Zealand, ignored when it came to having their requests heard.

The issue of isolation, resurfaced in a *New Zealand Herald* article in May 2008, whereby the Chatham Islands Enterprise Trust Chief Executive, Ian MacFarlane, told NewstalkZB that, 'the island's mainstays of farming and fishing were becoming uneconomical because of fuel and transportation costs'.⁷ Furthermore, the population had slumped to 600, a loss of over 100 in the last 18 months, because of the cost of bringing in food and the spiralling food costs. This thesis will demonstrate that such concerns are by no means new, the Chathams have

⁴ W. Skrzynski, 'Freshwater Fishes of the Chatham Islands', *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, 1: 2 (June 1967), p. 89. See also, E.W. Dawson, 'Oceanography and Marine Zoology of the New Zealand Subantarctic', *Proceedings of the New Zealand Ecology Society*, 12 (1965), pp. 44-57.

⁵ Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, p. 5.

⁶ Michael King and Robin Morrison, *A Land Apart: The Chatham Islands of New Zealand*, Auckland: Random House, 1990, p. 3.

⁷ 'Spiralling costs force Chathams residents out', URL retrieved 5 May 2008, from <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story>.

always struggled: there has been no comparable “boom” before the present struggle.

I have an interest in the Chatham Islands because my family roots are there, originating from the settler families: Murphys, Boons, Renwicks, and the Nielsens. Since I am a descendant of these families and my father, Allen Nielsen, was born on the Chathams, I have an insider position, but because I am Pakeha, female and non- indigenous, I also have an outsider position. Although I was not born there, I have heard stories about the Chathams and its people since childhood. Consequently, I recognise their distinct culture and the importance of whakapapa and oral tradition from one generation to the next. The islanders of my father’s generation spoke about superstitions, ghosts and tapu areas, as part of their upbringing. I am also aware of the sensitivities that may be involved in the writing of this thesis, especially indigenous histories of Moriori and Maori. Moreover, my living on mainland New Zealand influences my approach to writing this thesis, an outsider approach yet insider, through my father and his family. While, because of my background I am sympathetic towards the Chatham Islanders, and have a personal connection with the subject, I will be seeking to provide a scholarly and balanced analysis of the “crayfish boom”.

For this research, an understanding of historical methodology regarding “insider” and “outsider” perspectives is important. According to Doug Munro, an “insider” does not have to be an indigenous person, because the time a researcher spends doing archival research justifies the right for him/her to comment from those records (acquiring the poetics of another culture); therefore, knowledge of that culture in order that the indigenous past can be obtained.⁸ However, Munro’s views could be seen as orientalist. In brief, Edward Said argued in his controversial book *Orientalism* that the very act of writing about the Orient (in this case indigenous cultures) reinforced the power of Western scholars, acquiring intellectual knowledge such as language, geography and customs of indigenous peoples: an important part of colonial rule. In postcolonial analysis, the construction of the “other” produces authority through

⁸ Doug Munro, ‘Who ‘Owns’ Pacific History? Reflections on the Insider/Outsider Dichotomy’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 29: 2 (1994), p. 235.

collectivising discourses as opposed to the “not other” of the colonising West.⁹ Furthermore, Munro argues that: ‘the terms “insider” and “outsider” far from representing discrete categories are convoluted and often permeable. There is not single “insider” perspective and no single “outsider” perspective’.¹⁰

For one anthropologist, analysis of both points of view are useful in research leading to an understanding of culture-specific biases that affect both insiders and outsiders.¹¹ In research methodology, Linda Tuhiwai Smith maintains: ‘Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research’.¹² Thus, the researcher, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, whether “insider” or “outsider”, needs to consider the different roles and relationships, status and position to that of the informant.¹³ By historicizing the time and place, I seek to enter the everyday world of the Chatham Islands people: a representation of the past, in order to capture a sense of the “truths”, perceived by both the “outsider” and “insider”. I also acknowledge the importance of “elders” to the community, inclusive of Moriori, Maori, and Pakeha.

Thus, I am a member of the “old families” of the Chatham Islands, and my Whakapapa originates from the Murphy family. Denis Murphy (1825-1915) was the first policeman on the Chatham Islands.¹⁴ Both Murphy and Robert Rayner were guards over the Hauhau prisoners who came to the Chathams in 1866.¹⁵

⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

¹⁰ Munro, p. 236.

¹¹ Melani Anae, ‘Inside Out: Methodological Issues on Being a ‘Native’ Researcher’, *Pacific Health Dialog*, 5: 2, (September 1998), p. 276.

¹² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999, p. 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Richard Hill’s multi-volume history of policing in New Zealand refers to Robert Rayner but not to Denis Murphy. See Richard Hill, *The Colonial Frontier Tamed: New Zealand Policing in Transition, 1867-1886, The History of Policing in New Zealand*, vol. 2, Wellington: Government Printer Books, 1989, pp. 279,352.

¹⁵ Denis Murphy who served in the 70th regiment (no. 1911) arrived at Auckland, New Zealand, on the *Louisa* from India on the 14 May 1861. He fought in the Maori Wars from 1863-1865 and departed from Napier in 1866 as a voluntary guard, under Lieutenant Corporal Hemmington over the Hauhau prisoners (Te

Discovered in Rayner's diary is a reference to: 'Murphy who got the police billet came home drunk' on 22 June 1867.¹⁶ On 14 December 1867 Rayner wrote that Murphy was discharged from the Police, and Rayner was offered the police billet, because Private Denis Murphy had been discharged from the military guard for "bad conduct".¹⁷ Murphy then remained on the Island and received a military pension. He married Mary Jane Boon (e) in 1870 and they had eleven children. Mary (1844-1902) arrived on 16 January 1867, at Wellington, on the *Southern Cross* from England.¹⁸ She went on to join her brother Ambrose Boon, alias William White, in the Chatham Islands, (Boon having arrived there in 1865). Denis and Mary's daughter, Annie Murphy, married John Renwick who first went to Pitt Island as a shepherd, an expert on Merino sheep. He later managed the Owenga estate from 1903 to 1929. (Renweek [sic] Renwick's Reef is named after John Renwick). Annie and John's daughter, Flora Renwick, married Theodor Fredrik Nielsen, who left Fano, Denmark, as a young sailor on the *Maerdor*. Later he navigated fishing vessels to the Chathams and settled circa 1914 to become a successful fisherman. As lessee of Rangatira (South-East) Island from 1936, then owner of Mangere and Little Mangere Islands, he ran sheep. The Crown took over South East Island for the Black Robin project in 1953.¹⁹ Flora and Ted had ten children with descendants living in the Chatham

Kooti), in the Chatham Islands until 1868. Residing in the Chathams for the rest of his life, Denis worked as a mail carrier, a farm hand, and sewed his children's clothes. Mary Murphy also worked as a housekeeper. See Treasury Imperial Pensions, Chelsea Pension, 1866-1891, Archives New Zealand; Forbes Eadie Troopships Engaged in the Maori Wars, 1840-1865, National Library New Zealand; Robert A. Falla, 1901-1979, Chatham Islands Papers, 1856-1879, f MS-Papers-6160, WTU; Papers relating to Military Service in the New Zealand Wars, 1860-1870, Denis Murphy Collection, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, ARC1989-60; Denis Murphy Pictorial Collection, 19XX-2, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

¹⁶ Diary of Robert William Rayner, 23 August 1866 to 31 December 1868, MSX-3694, WTU.

¹⁷ *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)* 1868, A-15 E. No. 42, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Wellington Independent*, 17 January 1867, p. 4.

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

¹⁹ In 1949 the lease of South East Island (Rangatira) was transferred to Ted Nielsen's son, Philip Nielsen, until the Crown purchased it in 1953. It was gazetted as a reserve in February 1954 with an agreement for Philip Nielsen to continue its lease until 1957. See David Butler and Don Merton, *The Black Robin: Saving the World's Most Endangered Bird*, Auckland: Oxford University

Islands today and New Zealand. There are also Maori and Moriori connections through marriage, for example, Elsie Nielsen married Sunday Hough, and Dolly Jacobs married Philip Nielsen: two influential families. Most family members supplemented farming with fishing. John Nielsen (son of Flora and Ted) moved from farming to crayfishing, when the Crown purchased Mangere Island from him in 1966, for reforestation and a bird sanctuary.²⁰

Fishing is important to New Zealand's economy but not essential. The focus of this study is not so much on the fishing industry itself, but the ways in which fishing shaped the identity of the Chatham Islanders as the means by which many earned their living, and as the main avenue of contact between the Chathams and the "mainland". Historically, the cod fishing industry established in 1910, and the crayfish boom, were significant developments in the Chatham Islands. After the crayfish bust in 1975, a new phase began with a shift from inshore to international deep-sea fishing, which prevails today. The Chathams fishery was seen to be one of the richest in the country after the declaration of the 200-mile (322-kilometre) Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ), in 1978.²¹ This declaration sought to protect the valuable inshore fishery resource from overexploitation by foreign fleets. Throughout the 1970s, with the Japanese and Russians sharing their knowledge about deep-sea fishing (orange roughy, hoki, hake and dories), the economic value to New Zealand as a major export industry was realised.²² The Chatham Rise is the richest of all New Zealand's fishing grounds.

Press, 1992, pp. 16-18. See also Fiona Holmes, *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984*, Christchurch: Raven Press, 1985, pp. 60, 96-100. South-East Island was the first flora and fauna reserve, and bird sanctuary, in the Chatham Islands area, particularly for the Black Robin. Fortunately, it had no land mammals and had retained its original population of Shore Plover, Chatham Island Petrel and insular sub-species of Antarctic Snipe. See also *Dominion Post*, 26 April 2008. In April 2008 forty-three nationally endangered Chatham petrel chicks were transferred from South East Island to artificial burrows within the predator free Sweetwater Conservation Covenant in the main Chatham Island. Once common the species is critically endangered with only about 150 breeding pairs left. See also *Chathams County Newsletter*, December 1972/January 1973, pp. 5-8, WTU.

²⁰ Interview with John Nielsen, 28 April 2009.

²¹ King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p. 8.

²² Johnson, Haworth, pp. 483-84.

Historiography

The state of historiography concerning fishing in the Chatham Islands is grouped into five categories. First: I discuss the general historical literature on the Chatham Islands. Second: local histories and how they apply to the Chatham Islands. Third: the general histories of fishing in New Zealand and the Chathams. Fourth: personal histories of the Chathams, and finally, the academic works written about the Chathams. I then examine primary sources.

Some general histories of the Chatham Islands have been written. Perhaps the best known is Michael King's *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, which provided an invaluable overview of the Chathams, but did not discuss fishing in depth. However, he did discuss Moriori fishing and the effect of European contact with the arrival of sealers and whalers.²³ In Michael King and Robin Morrison's, *A Land Apart: The Chatham Islands of New Zealand*, King addressed briefly the social-economic impact of the commercial fishing industry. According to King: 'the crayfish boom from the late-1960s until the early 1970s turned out to be the most disruptive, frenetic, and dangerous period in the Chatham Islands' history. It was lucrative too, but ultimately not for the Islanders. In this respect, it was a repeat of the experience of the sealing and whaling eras'.²⁴ King's claim is useful and will be tested throughout this thesis. He also asserted the Chathams reaped little monetary benefits and suffered from the social cost of the perceived invasion, such as the trebling of the male population in three years.²⁵ Furthermore, King conceded that fishing provided a good economic income for some islanders (but not for all Maori or Moriori), and farmers continued to raise sheep, despite the cost of shipping animals and equipment to and from the Chathams.²⁶

²³ Michael King, *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, Auckland: Viking, 1989.

²⁴ King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p.109. This book presented a short social history of the Chathams people, Moriori, Maori and Pakeha alike. While the photographs taken by Robin Morrison of the landscape and people, provided an insight into life in the Chathams both past and present, some islanders' have claimed that some illustrated photos within are labelled incorrectly.

²⁵ King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p.110.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7. The Chatham Islands are only briefly mentioned in national histories, a justification for this thesis. See Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin, 2003; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A*

Fiona Holmes's *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984* canvassed chronologically the history of the Chatham Islands and its people, and mentioned the different fishing eras. For example, not only did the station at Owenga play an important part in the sealing and whaling eras, but also the smaller islands of South East Island, Mangere Island, Little Mangere, the Castle, the Sisters, the Forty-Fours, Star Keys and the Pyramid.²⁷ Holmes highlighted how the crayfish boom was a significant industry in the Chathams.

David Schiel's *The Chatham Islands Heritage and Conservation*, published in association with the Department of Conservation, reiterated the recurring theme of overfishing and exploitation of fish resources in both the sealing and whaling eras and the crayfish boom.²⁸ According to marine biologist and ecologist, Schiel, the history of the Chatham Islands is essentially a maritime history, arguing that while fishing would remain a mainstay of the Chathams economy, all fisheries must be renewable and sustainable. Hence: 'Chatham Islands are partially protected by their oceanic environment and isolation, but they do offer one more opportunity to get things right'.²⁹

These works are what academics call "local histories" and have the perceived strengths and weakness of that genre. The strength of this type of history is that it offers a popular rural social history (a more humane study) about communities than a colonial/national history.³⁰ One benefit of such histories is that they are often informed by long-standing family connections, which provide a

History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000, Auckland: Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 2001, and Geoffrey W. Rice, (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992.

²⁷ Fiona Holmes, *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984*, Christchurch: Raven Press, 1985, p. 15.

²⁸ David Schiel, *The Chatham Islands Heritage and Conservation*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press in association with the Department of Conservation, 1996, p. 62. See David Cemmick and Dick Veitch, *Black Robin Country: The Chatham Islands and its Wildlife*, Christchurch: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985. The New Zealand Wildlife Service (Department of Internal Affairs) sought to conserve the wildlife on South East Island and Mangere Islands from the 1960s.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³⁰ W. J. Gardner, *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History*, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1999, p. v.

background of social continuity, as well as the best private source material.³¹ One weakness of these works can be the paucity of research material available, and an over-reliance on oral history based on memory. Accordingly, local history is often about genealogy, anecdote and legend within communities, rather than scholarly analysis.³²

Canterbury historian, W. J. Gardner's *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History* is pertinent here. Gardner's approach to historical research is "history alongside" influenced by "history from below". Gardner argued that the aim of social history is to get alongside people in order to gain understanding of where and how people lived their lives in the past, in local and regional communities, within New Zealand.³³ This includes the women and men who have remained anonymous in history (the successes and the failures): an approach that is sympathetic and non-judgemental.³⁴ One example is King's work *Mori Mori Rediscovered* that provided an insight into the social and cultural history of Mori Mori, resulting in resurgence in Mori Mori identity. His work discussed how community and place (particularity) were inextricably linked to social relationships. Gardner contended that community conjures up close relationships between families and that relationship depended on the women.³⁵ David Holmes *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*³⁶ demonstrated the importance of family connections, while Helen Telford's MA thesis "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories' demonstrated the importance of women to the community.³⁷

For Gardner: 'Ties of marriage, voluntary groups, exchange of labour and resources and other bonding agencies helped to build up mutual trust, and hence

³¹ Ibid., p. 21.

³² Ibid., pp. 49-55.

³³ Ibid., pp. v-vi.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 84.

³⁶ David Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands: Reminiscences by David Holmes*, Christchurch: Shoal Press, 1993.

³⁷ Helen Ruth Telford, "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories', MA Thesis, Anthropology Department, University of Auckland, 1978.

the necessary social cement'.³⁸ Similarly, the negative aspect of human behaviour in the form of private quarrels, jealousies, grudges, exclusiveness and intolerance, arises from living in the same locality.³⁹ Here, Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson's *The People of the Chathams* exemplifies Gardner's reservations about local histories, especially history based on anecdotes ("parish pump chronicles"), rather than academic history based on facts.⁴⁰ Gardner also wrote that community was an indication of social cohesion, but it must co-exist with forces of social division, "class" and "race", principally. Written during the crayfish boom, Gerald Arbuckle's *The Chatham Islands in Perspective* highlighted the reasons for social divisions and unity over time.⁴¹ Although Gardner is a "consensus" historian, that is, one open to opinion and agreement, he does not ignore "conflict", looking to "community" as a major force in New Zealand's past and future.⁴² In this genre the local historian seeks to engage with either private or semi-private individuals, rather than public figures, found in national or provincial history.⁴³ Overall, the advantage of local history is that it sheds light on socio-economic groups or individuals within the community.

Third, within the historical genre of general histories of fishing in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, there have been a number of books written. Robert McNab's *The Old Whaling Days* was a pioneer work that sketched the early history of whaling in Southern New Zealand, including the Chatham Islands between 1830 and 1840.⁴⁴ Rhys Richard's work *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands* provided a comprehensive study of fishing during the

³⁸ Gardner, p. 82.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁰ Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders' Early Days*, Martinborough: G.W.J. Publications, 1994. See Gardner, p. 51.

⁴¹ Gerald A. Arbuckle, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective: A Socio-Economic View*, Wellington: Hicks Smith and Sons, 1971. Father Arbuckle, SM, MA, PhD, graduated in social anthropology from Christ College, Cambridge University, and from the University of St. Thomas, Rome. He then specialised in economic anthropology with particular reference to problems of development in the South Pacific.

⁴² Gardner, p. 50.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁴ Robert McNab, *The Old Whaling Days, A History of Southern New Zealand from 1830 to 1840*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1913.

nineteenth century, filling in the historical gap of knowledge, since McNab's work. Richards revealed that overfishing occurred in the exploitive sealing and whaling eras, issues that would resonate in the crayfish boom. This provides further justification for the period under study. Moreover, the sealers and whalers disrupted the socio-economic and religious systems.⁴⁵

Aspects of fishing in the Chatham Islands are discussed in Dr Louis Thiercelin's *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a Whaling Ship's Doctor*, an eyewitness account of indigenous people of the Chatham Islands: a primary source of Pacific social history from the late 1830s to the mid-1860s.⁴⁶ Thiercelin claimed uniformity between Chatham and Maori customs.⁴⁷ Joan Druett's *Petticoat Whalers*, based on journals, letters and reminiscences, told of American women (but not indigenous women) who accompanied their husband-skippers on whaling ships from 1820 to 1920 to the Chatham Islands.⁴⁸ Rhys Richard's *Frederick Hunt of Pitt Island* recalls the life of pioneer settlers, Frederick and Mary Hunt, of Rangiauria (Pitt Island) from October 1842. It also records the whaling ships that called there for rest and provisions.⁴⁹ These works, however, are not in the time frame of this thesis.

David Johnson's, Jenny Haworth, *Hooked: The Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*, a more recent history of fishing, refers briefly to the Chathams,

⁴⁵ Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶ Louis Thiercelin (translated and edited by Christiane Mortelier) *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a Whaling Ship's Doctor, 1866*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1995, p. 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122. See Sheila Natusch, *Hell and High Water: A German Occupation of the Chatham Islands 1843-1910*, Christchurch: Pegasus, 1977. This work examined the German mission to the Chatham Islands in 1842.

⁴⁸ Joan Druett, *Petticoat Whalers: Whaling Wives at Sea, 1820-1920*, Auckland: Collins Publishers, 1991.

⁴⁹ Frederick Hunt, (1866), *Frederick Hunt of Pitt Island: Twenty-Five Years Experience in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands: an Autobiography* by Frederick Hunt, Rhys Richards (ed.), Petone: Lithographic Services, 1990. p. 80. See Ernest Langdale-Hunt, *Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes*, Christchurch: D.N. Adams, 1985. This book provided a history of the Hunt family and descendants who settled on Pitt Island. Its biographical section is a useful reference tool about the life of the settlers and their descendants in the Chatham Islands. It is not an exhaustive genealogy account, however, and there are gaps in knowledge within families.

but not in much depth.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, this work provides a history of the fishing industry: the people, the companies and the government administration of commercial fishing.

Fourth, in the category of autobiographical histories, Ernest Langdale-Hunt's *The Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes* argued that though the Chathams crayfish boom had gained a large export market, it was sadly overexploited and fished out, with no government control or anyone else; most unfortunate he believed for the islanders and the Island's economy, and tragic, as there was a considerable loss of boats and life, like the early whaling days.⁵¹ Langdale-Hunt drew from E. C. Richards's works, *Chudleigh's Diary*,⁵² and *The Chatham Islands* a biographical account.⁵³ Sheila Natusch's *Hell and High Water*, and Frank Simpson's *Chatham Exiles*.⁵⁴ Chudleigh's diary and Simpson's work provide first-hand accounts of fishing in the Chathams, while David Holmes *My Seventy Years On the Chathams* is an anecdotal history intertwined with folklore of this fishing and farming community.⁵⁵ Based on oral history interviews, Holmes provided insights into families' lives, including fishermen, key developments and socio-economic conditions in the Chathams over time. His father, Ryan Holmes, was the Constable from 1922 to 1930, and Resident Magistrate from 1930 to 1949. David stayed on to become a farmer, carrier and horticulturist, then a member of the Chatham Islands County Council for 50 years. He was awarded a MBE for services to the Chathams, in 1964, and a CBE in 1992.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Johnson, Haworth, *Hooked: The Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*.

⁵¹ Ernest Langdale-Hunt, *The Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes*, p. 97.

⁵² E. C. Richards (ed.), *Diary of E. R. Chudleigh 1841-1920: Settler in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Cadsonbury Publications, 2003.

⁵³ E. C. Richards, *The Chatham Islands: Their Plants, Birds and People*, Christchurch: Simpson and Williams, 1952.

⁵⁴ Frank A. Simpson, *Chatham Exiles: Yesterday and To-Day at the Chatham Islands*, Wellington: A. H. and A.W. Reed, 1950. In 1949 Simpson, a journalist, arrived at the Chathams from Lyttelton on the *Port Waikato*, and listed my father, Allen Nielsen (Owenga fishing village), as one of the passengers who was returning on holiday. p. 12.

⁵⁵ Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson's *The People of the Chathams* is an anecdotal history based on genealogy recorded by Te Miria for posterity.⁵⁷ Te Miria was born on the Chatham Islands, a descendant of Joe Dix, partaking oral research there for many years. Because there are no references and footnotes, this book cannot be regarded as a scholarly work, but it is a useful source for tracing family connections. According to some Chatham Islanders, some stories and alleged facts are simply incorrect, exemplifying Gardner's reservations about local histories discussed previously.

Fifth, within academic works there are two major studies: Gerald Arbuckle's, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective*, 1971,⁵⁸ and Helen Telford's MA thesis: "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: a Study of Social Relations and Social Categories", 1978.⁵⁹ Father Arbuckle surveyed the socio-economic conditions of the Chatham Islands during the time of the crayfish boom up to 1970. Influenced by the ideals and work of the Catholic Church, Arbuckle drew from the Catholic paper *The New Zealand Tablet*, and Bishop's statements, to campaign on behalf of the Chatham Islands people for social justice. He argued that the islanders had their own distinctive culture as a result of isolation, history, and conflict with mainland society and culture.⁶⁰ Arbuckle outlined the insider/outsider tensions relevant to folk and urban cultures prevalent during the boom, classing the locals as the indigenous society, a culture more folk than urban, and the government personnel, fishermen and non-government workers as the non-indigenous society, mainlanders, "outsiders", or New Zealanders. Entwined in this folk culture are: resistance to change and ideas, long memories, gossip, and superstition.⁶¹ Presumably, the values attributed to "Small Island" societies, alongside the moral judgements and perceptions of the Chatham Islanders, explained why outsiders were blamed for subsequent misfortunes. It also

⁵⁷ Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams*.

⁵⁸ Gerald A. Arbuckle, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective: A Socio-Economic View*, Wellington: Hicks Smith and Sons, 1971.

⁵⁹ Telford, "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories".

⁶⁰ Arbuckle, p. ix.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

possibly explained why some islanders put covenants on land after the crayfish boom.

Helen Telford provided an anthropological perspective on the insider/outsider dynamics present in the Chathams community, historically, and during the crayfish boom. Telford argued that in the past, isolation was seen as the cause of backwardness, or “arrested” development, hindering progress that called for resolutions. Second, the history and life upon the islands had been affected by developments in New Zealand, and more widely the South Pacific, as for example, Pitcairn Island. Therefore: ‘A definitely contrasting lifestyle and associated values are attributed to the outsider and this lifestyle is regarded as bad where as the Chatham Island way of life (as expressed in traditional ideals) is good’.⁶² Third, the values attributed to the crayfish boom exposed the undesirable side of modern life, a theme relevant to this thesis.

Sources

There is a considerable amount of primary material relevant to this thesis. In particular, the William Beverland Burt Chatham Islands Collection from 1962-1975 is a valuable newspaper source held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.⁶³ There were comprehensive records of fishing from government departments, newspapers, parliamentary debates and commissions, such as *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands* (1972). These government records, however, had to be approached with caution because they were written from an outsider perspective, and often reflected the biases of government officials with no knowledge of Chatham Islands society. *Rekohu: A Report on Moriori and Ngati Mutunga Claims in the Chatham Islands (Wai 64)*, 2001, contained an indigenous perspective on fishing in the Chatham Islands.

Journals and articles such as, *The Weekly news*, *Listener*, *New Zealand Geographer*, *Blueprint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future 1972*, and

⁶² Telford, p. 72.

⁶³ William Beverland Burt (1912-1992) was a radio telegraphist at the Chatham Islands (1936 to circa 1939 and 1942 to 1948) who collected newspaper clippings of Island news for over 60 years. He married Marjorie, the daughter of Charles Langdale and Harriet Paynter, See Wills Johnson, pp. 113-18.

Beyond Tomorrow, 1975 *Values Party Manifesto*, *The People's Voice*, and the *New Zealand Medical Journal* provided useful primary material. Likewise, because many were written from an outsider perspective, care had to be taken about possible bias of historical evidence.

The major national newspapers were another useful source of information. It is important, however, that the reader assesses their differing editorial styles. For example, the more conservative *Christchurch Press* covered parliamentary debates and discussed the views of government officials. The populist *Christchurch Star*, an evening paper, was orientated towards sensationalism, as was the *New Zealand Truth*. The *Truth's* editors clearly believed that stories about the Chathams crayfish boom were of national significance. Finally, the local regional newspapers *Chathams County Newsletter*, and *Chatham Islands News and Views*, provided an insider perspective and reflected the concerns of the Chathams County Council. The articles about the Chatham Islands in the *New Zealand Tablet*, a Catholic newspaper, were found in the W. B. Burt Chatham Islands Collection.

My private collection of photographs provided raw evidence of the people and fishing community, as did those from papers and journals. The strength of oral interviews was the participants' recall of long-term memory about events; the accuracy of memory against fact was one weakness. Again, as with all evidence, care needs to be taken about possible bias of the informant.

This, then, is a social history of fishing in the Chathams Islands from 1910-1975, focussing on the crayfish boom, and the insider/outsider issues that arose during this period. Chapter one provides an overview of fishing in the Chathams from the late nineteenth century to 1965, as historical background. Thus, providing the basis to compare how things changed during the crayfish boom. It investigates the relationship between the Chatham Islands fishermen and the government in three areas. First, it identifies the government's continual reluctance to provide assistance for the Chathams fishermen, and the interconnection between fishing and land rights; the government's reluctance to impose fishing restrictions and their reluctance to heed the views of the people who lived there; the belonging of

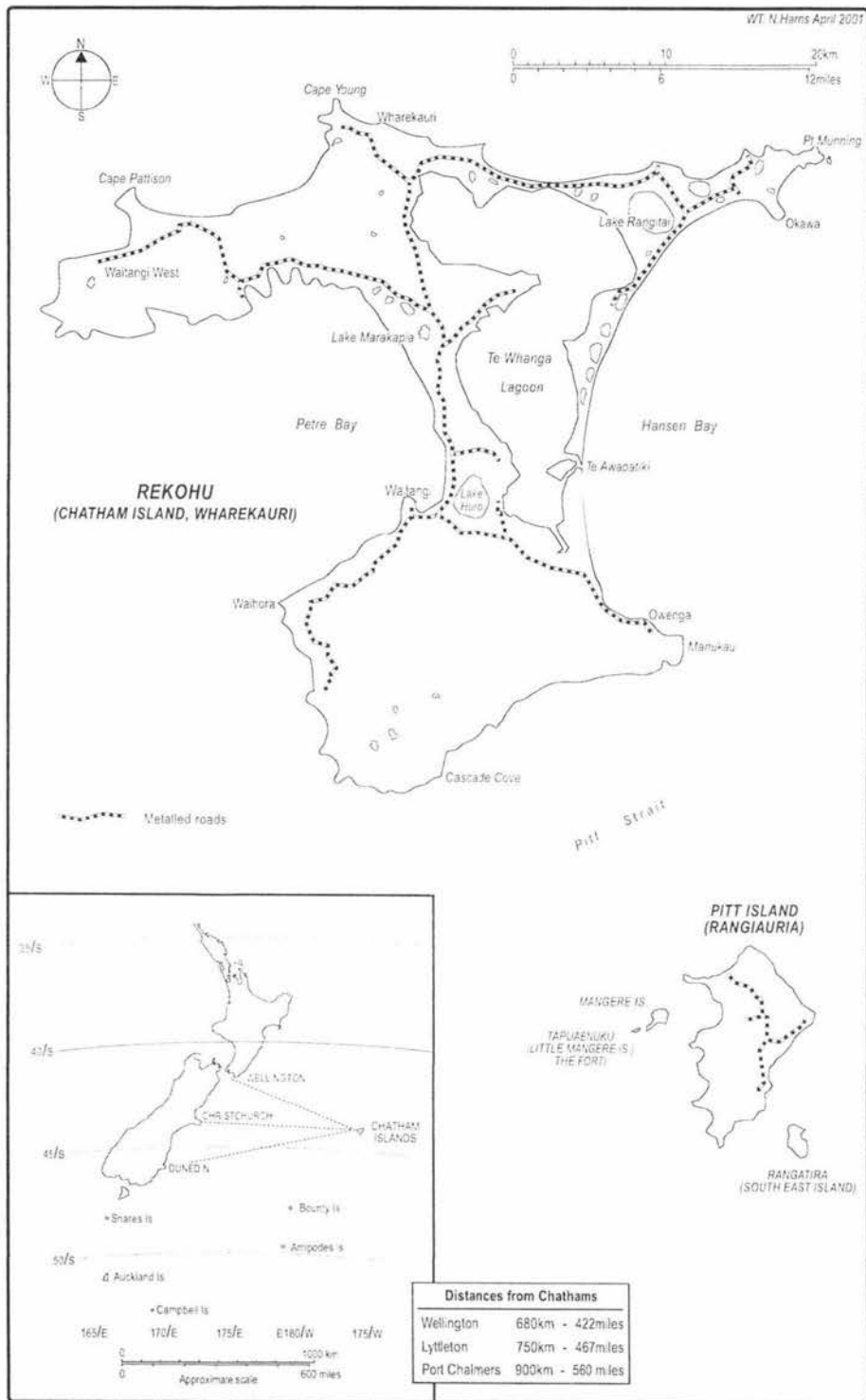
the fishermen to the working class as part of a wider community, and their involvement in unions over time. Second, it explores the islanders' perceived reluctance to become involved in the blue cod fishing industry during World War Two, and the government's threat to bring in "outsiders". Third, it sketches how the government seemed to prefer outsiders, especially, Italian fishermen to work in the Chathams during the 1950s: a prosperous period of export trade for New Zealand. It examines the dispute over employing Italian fishermen that generated tensions between Chatham Islands fishermen and outsiders. The main point is that the impending crayfish boom from 1966 to 1969 did not suddenly result in increased tension between Chatham Islanders and outsiders; rather, it heightened already existing tensions.

Chapter two quantifies the crayfish boom and outlines its effects on the environment in terms of crayfish supplies and failed conservation measures. Second, it explores environmental issues: tailing, evisceration and dumping at sea in the Chathams Islands. It argues that despite the calls to government for conservation, the conservation regulations for crayfish were introduced too late. It seeks to demonstrate that overexploitation had occurred because of neglect of an outlying area. It then discusses the role of Norman Kirk as a Member of Parliament for Lyttelton and from 1966 as Leader of the Opposition. It argues that the crayfish boom strained Chathams infrastructure and for the islanders' brought few benefits. Finally, it examines the Chathams County Council's income from fishing versus expenditure. It argues that although the Council received more money during the crayfish boom, its expenses also increased.

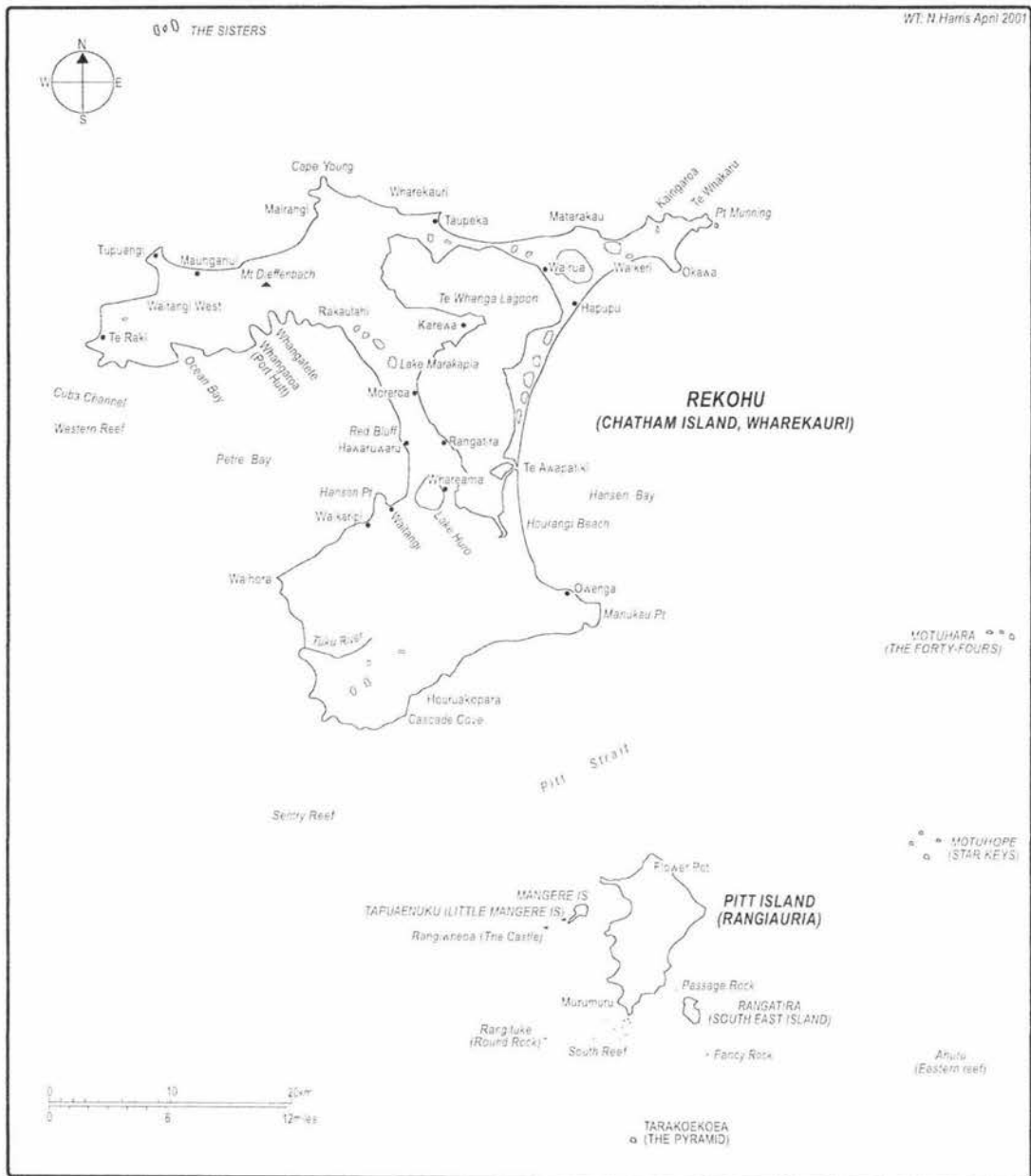
Chapter three outlines the social consequences of the crayfish boom. It examines three key issues that influenced relationships between Chatham Islanders and outsiders: infrastructure, piracy and violence, and safety issues. It argues that collectively, they reinforced perceptions that the Chatham Islands were marginal to New Zealand, and did not benefit from the "boom". Yet, safety regulations were the one area where the government took action, because of the many lives lost at sea. Further, it explores the islanders' calls for improved infrastructure and development. It argues that despite the government benefiting from the export earnings, it appeared to be ineffective in dealing with the Chathams

problems. Finally, it sketches the islanders' request for an Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands in 1972.

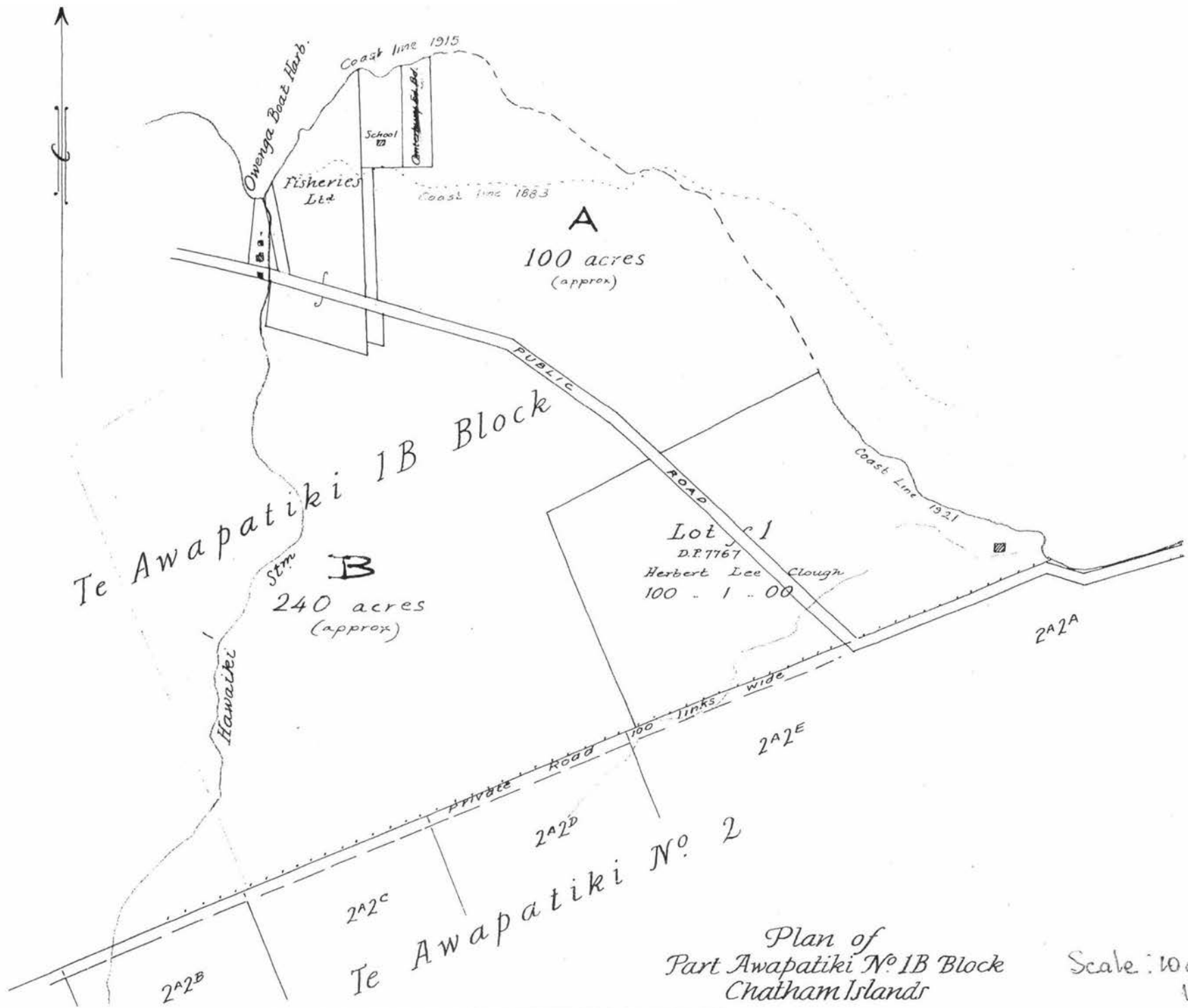
Chapter four quantifies the crayfish bust from 1971-1975 in order to explain why crayfish conservation became an issue in the 1972 general election; and, why people looked forward to the (belated) Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands. It examines the environmental debates on crayfish in the Chathams, a time when greater attention was being paid to conservation issues in New Zealand. It sketches the emergence of the Values Party, a political party dedicated to environmental issues. It discusses Kirk's role as Leader of the Opposition, and how the Chatham Islands became a "political football", leading up to the 1972 election. It sketches the benefits to the Chatham Islands during the Third Labour Government. Finally, it discusses whether the islanders continued to resent outsiders after the boom and whether lessons had been learnt from the crayfish boom about conservation for the future.



Map 1: Rekohu location map



Map 2: Rekohu – the islands



Te Awapatiki 1B Block

A
100 acres
(approx)

B
240 acres
(approx)

Lot 1
DE 7767
Herbert Lee Clough
100 - 1 - 00

Te Awapatiki No. 2

Plan of
Part Awapatiki No. 1B Block
Chatham Islands

Scale: 10 chains =
1 inch