'UNREALISED PLANS. THE NEW ZEALAND COMPANY

IN THE MANAWATU, 1841 - 1844.'

A Research Exercise presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Diploma in Social Sciences in History at Massey University

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1988
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me in the course of researching and writing this essay.

The staff of the following:
Alexander Turnbull Library.
National Archives.
Massey University Library.
Palmerston North Public Library, especially Mr Robert Ensing.
Wellington District Office, Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, especially Mr Salt et al.
Mrs Robertson of the Geography Department Map Library, Massey University.

all cheerfully helped in locating sources and Maps, many going out of their way to do so.

Mr I.R. Matheson, P.N.C.C. Archivist, suggested readings and shared his views on Maori land tenure in the Manawatu. He also discussed the New Zealand Company in the Manawatu and the location of the proposed towns. He may not agree with all that is written here but his views are appreciated.

Thanks to Dr. Barrie MacDonald, Acting Head of Department, for seeing it through the system.

Thanks to Maria Green, who typed the final draft with professional skill.

My greatest debt is to Dr. J.M.R. Owens, who supervised this essay with good humoured patience. He provided invaluable help with sources and thoughtful suggestions which led to improvements. His interest gave it value when I had my doubts, so for all this, all thanks.

Finally to Mum (with love) for money and harassment and Dad for lending me the car.
# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements  

Contents  

Illustration and Maps  

Abbreviations  

Introduction  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Pre-European Maori History and the Pattern of Maori Landownership in the Manawatu and Horowhenua in 1840</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. The Sale of the Land</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. New Zealand Company Surveys and Private Plans for Settlement</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Commissioner Spain Investigates the New Zealand Company's Title</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion  

Appendix: Statement of Goods used as payment for the New Zealand Company's 2 February 1842 purchase.  

Bibliography
ILLUSTRATION AND MAPS

Illustration

Headquarters of the New Zealand Company's Surveying Staff at Te Karikari on the Manawatu River. By S.C. Brees

Maps

One. Tribal and Hapu Boundaries in the Manawatu and Horowhenua. 12 - 13

Two. The Extent of the New Zealand Company's 2 February 1842 purchase. 17 - 18

Three. Selection Map of the First Selection of Country Sections in the Manawatu and Horowhenua Districts, April 1842. 30 - 31

Four. Location Map of Te Karikari and Te Paiaka, Manawatu. 35 - 36

Five. The Proposed Town of Te Maire and its Location at the Manawatu. 37 - 38

Six. The Full Extent of New Zealand Company's Surveys and Country Sections in the Manawatu and Horowhenua. 41 - 42

Seven. 'A Proposed Plan of the City of Wellington in the First Settlement in New Zealand founded 1839 - 40.' 37 - 38

Eight. Location Map of John Yule's Section in the Horowhenua District. 50 - 51
ABBREVIATIONS

BPP  British Parliamentary Papers

OLC  Old Land Claim


NZGWS  New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator

NZH  New Zealand's Heritage

NZJ  New Zealand Journal

NZJH  New Zealand Journal of History
INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Company was formed in August 1839 following the amalgamation of two earlier colonising bodies. The Company was the instrument with which Edward Gibbon Wakefield hoped to give practical expression to his theories of colonisation, and it was representative of a Victorian trend toward colonisation by which the British...commercial classes and many of the British Ministers (worked) toward the expansion of British trade and shipping in the Far East.¹ Edward Gibbon Wakefield's theories of systematic colonisation and the activities of the New Zealand Company in New Zealand have been well documented and described in the literature.² This essay is in the form of a regional case study, as it examines the Company's plans to open up the Manawatu and Horowhenua districts for European settlement by purchasing a vast tract of land from one Maori tribe with rights of landownership.

Having purchased this huge block the Company then began to survey and divide the land into country sections. These sections were then offered to holders of its landorders, some of whom hoped to settle in the region under the Company's colonisation scheme, whilst others used the land for speculative purposes. By the end of 1842 plans for three private towns had been proposed for the area the Company had surveyed.

When examining the sale of the land to the Company a gap between Maori and European perceptions of the meaning of the negotiations became apparent. For convenience I have labelled it a perceptual gap between Maori and European

   Warwick Tyler, 'The New Zealand Company,' NZH, 1:12 (1972), pp. 331 - 336., are some examples.
viewpoints, by which I mean that the psychological frameworks, conditioned by their different cultural milieus, with which each party approached the sale contained inherent disparities that were bound to lead to conflict. This is because the values and 'world view' of the Maori and European participants were different, and in some respects mutually exclusive, or so it seems to me. Although this gap was more pronounced when Victorian Englishmen met with post-Classic Maori who were still culturally autonomous, I feel it is a phenomenon which still exists today, as evidenced by the increasing activity amongst Maori organisations as they attempt to have the validity of their own perspective recognised by the European majority, the latter being, for the most part, apathetic, or viewing such attempts at recognition with guarded suspicion.

Recent historical publications tend to support this concept of a gap between Maori and Pakeha perspectives. Judith Binney speaks of a 'gap in perceptions' between the 'colonised' and colonisers', which became apparent as she delved into Maori oral history whilst researching some of her recent publications. As the majority of publications on New Zealand History have been written by European New Zealand Historians, this has led to our History being processed by European minds and presented with a European perspective. Binney stresses the need to take account of the Maori view of our history which, because it stems from an oral tradition, is different from the '...linear or diachronic order of European Historical tradition,' but no less valid. Such differences in perspective need to be understood and respected, and by 'juxtaposing' the two perspectives a better understanding of our past may be achieved.3

A similar theme is examined by W.L. Renwick, who believes that in order to fully appreciate New Zealand's rich past we need to develop a '...unique bicultural way of viewing ourselves as New Zealanders in relation to each other! The issues which affect

us today have historical antecedents, so in order not to repeat some of the mistakes in our past we need to understand the '...at bottom epistemological,' differences between Maori and European as we look to the future. 4

Whilst this essay in no way contributes to such a 'unique way' of viewing ourselves, the issues these writers have raised were kept well in mind when examining Maori and European interaction and attempting to understand the conflict of perceptions over land. If anything the deficiencies in this essay arise from the lack of a bicultural perspective.

In order to understand the pattern of Maori landownership extant when the Company made its purchase, it was necessary to examine the complex sequence of events, especially between 1820 -1840, which led to this pattern. Chapter One deals with this.

Chapter Two examines the New Zealand Company's motives and initiatives which led to the Manawatu purchase, and contrasts these with Maori reasons for selling. It is here that the perceptual gap became apparent.

Once the land was sold and surveyed, the Company then used it to fulfill its obligations to holders of its landorders, and some of the land was used to put forward proposals for three private towns. This is described in Chapter Three, whilst Chapter Four deals with the Government Land Claim Commission inquiry into the Company's title and the validity of the Company's purchase in relation to the pattern of Maori landownership established in Chapter One.

Unrealised plans : the New Zealand Company in the Manawatu, 1841-1844 : a research exercise presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Diploma in Social Sciences in History at Massey University

Krivan, Mark
1988

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