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'UNREALISED PLANS. THE NEW ZEALAND COMPANY

IN THE MANAWATU, 1841 - 1844.'

A Research Exercise presented in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Diploma  
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ABBREVIATIONS

BPP	<u>British Parliamentary Papers</u>
OLC	Old Land Claim
NZC 12th Report	<u>Documents Appended to the Twelfth Report of the Directors of the New Zealand Company (London, 1844)</u>
NZGWS	<u>New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator</u>
NZH	<u>New Zealand's Heritage</u>
NZJ	<u>New Zealand Journal</u>
NZJH	<u>New Zealand Journal of History</u>

## 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.'<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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1. Helen Taft Manning, 'Lord Durham and the New Zealand Company,' *NZJH*, 6:11 (1972), p. 14.
  2. R.A.K. Mason, 'The Grand Plans of Edward Gibbon Wakefield,' *NZH*, 1:13 (1971), pp. 337 - 342.  
 John Miller, Early Victorian New Zealand. A Study of Racial Tension and Social Attitudes 1839 - 1852. (Wellington, 1958).  
 Michael Turnbull, The New Zealand Bubble: The Wakefield Theory in Practice (Wellington, 1959).  
 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<sup>to</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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3. Judith Binney, 'Maori Oral Narratives, Pakeha Written Texts: Two Forms of Telling History, NZJH, 21:1 (1987), pp. 16 - 28.'



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.<sup>4</sup>

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.

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4. W.L. Renwick, 'Show us These Islands and Ourselves... Give us a Home in Thought,' NZJH, 21:2 (1987), pp. 197 - 214.

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