

PHOTOGRAPHIC ART & HISTORY

25c

NUMBER 4

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Photograph by Paul Ness,
Eastman Kodak Company
Taken on Kodak Tri-X Pan Sheet Film at 1/25 sec. f 5.6
Developed in Kodak D 76 Developer and
printed on Kodak Bromesko Paper.

Kodak



Issue Number Four of a Magazine Devoted to:

- ★ THE APPRECIATION OF FINE PHOTOGRAPHY
- ★ THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY
- ★ THE PRESERVATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS OF NEW ZEALAND HISTORY
- ★ THE COLLECTION OF NOTABLE CAMERAS, EQUIPMENT AND OTHER PHOTOGRAPHICA.

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In this issue:-

- ★ Ten New Zealand Photographers Publish a Book
- ★ A major Travelling Exhibition of Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs
- ★ The First Century of Photography in an Otago Museum Exhibition
- ★ Gernsheim's "History of Photography" in a revised Edition
- ★ Letters: Mistakes Actual, Mistakes Possible
- ★ An Auckland Photographer of the 1850's

COVER: The furniture and the clothes date the photograph, but in its style it is an universal and ageless example of just how much visual impact and beauty a "straight" photograph can achieve. Yet it was not made by one of the great international names of photography: it was made by an obscure small-town New Zealand photographer out in the backblocks soon after the turn of the century. James McAllister, who took the photograph in his Stratford studio in 1905, learned photography in Dunedin and Christchurch after emigrating from Scotland at an early age. In 1892 he formed the partnership of Berry and McAllister in Hawera, and in 1896 established himself in a solo practice in Stratford, where he worked till at least 1908.

When McAllister took this photograph, established "art" photography was just about at its nadir of fuzzy, romantic pictorialism. The soft-focus reality-denying bichromate prints of the pictorialists have been forgotten, but this photograph by McAllister survives as one of the strongest photographs in "Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs", a travelling exhibition organised by New Plymouth's Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and John B. Turner, late of the Dominion Museum. Tom Hutchins reviews the exhibition on p.8.

Subscriptions to Photographic Art & History are available at \$1.25 for six issues from 29 Wyndrum Ave., Lower Hutt. Back numbers are available of issues No.1 at 10c each, No.2 at 20c but not No.3. Payment for back numbers may be made in stamps up to 50c. Cheques and postal notes should be marked payable to "Photographic Art & History".

EDITORIAL VIEWS

EXPOSURE.....

Much is happening in New Zealand photography these days; museums and art galleries are recognising its artistic and historical importance; books are being published around their photographic content; individuals for whom photography has become a major means of self-expression are making and publishing photographs and forming informal groups outside established organisations and institutions; individuals, organisations and institutions are collecting and maintaining more and more of the photographs and photographic equipment of the past. The primary task of this magazine is to publicise these developments, which are generally individual and local activities. Our growing sense of self-importance, together with the friendly urging of certain commercial associates, have led us to drop the word "newsletter" from our title page, but news about photographic activities around the country remains very much our concern. And with some arrogance this magazine has also appointed itself not only a reporter but also a judge of these developments. As a critical review, it is itself open to criticism: this must be accepted, and even welcomed. To justify its existence, this magazine must not only give publicity; it must encourage as far as it can a spirit of enlightened and constructive criticism. This spirit is, we believe, essential to photo-historical scholarship, and to the development of the highest standards of appreciation of the art, and of New Zealand photography generally. If Photographic Art & History can promote this spirit, it will in fact as well as name become more than just a newsletter.

DEVELOPMENT.....

John. B. Turner is one of the most active figures in New Zealand photography. As photographer at the Dominion Museum in Wellington he mounted two major travelling exhibitions last year alone ("Maori in Focus" and "Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photography"); he is one of the country's most prolific writers on photography, in fact probably the most prolific; he helped found this magazine, which probably would not have got this far without him; he's no mean photographer himself. This year he's taken on a new job as Lecturer in Photography at the Auckland University School of Fine Arts. We regret he has had therefore to relinquish his share of direct editorial control over this magazine, but he'll remain closely associated as our Auckland correspondent, and our loss, great though it may be, is far outweighed by the gain to the Auckland photography world.

PRINTING.....

Your growing support and participation in the enterprise of publishing this magazine has been a great stimulus to our efforts to keep it going. Last issue's sally into the retail bookshops was so successful that there's scarcely a copy left, and we're increasing our printing for this issue in an effort to find out just how many copies we can sell. Your letters of encouragement are great, and we apologise for not being able to find time to answer them all. And we do appreciate the time and effort some of you are putting into articles and photographs submitted for publication; we'll do our best to publish them all. The future of Photographic Art & History may not be 100 per cent certain yet, but your support, whatever its form may be, is making that future a lot more hopeful than it was a few months ago. Thanks, and keep it up: it's your magazine.

B.W.

JOHN B. TURNER
43 WOODSIDE RD. MT. EDEN
AUCKLAND 3, NEW ZEALAND.

WHERE TO NOW?

PHOTOGRAPHY: A VISUAL DIALECT. Published cooperatively by ten contemporary New Zealand photographers. Auckland, 1970. Price \$1.

The ten photographers, each of whom contributed three pictures to the book, are Alan Leatherby, Mac Miller, Richard Collins, John B. Turner, Ken Foster, Roy Long, Max Oettli; Gary Baigent, John Fields, and Simon Buis. Three are professional photographers, the rest are in occupations ranging from salesman to skindiver. Only one is older than 40, seven of them are under 30. And they've produced what may be the most significant book of photographs yet published in New Zealand.

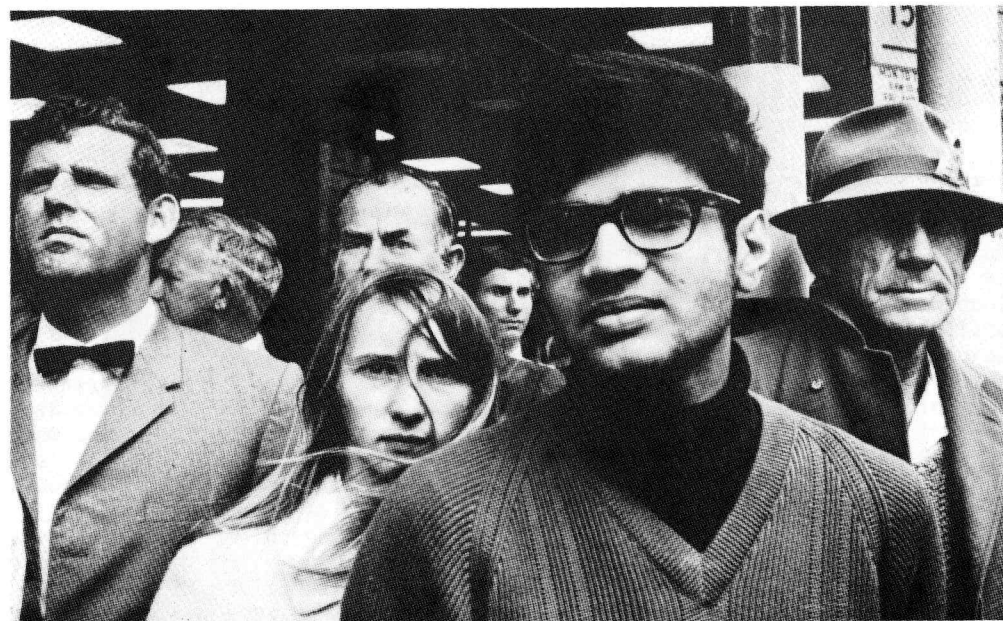
Significant, firstly because they are published simply as photographs, not as illustrations, and therefore the book must stand on its photographic merits alone: apart from a brief introduction by John Fields and even briefer biographies of the photographers, there is no text.

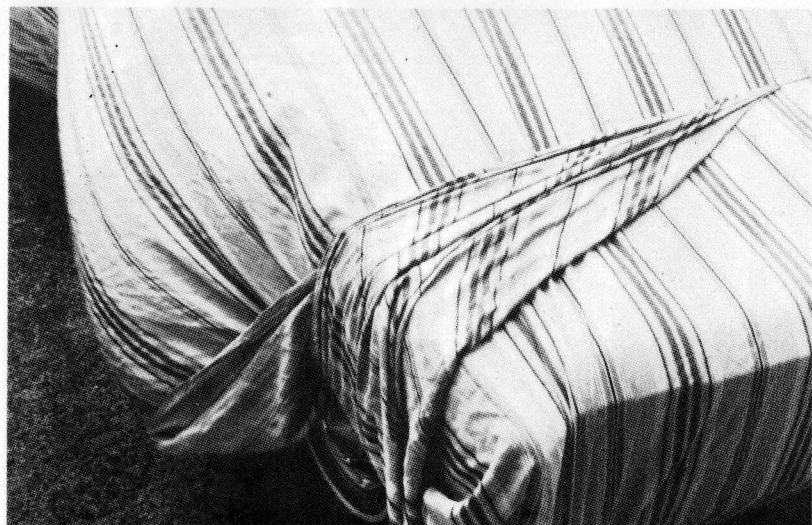
And secondly, significant because the book does stand on its photographic merits. A common point in much writing about photography is that the really good photograph is one which expresses and communicates the photographer's deep feelings for the subject, one in which the photographer has set out to achieve above all else, this personal expression and communication, rather than to simply please some third party with the final product. The photographs in this book do achieve this, in some cases with stunning effect.

Ken Foster's elementally simple yet detailed photograph of an ape's hand grasping the bar of its cage has at first sight an impact which does not diminish with familiarity. The eyes in the more-than-portraits by Alan Leatherby, Roy Long and Simon Buis gaze as penetratingly at the reader of the book as they must have at the photographer's. The reader, like Richard Collins, is forced to recognize the uniqueness of simple objects like a tree-root, a worn wicker chair, or the folds and billows of a badly-tied canvas car-cover. Virtually every photograph in the book is a stimulant, if not a shock, to tastes jaded by the tired mediocrity of the vast bulk of "serious" photography, amateur and professional, seen in New Zealand today.

But, there are one or two buts. Most of the pictures are photographic haiku's, rather than full fledged sonnets, let alone elegies or epics. They are almost all fine examples of the art, but tend to be limited in how much they try to say. One would have wished that more of them had managed a greater generality, saying something beyond the boundaries of the immediate subject. John Turner's photograph of an elderly couple on a park bench just about achieves this breadth of vision. John Fields' tremendous beachscape probably achieves it, but in the book it's too small for its full impact to be felt; I'd guess an original print of reasonable size would be a mighty photograph. But the only picture really to achieve the sort of universality expressed by, for instance, the best of Ans Westra's photographs is a photograph by Max Oettli of a few people waiting at a street corner. At first glance one wonders why such an apparently ordinary photograph was included in the book; then one realises that although there's only half a dozen people there, they express the diversity of all mankind, and though all that they're looking and waiting for is probably a traffic light, their expressions have the tenseness of mankind's looking and waiting for.....Godot, perhaps?

PHOTOGRAPHS: Opposite: Top; by Max Oettli. Bottom; by Ken Foster. Overleaf: Top; by Simon Buis. Bottom; by Richard Collins.





But the photographers have achieved these exquisite haiku's, and if they did not set out to achieve more the lack of such achievement must not be held against them. However, this does create its own problems; briefly, where to now? The haiku, however well done, is a poetic formalism, and the photographers in this book must be wary that they do not establish and become bound by a new photographic formalism in their efforts to break away from the old. All arts, and most other areas of human activity, seem to pass through recurring stages where the inner contradictions of established forms give rise through an inevitable dialectic to new syntheses of approaches and ideas which themselves become established forms and must await the struggle with new antitheses. Photography's history has shown that it is far from immune to this, but the photographers in this new book must try to prevent the sort of work they are doing to freeze into an established form. There are already faint signs of this danger: for instance the photograph which has as its subject one or two people in a man-made environment made to look almost surreal by its isolation in the photograph from the wider surroundings. In New Zealand John Daley has produced some very strong photography with this theme, and the book has two fine examples by Gary Baigent and Roy Long. But how much longer can this theme be used before it starts to produce a boredom like that induced by the salon photographer's tree-framed landscapes? There will always be a need for the photograph of the simple object seen simply and directly and photographed well. But after all, Paul Strand's "White Fence" is more than 50 years old. And it's nearly 40 years since Henri Cartier-Bresson started photographing people as he found them, looking straight down his lens.

The answer lies, I think, in what was mentioned earlier: an attempt at universality or at least at trying to make the photograph say something beyond the immediate subject and its time and place. No-one can expect (though we can all hope) always to reach the sort of universality expressed by Ans Westra, Paul Strand, or Henri Cartier-Bresson. But a continuing effort to approach universality, even if it is seldom reached, is the best guarantee I can think of against a static and frozen formalism no matter what the style or subject used. The photographs in this book are far too good to be regarded as a pinnacle of achievement in a world in which whole mountain ranges remain uncharted; they must be regarded as a superb advanced base from which the real assault can begin.

B.W.

If you're unable to find a copy of Photography, a Visual Dialect in your local booksellers or camera shops, copies can be obtained from this magazine for \$1.10 including postage. Send your cheque or postal note to:

Photographic Art & History,
29 Wyndrum Avenue,
LOWER HUTT.

REVISED STANDARD

THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY from the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern Era. By Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. Thames and Hudson, London, 1969. N.Z. Price \$16.80. Reviewed by John B. Turner.

Reviewing this revised and updated edition of the Gernsheim's monumental history of photography is like trying to review the Bible. No matter what is said, it appears hopelessly inadequate compared to the immense scope of the book itself.

The Gernsheims excel in digging up the most minute details of history. They were responsible for tracking down the world's first photograph, made by Nicephore Niepce in 1826: they unearthed it in England in 1952. The sheer volume of facts, figures and quotes occasionally makes for hard reading and sometimes poses more questions than are solved, but this is all to the good because photography's history is far from cut and dried. Right from the start Daguerre and then Fox Talbot received the major credit for the inventions of photography; but as the Gernsheims show, quite a few others like Niepce (Latterly Daguerre's partner), Hippolyte Bayard, Verignon, and Friedrich Gerber were independent inventors via such processes as heliography, direct positives on paper, etc.

Broadly speaking photography has at various times run the gauntlet as an exciting scientific discovery, a joke, a non-art, a money-maker, a scientific aid and a neglected modern art. The Gernsheims have structured this untidy complex evolution into more than 40 easily-referred to chapters under main headings of photography's prehistory, its invention, the early years, the collodion period, scientific applications, the evolution of colour photography, and photomechanical printing processes.

The Gernsheims have sorted their years of intensive research into a highly believable form but until we have comparable histories from such countries as China, the USSR, Canada, Japan, Australia and even New Zealand, who knows what marvellous images, inventions and innovations have been missed out? As a case in point, in 1890, one year before the first telephoto lenses were introduced independently by Steinheil in Munich and Dallmeyer in London, a New Zealander, Alexander McKay, published a paper "On some means for increasing the Scale of Photographic Lenses and the use of Telescopic Powers in connection with the Ordinary Camera." (Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute 1890, p.461-5). McKay's notes, cameras, lenses and photographs may well be extant to prove the worth of his experiments.

In any photographic research the Gernsheim's History... is an invaluable companion for student, general historian, picture librarian, photo archivist and collector of photographica alike. In particular, the Appendix dealing with exposure times, the periods specific processes were used, milestones in photographic optics and a list of photographic societies of the first decade, journals and annuals is an extremely valuable aid. I suspect most people could find many hours of interesting reading in this book. Take the following example:

"Cyrus Macaire, a Frenchman seeking his fortune in America in 1840-41, was one of the itinerant photographers in the Southern States. Owing to underexposure his portraits often turned out black and were refused by the sitter. Undaunted, Macaire passed them off to slaves, who recognised

themselves without hesitation in the portraits of their masters. This business proved to be so good that in the end Macaire posed whites to furnish the portraits of Negroes."

Although the Gernsheim's conclude with a plea that future photo-historical collections concentrate on fine photographs, rather than the traditional agglomerations of equipment and lenses with photographs merely as examples of processes, the 300 photographs in their book although better distributed for reference in this edition, are rightly treated as supporting the text. The book retains its function as the most thorough English-language source-book of photography up to about 1914.



Travelling Photographer's Darkroom tent, c 1865.
From Gernsheim's "History of Photography..." p 276.

NINETEENTH CENTURY NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHS: A Govett-Vrewster Art Gallery (New Plymouth) travelling exhibition sponsored by the ANZ Banking Group, Kodak New Zealand Limited, and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, with special assistance from the Dominion Museum, Wellington. Reviewed by Robert Hutchins, Senior Lecturer in Photography, Auckland University School of Fine Arts.

Photography in colonial New Zealand is no longer an unknown country! This historical exhibition opens it up and begins to map some of the main features.

A few years ago we had from the New York Museum of Modern Art the big exhibition "The Photographers' Eye", memorable for making visible to a NZ-wide public some important aspects of photography as an art medium. "Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs" has the same order of importance for photography in this country. It establishes a surprisingly substantial body of work from our national history. As it shows in art galleries throughout the country it will remind us that, all along, the camera has been used by inquisitive, perceptive and sensitive minds to make expressive images of their experience in a young country.

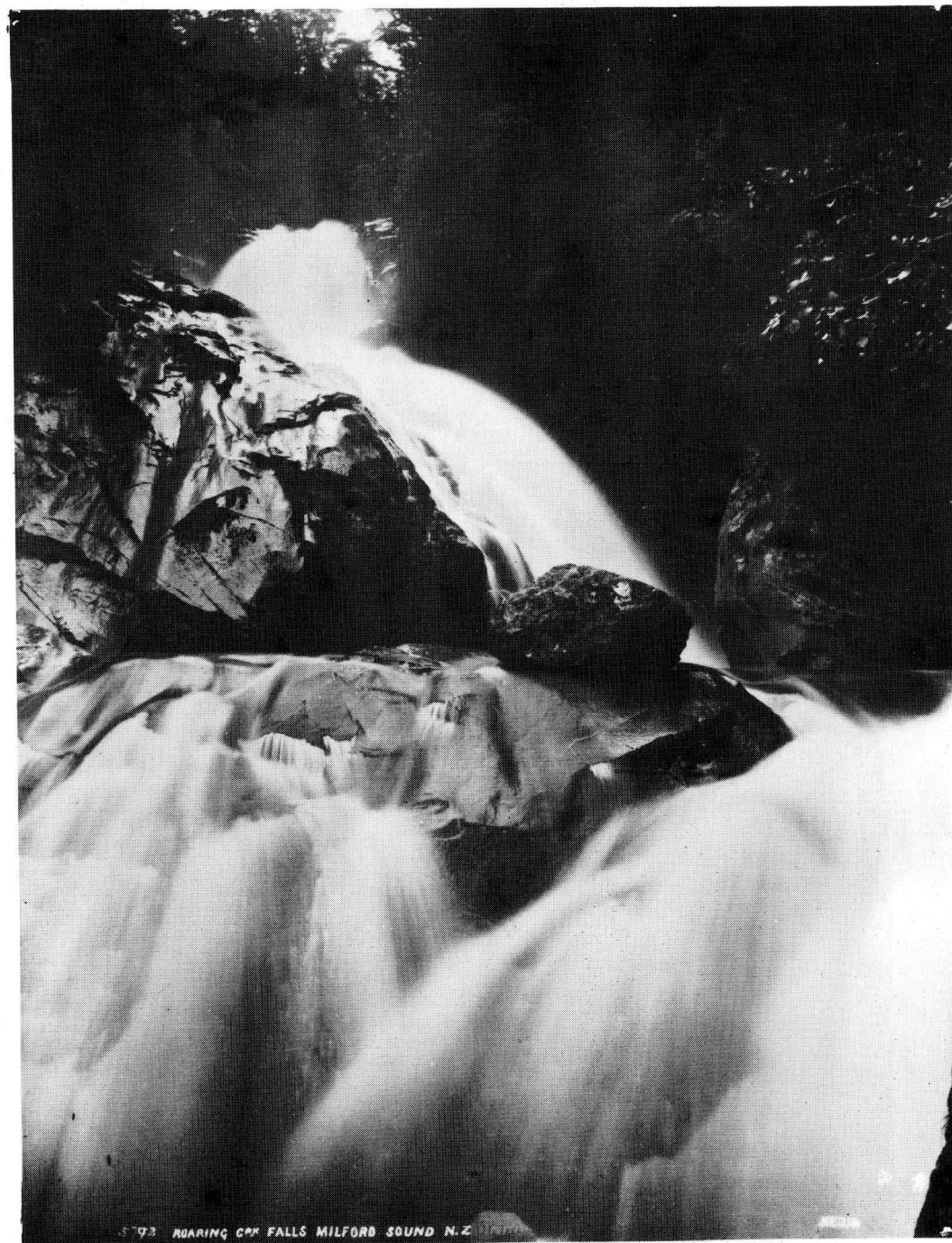
The illustrated catalogue should become a collectors' item for anyone seriously interested in the development of photography in New Zealand. In it John Turner, who as a photographer for the Dominion Museum initiated and did most of the organising of the exhibition, gives background details. John Maynard, Director of the Govett-Brewster Gallery, is to be congratulated for giving the major institutional support. And from New Plymouth also, Malcolm Ross was responsible for getting a lot of biographical details. Twenty-three known and seven unknown photographers have contributed 94 pictures from the years 1862 to 1905.

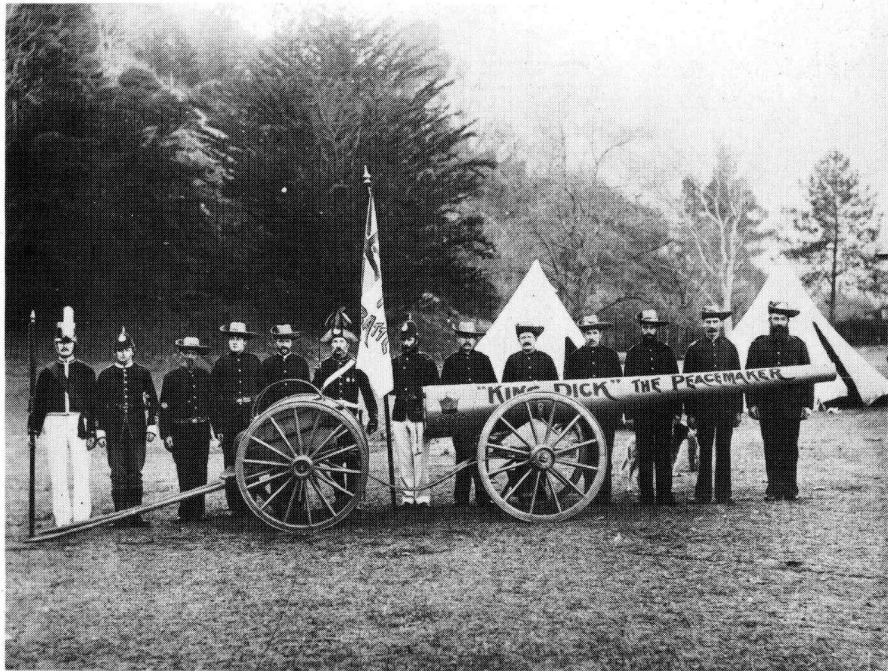
There is evident a strong documentary motivation on the part of the original photographers. Only two or three prints can be said to have originated from a purely pictorial intention as we know it today. At least 18 pictures could be called purely documentary, in the best sense of the word, and the majority of another 20 landscapes have a documentary flavour. The wish to see and record directly in the same style is also evident in the 19 pictures of Maori subjects. Another eight prints are based on events. Ten more are what might be called "domestic landscapes", of people associated with their homes and farms. There are also nine more or less formally posed groups, and seven individual portraits. Oddly, only two prints can be called images of "objects for their own sake": a fish and some mountain lilies.

It is dangerous to generalise about photographers working over the 40-year period. But there is a strange sense of them looking directly and without visual complication, as though the subject matter itself were enough without having to strive for visual effects or pictorial conventions.

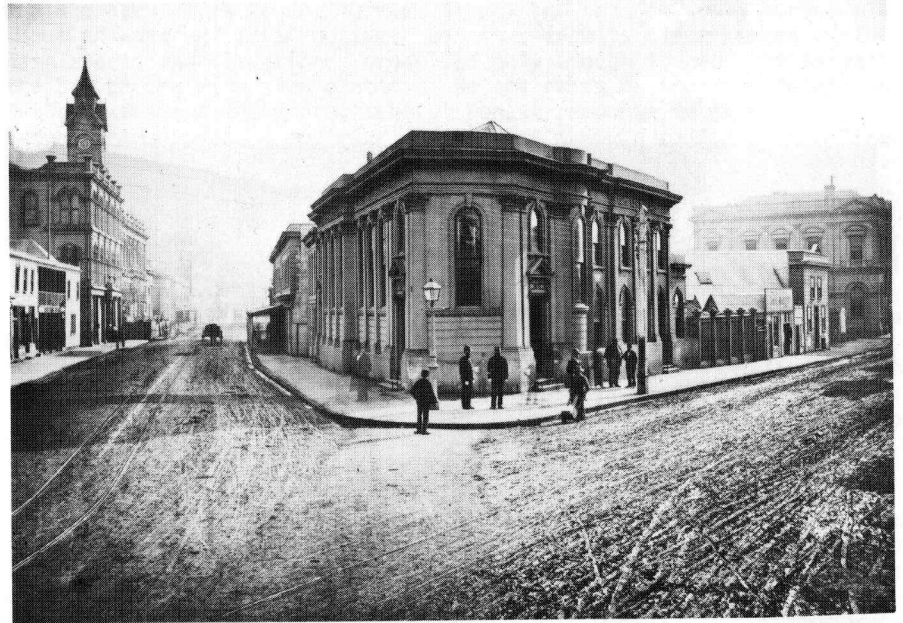
Typical of the strong documentary style is Frederick Tyree, who worked in Nelson in the 1880's and 90's (or, according to John Turner's catalogue notes, it may have been his brother William.) There is a fine big enlargement of a Maori wedding, about 1895. About 50 guests with the couple in the centre are grouped in front of a three-gabled house. Every individual is himself. People lean out of the upper windows to face the camera; a small child turns its back in the foreground gate; old men sit on the far left thinking they are out of the picture. The gathering is in front of you still. In this and the other Tyree pictures this beautiful directness is modified by the playing of the severe lines and sharp angles of colonial structures against the strongly rounded hills looming up behind. The pictures are composed to

PHOTOGRAPHS: p9; F.A. Coxhead, Roaring Creek Falls, Milford Sound. c.1880. p10 top: Tyree, "King Dick", the Peacemaker Boer War Peace Celebrations, 1902, p10 bottom: Alfred H. Burton, Huingatini at Whatiwhatihoe, Kings Residence, 1885. p11 top: Alfred H. Burton, Terrace Hotel, Te Wairoa, after Tarawera Eruption, 1886. p11 bottom: James Bragge, Bank of New Zealand Corner, Wellington, c 1879. p12: Dr. A.C. Barker, Mr & Mrs Collie, Ohapi, c 1868.





9689 - MUNGATINI - AT WHATIWHATINDO - KING'S RESIDENCE
SERIES 5001 BUREAU





fill the whole plate. This is deliberate, direct and transparently honest picture-making without an apparent "art" motive. But it transmits clear images of the facts of those past events and situations, organised only enough to meet the formal requirements of the big camera with slow plates. We are taken by the rich detail into the past events, and we share the photographers' honest response to them.

The Tyree pictures show a modification of what I would call a strong "frontality" which typifies most of this early New Zealand photography. The Tyree camera is angled, even if only slightly, to the subject. If anything, apart from the subject matter, distinguishes most of these colonial photographs from what was happening in Britain, Europe and America at the same time, it is this uniformly frontal approach. The camera looks directly and frontally. It is a simple, and often powerful view, communicating the facts and feelings of frontier life.

But, as a corollary, there is lacking the more oblique, more complex visual approach which greater change in subject-distance and camera point of view can give. The directness of view on Rangitoto's barren shape by the Rev. John Kinder in about 1886, is inevitable from the subject matter. Starkness is what the image of lava slopes is all about. Similarly the central directness of a view down a bush road by James Bragge in about 1879 is inescapable (although there is an uneasy feel of wrong scale in the odd figure right in the centre of the picture which makes me want to see the negative itself.)

When we come into towns, however, and remember the images of Hill and Adamson in Scotland, and Carlo Ponti in Italy, for example, we sometimes wish for a second, closer, more angled view. For example, Frank Coxhead was a view up a road in early Dunedin, where a closer look along the shop fronts to the right would have added to the rather stark frontality. Why should there be this frontality? Perhaps it was a matter of photographic materials being scarce in faraway New Zealand and the need to conserve exposures; perhaps it is a matter of personal style; perhaps it is a reflection of the less sophisticated visual environment in the colony or perhaps all of these and more.

Some of the very gentle pictures by Alfred Burton of Maoris, seen in the "Maori in Focus" exhibition are here, along with a few Tarawera landscapes. His style, I think, comes across better in the smaller show. Both should be seen as part of a larger context. And this raises the question of how representative is this selection, not just of one man's work, but of the whole era.

The foreword to the catalogue states that this is by no means intended as a comprehensive survey of nineteenth century work in New Zealand. It establishes important figures, and is thus a major event. There is the work of the busy amateur, Dr. Barker, who has produced a classic image in his 1870 print "Ohapi Lean-to". A woman sits holding a child in front of a lean-to cottage on a bleak flat area with water and flax in the foreground; to the right a gig slopes gauntly against the sky, a white lamb is tethered near it, and a young Maori man in pakeha dress looks out of the frame to the right. It suggests a sequence about to begin in a Bergman film, but it is all about frontier life in our own country, a century ago.

An unknown photographer has made two small pictures of Maori prisoners, captured at Wereora Pa, Waitotara, in about 1865. The warriors are on a sailing ship, in one print standing barechested and proud, their image asking questions still alive last Waitangi day.

Another question: where are the images of the Maori-Pakeha Wars? Fenton had photographed the Crimean War, Brady was at work on the American Civil War. It seems unlikely that the New Zealand colonial war was not similarly recorded, even if not on the same scale. Were the photographs all taken back to England by army photographers, or are they waiting to be uncovered in some forgotten New Zealand collection?

This exhibition is both historical and historic. It gives some very moving answers about life and photography in this country. It is a splendid beginning to establishing our historical heritage of the camera.

LETTERS

MISTAKES POSSIBLE.....

Sir,

May I call the attention of all who may have occasion to classify, exhibit or publish the work of early New Zealand photographers to certain inconsistencies which are liable to occur when giving credits. This is a problem which may not be fully appreciated as such, and which deserves more thought. There are two principal causes: one is when the name appearing on the print is the publisher rather than the photographer; the second when a photographic business is taken over and the negatives of the former proprietor are sold under a new name. I would like to give examples of both.

An expedition in 1888 was accompanied by two photographic parties, one for Burton Brothers consisting of G. Moodie, H. Burton and R. Ferguson; the other for Morris, consisting of F. Muir, P. Brodie and J. Forrest. The resulting photographs appear under the names of "Burton Brothers" and "Morris." The late Mr Cecil Pattillo told me quite positively that Morris did not take the beautiful photographs which bear his name.

The second cause leading to misunderstanding is illustrated by the firm of Muir and Moodie taking over Burton Brothers business in 1898. A glance at Muir and Moodie's catalogue issued in 1901 and Burton Brothers of 1885 will show that the same photographs are offered with the identical reference numbers and furthermore that Muir and Moodie state that the 7,500 or so subjects they offer were built up over more than 30 years. When Muir and Moodie reissued these photographs they replaced Burton Brothers name with their own. I would suggest that the attribution "Photograph by....." followed by either of these firm's names would be wrong. Sometimes there is a series of takeovers. In Dunedin J. Wilson started a portrait business immediately after his arrival in 1857. W. Meluish took over about 1860, and three or four years later D. Mundy took over and had a label which read: "D. Mundy, late Meluish, established 1856." The 1856 would appear to refer to Mundy's establishment in New Zealand. And then a little later Frank Coxhead acquired Meluish's negatives, inscribed his initials on the plates, and in 1883 published a number of albums of "Dunedin in 1860". It should be noted however, in fairness to Coxhead, that in his advertisement of these albums he states "Published by F.A. Coxhead." We should not credit him with photographs taken before his arrival in New Zealand and to which he does not even lay claim himself. His initialling of the photographs is by way of claiming copyright or at least ownership and right to publish.

HARDWICKE KNIGHT
Dunedin

MISTAKE ACTUAL.....

B.A. Meylan and others have written pointing out a mistake in the review of G.J.H. Moon's Photographing Nature in Issue No. 3 when we said: "...extra depth of field ... can not be obtained by increasing the camera to subject distance then enlarging the negative to get the image size back to where it was wanted originally: at closeup distances image size is determined solely by lens aperture and final image size." What we should have said is "extra depth of field can not always be obtained, etc." We failed to acknowledge that at distances greater than about a tenth of the hyperfocal distance of the lens in use, the trick suggested by Mr. Moon does in fact work. So Mr. Moon was not, as we suggested, quite wrong in his statement, and our apologies to him and all our readers. For the best recent discussion of depth of field, which as Mr. Meylan acknowledges is a difficult and complex subject, see L. Andrew Mannehim's articles in Modern Photography, June and July 1970.

B.W.

HISTORY SEEN

The unluckiest photographers in New Zealand are those who don't live in Dunedin or who have not visited that city in the past two months. The Otago Museum has had as its major display over the period of the exhibition, "The First Century of Photography, 1839-1939", organised and largely stocked from the personal collection of New Zealand's foremost photographic antiquarian, Hardwicke Knight of Dunedin. Filling the museum's hugh foyer and part of the Hocken and University Libraries, the exhibition gave great insight into not only the technological history of photography but also into its social, cultural and historical significance.

From his own collection of photographica Mr. Knight was able to provide a collection of nineteenth century photographich equipment which could be matched by very few other private collections in the world. Daguerreotype equipment on display included a reconstructed Voigtlander camera of the type introduced in 1841 and a Lerebours camera of 1855. Several wet-plate cameras were on display as well as a large variety of all types of equipment from the later nineteenth century. One display case was devoted to early stereographic equipment, another to daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes and other early forms of the photograph, while yet another carried a gleaming collection of brass-barrelled lenses and shutters. Mr. Knight's own collection was complemented in part by items from other collectors, notably fellow Dunedin collector Dick Billington who contributed, for instance, an early Graflex and apparently also assisted with mounting the display.

It's a pity the equipment on show from the later part of the period covered did not match in numbers and variety the earlier gear. The Vest Pocket Exacta was there, but although Kodak, Leica and Contax were represented, Mr. Knight was unable to obtain examples of the landmark original models of these and other significant cameras from the late 19th and first part of the 20th centuries. Still, this unfortunate lack was more than compensated for by the other equipment exhibited. For instance, a fine display of Thornton Pickards, notably the early "Ruby" models, filled yet another display case, and where Mr. Knight was unable to obtain the equipment itself he was assiduous in digging up photographs and copies of old advertisements, catalogue pages, etc., depicting the originals. And there were all sorts of oddities, such as a very early movie projector looking very much like the bared inside of a large sewing machine, and a stand camera looking strangely incongruous because of the folding hood which indicated it to be a single lens reflex.

But the equipment was only one part of the exhibition; one of the five parts to be precise. Over the road from the museum itself the exhibition of photographs of the 19th century Maori was on display in the Hocken Library, and the University Library had on display a big collection of books carrying photographs by photographers from Francis Frith to Henri Cartier Bresson. There was no room for these in the Museum foyer, which in addition to display cases and a floor display of equipment was crowded with a huge number of display panels erected in bays and sections.

One of these sets of panels carried a delightful history of photography, made up largely of copies of early advertisements, cartoons, newspaper and magazine articles and in fact of sorts of written and illustrative material from the period concerned, and involving the photographs as well as the technology. The photographs included some original photogravures by Paul Strand, among them the two which are perhaps his most famous, "White Fence" and "Blind Woman".

Dunedin's 19th century photographers, which, at this stage of photo-historical research anyway means some of New Zealand's most important photographers, were covered

in another set of panels carrying not only the photographers' professional work but in many cases, through some great research by Mr. Knight, photographs of the photographers premises including the building in which Meluish worked in the 1850's. Yet another set of panels carried a tremendous number of photographs of nineteenth century Dunedin.

But in many ways the highlight of the exhibition was the series of panels entitled "Man in Early Photography". This was a huge selection of pictures, some original photographs, most copies of originals or of photographs in books. Many of these were greatly enlarged, or were greatly enlarged sections of small parts of the originals. None of the photographs carried a title, and this added to the impact of the display, which aimed to show what men, women and children looked like when caught, posing or unawares, by the lens of the early photographer. The total impact of this huge number of photographs was tremendous, and placed the whole exhibition firmly in its historical context and made unmistakable the social and cultural significance of photography as an historical phenomenon.

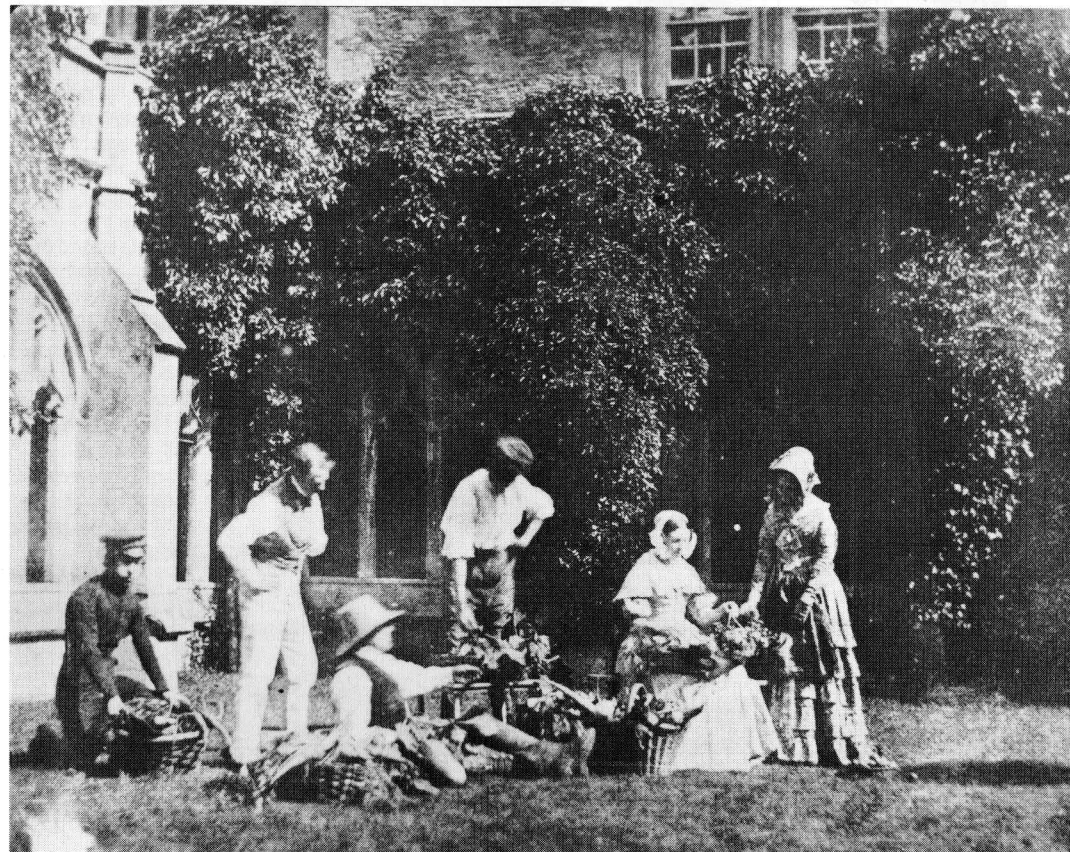
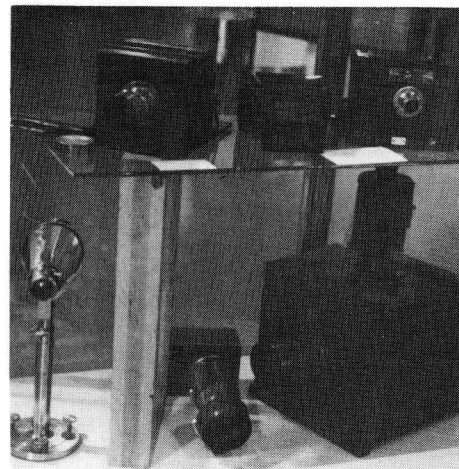
Most of New Zealand's larger museums are oriented towards natural history and ethnology, although there's a growing tendency for them to display when might be called domestic artifacts, and of course it is these latter which are the mainstay of the small local museums of which more and more are being established in small towns up and down the country. But few museums, apart from the one or two specifically devoted to technology, have given much recognition to technological history. That the Otago Museum, till now apparently a conservative bastion of the entomological and anthropological Establishment, should be the one to stage such a display as this one is progress indeed. And apparently the possibility is being investigated of mounting a smaller version of "The First Century of Photography" on permanent display. If carefully selected such a permanent display should carry much of the interest and impact of the original, and would make the Otago Museum very much a must for any photographer visiting Dunedin.

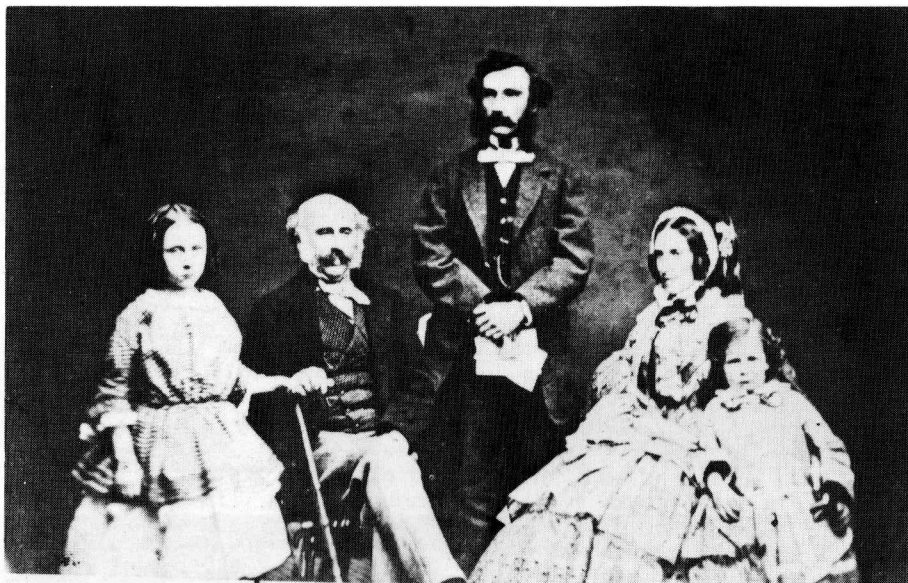
B.W.

INFORMATION PLEASE

Dunedin publisher John McIndoe, who has carried photographic publishing in this country, a significant step forward by putting out "Dunedin, Victorian City of New Zealand" and "Vintage Wellington" has taken a gigantic step by commissioning Hardwicke Knight to write a History of New Zealand Photography. This is to be written for a fairly wide market, and is to be published towards the end of this year. The book will include articles on individual photographers and an appendix listing photograph collections generally accessible to the public. Anyone who has a reasonable amount of information about any early photographer is urged to pass it on to Hardwicke Knight, who would also like brief details of collections of photographs held by institutions or organisations. His address is 15 King George Street, Broad Bay, Dunedin, or c/- Medical Photography Dept., Dunedin Hospital.

Photographs opposite: Top, two displays from the Otago Museum exhibition. Note the brass cannon-shaped Voigtlander daguerreotype camera in left hand photo. Bottom: An original Fox Talbot calotype, from the Auckland Museum, which was included in the exhibition.





J. N. CROMBIE,

(LATE OF THE AMERICAN FIRM OF MEADE BROTHERS, COLLINS-STREET.)

DEGS to announce to the Public generally, that he has Fitted, in the most Superb Style, Apartments in SHORTLAND CRESCENT, two doors above the Office of the "Southern Cross," for the prosecution of the above ART in all its details, comprising, besides the usual styles,

CRAYONS,

WHICH HAVE A PECULIAR FLOWING AND SKETCHY APPEARANCE.

STEREOSCOPIC PICTURES

REPRESENT THE FIGURE AS POSSESSING ALL THE SOLIDITY AND ROUNDNESS OF STATUARY. PLAIN, LANDSCAPE, OR ILLUMINATED BACK-GROUNDS.

Arrangements can be made for taking Invalid or Deceased Persons at their Residence.

Views of Town or Country Seats, FAVOURITE ANIMALS, &c.

OIL OR WATER-COLORED PAINTINGS,
And every other description of object, accurately copied.

Any Description of DARK DRESS is the best adapted for the perfect development of the Portrait.

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THE ART.

Amateurs supplied with Apparatus, &c.

THE PUBLIC ARE RESPECTFULLY INVITED TO CALL AND INSPECT SPECIMENS.

N.B.—J. N. C. guarantees all Pictures taken at the Establishment equal to those executed by him for the late firm of MEADE BROTHERS.

J. N. CROMBIE * * * * * PHOTOGRAPHER

Janice C. Mogford, Auckland Museum Library.

For Auckland the continuing story of Mr. Crombie began in 1855 when he arrived from Melbourne and announced himself with an intensive and extensive advertisement in the Southern Cross newspaper.

At the age of about twenty-one he had arrived in Melbourne from England at the time of the gold discoveries in 1852, and not finding employment at his trade of practical engineer, went as an assistant to the Photographers Meade Bros., of Collins Street.

About 1854 he arrived in New Zealand and commenced business as a photographer in Nelson, but soon removed to Auckland and opened a studio in Shortland St., two doors above the Southern Cross Office. He continued to advertise his prowess and services for some years and at times favourable comment was made on his efforts in the local press.

We tend to think this decade of ours has reached a zenith in high pressure advertising but Mr. Crombie showed a fine determination to keep himself in the public eye. In January 1856 he grandiloquently offers "every man, women and child an opportunity of procuring a portrait which, for artistic finish and mathematical correctness is not to be surpassed". Indeed, Photo no. 13 (9" x 7") mounted in a handsome case or gilt frame is "calculated to deck a cottage or adorn a palace". Somewhere in New Zealand surely, there must be some daguerreotypes extant by J.N. Crombie!

In March 1856 he evidently began to feel the need to extend his field of operations for there appeared a succession of farewell notices - "absolutely your last chance" etc., etc. In March 28th issue of the Southern Cross according to Local Intelligence: "It will be perceived by our advertising columns that Mr. Crombie has finally resolved upon leaving Auckland for the Southern Provinces where he will doubtless be as successful with his clever reflections of the community as he has been here. His art is one peculiarly adapted to colonial requirements ... and photographs supply an unerring substitute for the painter's art."

Did he actually go on his Southern trip then? Somehow I don't think so. The extended departure notices continued to appear until May and then in June we read that J.N.C. intends to give the Bay of Islands and adjacent parts the benefit of his art. He announced his return in August but only for two weeks as he said he was under an obligation to proceed to Taranaki at the first opportunity.

During his 15 months stay in Auckland he took over a thousand portraits and Governor Gore Browne "courteously acceded to a request made by Mr. Crombie for permission to assume the designation of Photographer to his Excellency." So now we have:- CROMBIE'S ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY.

The initial two weeks before departure south stretched into September then away he went on the "Zingari" to commence his tour of the Southern Provinces. Presumably it was on this trip that he took some of the twelve portraits of Maori chiefs, which together with an historical comment by Mr. Davis, Government Interpreter, were forwarded to the London Illustrated News to convey, in effect, "a correct impression of the features and character of the aboriginal potentates of this antipodal fraction of the British Empire." These portraits included photographs of Chiefs Maketu, Waikato, Patuone and Tamati Waka Nene. I wonder, did they get published?

Photographs opposite: Top, Governor Gore Browne and family, by J.N. Crombie. Bottom: Crombie's advertisement in the "Southern Cross", June 19th, 1855. Photographs by courtesy of Auckland Museum and Institute.

(Advertisement)

In 1858 the Royal Photographic Gallery, still in Shortland Street, was remodelled and no expense was spared. Admission was free to the showroom which "contains Portraits of the most celebrated characters in the Australian Colonies, also views of the Southern settlements of New Zealand".

In 1859 Crombie moved his premises to Queen Street and maintained that they were now equal to any in Europe - a most perfect studio of Photographic Art." A ladies' dressing room was provided with a strict regard to privacy and fitted with every facility for the completion of the Toilette."

The Auckland Register in Notes of the Week for September, 1859 announced that "under the title of 'Auckland Photographed' Mr. Crombie has produced two very interesting views of the Capital City of New Zealand. One of Shortland Street and the other of Queen Street Wharf with shipping and steamers showing the Lord Ashley, with the English Mail working in to take her berth; the White Swan getting up steam and the Joseph Fletcher unmooring." These subsequently appeared in the London Illustrated News in May 1860.

There now appears to be a quiet period in our peripatetic friend's career until in 1862 an advertisement addressed to the inhabitants of Auckland was published in the Southern Cross of 6 May. "Ladies and Gentlemen - In taking leave of you, perhaps never to return, though I trust otherwise - I get to acknowledge the liberal and constant success I have met with for the last seven years. I arrived among you very imperfect in my profession, and am conscious still of many shortcomings, being, as far as photography is concerned, entirely Colonial-bred. I am very anxious to acquire that knowledge which is only to be had at the fountain head. In pursuance of this object and for many other reasons, I intend leaving here by steamer next Thursday... To the inhabitants of New Zealand, and the gentlemen of the Press (to whom I am absolutely bankrupt)

Farewell!

I quote this so fully not only because it is a delightful example of mid-Victorian prose but because some part of our raw, young country remained until he died, with J.N.C., so that in his marriage announcement in England in 1864 he is designated Mr. J.N. Crombie of Auckland.

The years pass until his obituary appears in the Weekly News of January 1879. "Mr. J.N. Crombie, formerly photographer in Auckland having become afflicted with bronchitis determined on a trip to New Zealand which he was destined never to see again for he died in Melbourne on the way back to Auckland." And so the final chapter closed on this colourful, energetic young man who must indeed take his place amongst the early professional photographers of New Zealand.

Acknowledgements:- Bibliography: Miss E.A. Evans

Photos: Peter Brennan

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Several people have written supporting the suggestion put forward by Mr. Bernard Teague, of Wairoa, for a Photo-Historical Society to link those people and organisations seeking out and preserving the photographic records of New Zealand's past. John Diamond of Glen Eden, Auckland, is a strong believer in building up a continuing history of his district and so for more than 30 years has been collecting and copying old photographs of the western suburbs of Auckland and has also been taking photographs of the changing landscape.

James W. Sim, a professional photographer of Heriot in West Otago, has built up a collection of about 500 photographs of his district, dating back to the early pioneer days. Mr. Sim copies these for preservation., and like Mr. Teague has made some into slides for showing.



Photography: Richard Wallace, Otorohanga
Equipment: Mamiya 2½ square Twin Lens Reflex
(Distributors for Mamiya: Photographic Wholesalers Ltd.,
Auckland, Wellington & Christchurch)