

Maori always as utterly blameless as they appear here? It is implied that the company and its servants were wrong to treat them as 'primitive children'. Are we then to take them as adult participants, equipped with the experience of decades of European contact? If so, should they be fully excused for their ignorance of what the company's agents were up to in the land purchases?

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The Making of Wellington 1800-1914. Edited by David Hamer and Robert Nicholls. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1990. 272pp. NZ price: \$39.95.

ANNIVERSARIES are a mixed blessing for historians. They provide opportunities to publish — and to secure financial support to do so (as in this case). Conversely, historians are expected to come to the party — even if they had not planned to, and thus their offering can be miscellaneous (as it is here). This well-presented collection of 11 essays commemorates the sesquicentennial of Wellington city and of organized European settlement around its harbour. It offers (as the editors concede) only a sampling of current research which focuses on Pakeha social history in the nineteenth century.

A majority of the essays are concerned with origins and developments before the 1860s. Prior Maori occupancy of the land adjacent to Te Whanganui-a-Tara is recognized by including Angela Ballara's meticulous account of complex Maori migrations into the area during the three decades before 1840. The facts of land sales to the New Zealand Company established the final arrangement of Maori tribal boundaries in the area. This provides a link with Rosemarie Tonk's analysis of how the New Zealand Company's land claim in the Port Nicholson district was handled by the Spain Commission. She demonstrates the limitations of humanitarian motives. In fact a 'final' settlement was pushed through in 1847 by Colonel McCleverty appointed by Governor Grey. Displaced to the outskirts of the new town and to rural areas beyond, Maori gradually disappeared from the streets of Wellington, and (as David Hamer notes) late nineteenth-century visitors perceived that Maori did not belong in the Pakeha city. Apart from these essays, and brief comments in two others, Maori also disappear from discussion in this book.

Six other essays concerned mainly with the first two decades of European settlement reveal the limitations of this collection, based as it is on disparate research interests with little to link them. Brad Patterson draws on his substantial research on the surveying of Wellington and its hinterland in his narrowly conceived account of the breakdown in relationships between early surveyors and the Principal Agent of the New Zealand Company in Wellington. Kathleen Coleridge's account of early printers and their newspapers has much detail on individuals but little analysis of their products. The use of timber in the building of early Wellington is explored by Chris Cochran with the emphasis of his essay being on the architectural legacy. The use of a famous wooden building, Barrett's Hotel, as Wellington's main social and civic centre in the 1850s, is described by Julie Bremner. An occupational analysis rather than an examination of local issues is the substance of Diana Beaglehole's account of political leadership in Wellington before 1854. In 'Life after Death', Margaret Allington ranges widely over the origins, uses, life histories revealed by, and twentieth-century legacy (in face of the encroachment

of a motorway) of the former burial ground known as the Bolton Street cemetery.

Broader perspectives are taken by three other essays — thematically, temporally and geographically. Implicitly they present (but do not explore) the ambiguity of Wellington as a concept, the varied mental boundaries of contemporaries: a town, a conurbation, a region, a province. (More than 70 illustrations are scattered through the chapters, but there is no discussion of the representations of the town or of its hinterland.) Wellington's landed and mercantile élite, whose lifestyle in the late nineteenth century is examined by Roberta Nicholls, sought status and had influence in both town and countryside. Fruitfully employing the concept of an urban frontier, David Hamer views the founding of Wellington (the town) in terms of its role in the colonization and settlement of Wellington (the region).

The ambiguity is most apparent in the essay by Miles Fairburn and Stephen Haslett who put the question: did Wellington province from the 1850s to 1930 have a distinctive social pattern? Claiming the lack of any 'ready-made set of criteria' provided by other New Zealand historians, Fairburn and Haslett apply the statistical 'tests' of their controversial model of 'atomisation'. They conclude that there is 'little evidence that atomisation had a history in Wellington which diverged fundamentally from the typical New Zealand-wide experience'. To that extent, then, the notion that regional differences were fundamental (of 'structure' rather than 'degree') is 'an untenable historiographical convention'. The problem is that their data for violence and drunkenness (which is central to their analysis) reflects the situation in the town (or two main towns by the 1860s) rather than the region. In terms of Pakeha disorder at least, Hamer's urban frontier seems a more fruitful focus for analysis than Fairburn's and Haslett's more arbitrarily defined rural province.

Possible links — or historiographical tensions — amongst the essays are not effectively drawn by the editors' introduction. The rhetorical questions raised by the dustjacket's fly-leaf provide a better focus. The opportunity is not taken to provide (albeit speculatively) an overview of the city's development and to point the way to future research. For the gaps are readily apparent (leaving aside the twentieth century), such as: economic life and local politics; town planning and government; patterns of housing and health. The larger issue of the fragmentation of historiography needs also to be faced. Is the city biography, like the national history, dead?

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The Making of Russell McVeagh: The first 125 years of the practice of Russell McVeagh McKenzie Bartleet & Co. 1863-1988. By R.C.J. Stone, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1991. 372pp. Price: \$59.95.

RUSSELL STONE has written a notable group biography of Auckland businessmen in the 1880s, a two-volume biography of Sir John Logan Campbell, and now he has completed not the history but a life and times biography of Auckland's best known law firm. The book is a handsome production from its marbled cover to its copious appendices and is Stone's best so far. He assures us in his introduction that the partners of Russell McVeagh did not demand a celebratory history. Nor does he provide one; instead he uses the splendid opportunity provided by the commission to write a fine account of the