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**A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY
OF THE NEW ZEALAND HORSE**



**CAROLYN JEAN MINCHAM
2008**

E.J. Brock, 'Traducer' from *New Zealand Country Journal*.4:1 (1880).

A Social and Cultural History of the New Zealand Horse

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Abstract

Both in the present and the past, horses have a strong presence in New Zealand society and culture. The country's temperate climate and colonial environment allowed horses to flourish and accordingly became accessible to a wide range of people. Horses acted as an agent of colonisation for their role in shaping the landscape and fostering relationships between coloniser and colonised. Imported horses and the traditions associated with them, served to maintain a cultural link between Great Britain and her colony, a characteristic that continued well into the twentieth century. Not all of these transplanted readily to the colonial frontier and so they were modified to suit the land and its people. There are a number of horses that have meaning to this country. The journey horse, sport horse, work horse, warhorse, wild horse, pony and Māori horse have all contributed to the creation of ideas about community and nationhood. How these horses are represented in history, literature and imagery reveal much of the attitudes, values, aspirations and anxieties of the times. Yet despite the clear significance of horses to this country, no one breed of horse has emerged to represent the country as a whole. Unlike many other modern nations, New Zealand has not identified a national horse. Close allegiance to the British heritage as well as a strong sense of local and regional identity has meant that there is no New Zealand Horse to take its place beside the Australian Stockhorse, the Canadian Horse or any of the other national horses.

Acknowledgements

On completion of my Masters thesis on horseracing in the colonial community in 2001, I knew that I wanted to explore the human-horse relationship in more depth. It also corresponded to a time when I was personally trying to learn about horsemanship, and became aware of the large body of knowledge about horses that existed outside the walls of the university or library. My depth of gratitude, therefore, extends to a wide range of people who have informed and assisted me in this project.

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List of Abbreviations

A&P	Agriculture and Pastoral (Association or Show)
<i>AJHR</i>	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
ASHA	Australian Stock Horse Association
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
<i>DNZB</i>	Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
DOC	New Zealand Department of Conservation
ENZB	Early New Zealand Books Project, University of Auckland
<i>NZJH</i>	New Zealand Journal of History
NZPCA	New Zealand Pony Club Association
NZRCA	New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals