

CHAPTER FOURTHE QUEST FOR LAND

Dicky Barrett played a key role in brokering deals between Maori and the New Zealand Company. He interpreted not only the language, but also Maori attitudes, actions and customs. Barrett drew on his family and tribal affiliations in the negotiations that obtained the land the Company wanted. All three of the transactions that Barrett was involved in were with Te Ati Awa and in particular with Rawinia Barrett's Ngamotu and Puketapu kin. Rawinia and the Barrett children were present at all of the negotiations and their presence was influential. However, the land transactions were controversial, and the Land Claims Commission set up under William Spain in 1842 revealed that the Maori and Europeans involved in the 'sales' had different perceptions of the transactions. Barrett failed to bridge adequately the gap between the two cultures, and much of the confusion and bitterness that followed stemmed from this failure. However, he was not solely to blame. The Company pressed ahead with its plans, regardless of Maori opposition.

The New Zealand Company was the brainchild of Edward Gibbon Wakefield. He was concerned with conditions in England at a time of overpopulation, mass unemployment, and poor living and working conditions. His solution to these problems was the establishment of colonies as an outlet for England's excess population. New Zealand was one of the places deemed suitable for colonisation. It was envisaged that the Company would buy land cheaply from Maori and resell it at a higher price to settlers. This would create a fund to finance further immigration.

Maori, though paid only a pittance for the land, would benefit from the introduction of 'civilisation'.

The Company had no doubts that Maori longed for the European settlement of New Zealand and it acted accordingly.¹ In May 1839 the Tory left England under the command of Colonel William Wakefield, Edward Gibbon Wakefield's brother. Edward Jerningham Wakefield, the theorist's son, accompanied his uncle in an unofficial capacity. The aim of the expedition was to buy the land required to put Edward Gibbon Wakefield's plan into action. The Company was so confident of success that it began to sell land in New Zealand almost immediately. By July all the town sections in the first settlement had been sold, and the first ships carrying settlers were despatched in mid-September, even before any land had been purchased.² The Tory arrived at Queen Charlotte Sound in mid-August and stumbled accidentally on to the whaling community at Te Awaiti. Here the Wakefields met Dicky Barrett and realised his importance for their quest. The Company had directed Wakefield to investigate Port Nicholson (renamed Wellington in 1840 and known to Maori as Te Whanganui-a-Tara) as a site for colonisation, and according to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, 'Barrett's account fully confirmed this idea; and he, after having been made acquainted with our views and projects, expressed himself willing to second them with all his ability.'³

¹ P. Burns, Fatal Success. A History of the New Zealand Company, Auckland, 1989, pp. 52, 87, 89.

² Ibid., p. 17.

³ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 36-7.

What made Barrett such a valuable asset was his relationship with Te Ati Awa who now resided at Port Nicholson. William Wakefield hoped to use Barrett to open negotiations with the chiefs at Port Nicholson.⁴ Barrett warned him of the difficulties involved in purchasing land, due to the unsettled nature of land ownership in the area. However he told Colonel Wakefield he believed he could purchase Port Nicholson for the Company, 'by having a native wife who had a Family belonging to the same Tribe.'⁵ The Wakefields were optimistic about Barrett's abilities, believing him to be 'thoroughly acquainted with the feelings and customs of the natives, as well as their language.'⁶

Barrett told the Spain Commission that he was not offered payment for his services by Colonel Wakefield until November.⁷ In a letter that Barrett wrote to his brother however, he made it clear that he was not so magnanimous, or as willing to help as the Wakefields indicated. Rather, 'after a great deal of persuasion I was induced to accept on the promise of a considerable sum'⁸ This offer was tempting to Barrett as his whaling business was in trouble. The catch had dwindled from a peak of 17 whales caught by one station at Te Awaiti in 1833 to 9 whales caught by three stations in 1839.⁹ The prospects of a permanent English colony in the area offered a

⁴ W. Wakefield, Journal, 31 August 1839, p. 588.

⁵ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁶ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 37.

⁷ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁸ R. Barrett, Letter to his brother, 6 November 1841.

⁹ R.D. Caygill, 'The Te Awaiti Whaling Station. An Essay on Whaling In and Around Cook Strait, New Zealand', M.A. thesis, Canterbury University, 1948, p. 79.

way out of their predicament for the Te Awaiti whalers. Wakefield promised Barrett that 'the company will be glad to avail themselves of the services of any British subjects now resident in New Zealand ... and that the settlers will be recommended to do the same.'¹⁰ Furthermore, the whalers were aware that an English settlement would also lead to an increase in the value of the land that many of them had acquired from Maori.¹¹ On 20 September Barrett boarded the Tory with his wife and children and sailed to Port Nicholson.

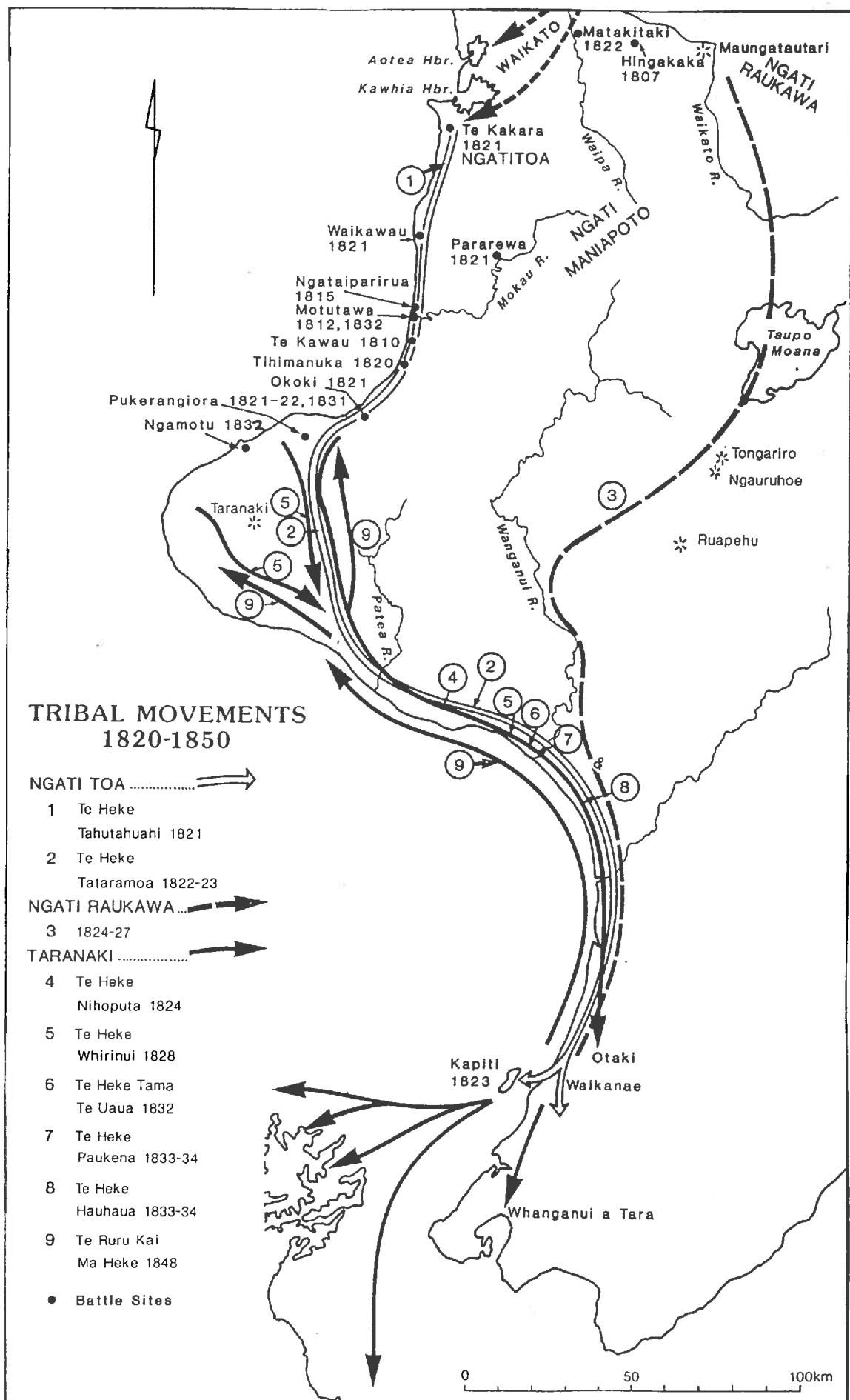
Most of the Te Ati Awa with whom Barrett travelled on Te Heke Tama Te Uaua in 1832 settled originally at Te Uruhi near Waikanae.¹² They had been preceded by other groups from the Taranaki region and Ngati Toa from Kawhia, who settled along the Kapiti coast in the 1820s after ousting local Maori. Te Rauparaha was the dominant influence in the area and the major player in the conquest of the area. In the mid-1820s Ngati Tama and Ngati Mutunga moved over into Port Nicholson and drove out Ngati Ira, the existing inhabitants. This gave them a valid claim to the area according to Maori custom. However Ngati Toa claimed all the land taken by conquest which their allies settled on. In the case of Port Nicholson a compromise was reached. According to Patricia Burns, Te Rauparaha gave Te Whanganui-a-Tara to the Ngati Mutunga chief Pomare, who married his niece, Tawhiti.¹³

¹⁰ W. Wakefield to R. Barrett, 8 November 1839, cited in F.A. Carrington, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before Select Committee on New Zealand, GBPP, NZ 2 : 1844, p. 66.

¹¹ W. Wakefield, Journal, 31 August 1839, p. 588.

¹² This section on the history of Maori occupation of Te Whanganui A Tara is largely taken from A. Ballara, 'Te Whanganui-a-Tara: Phases of Maori Occupation of Wellington Harbour, c. 1800-1840', in D. Hamer and R. Nicholls (eds.), The Making of Wellington, 1800-1914, Wellington, 1990, pp. 9-34; P. Ehrhardt, Te Whanganui-a-Tara customary tenure 1750-1850, Wellington, 1993.

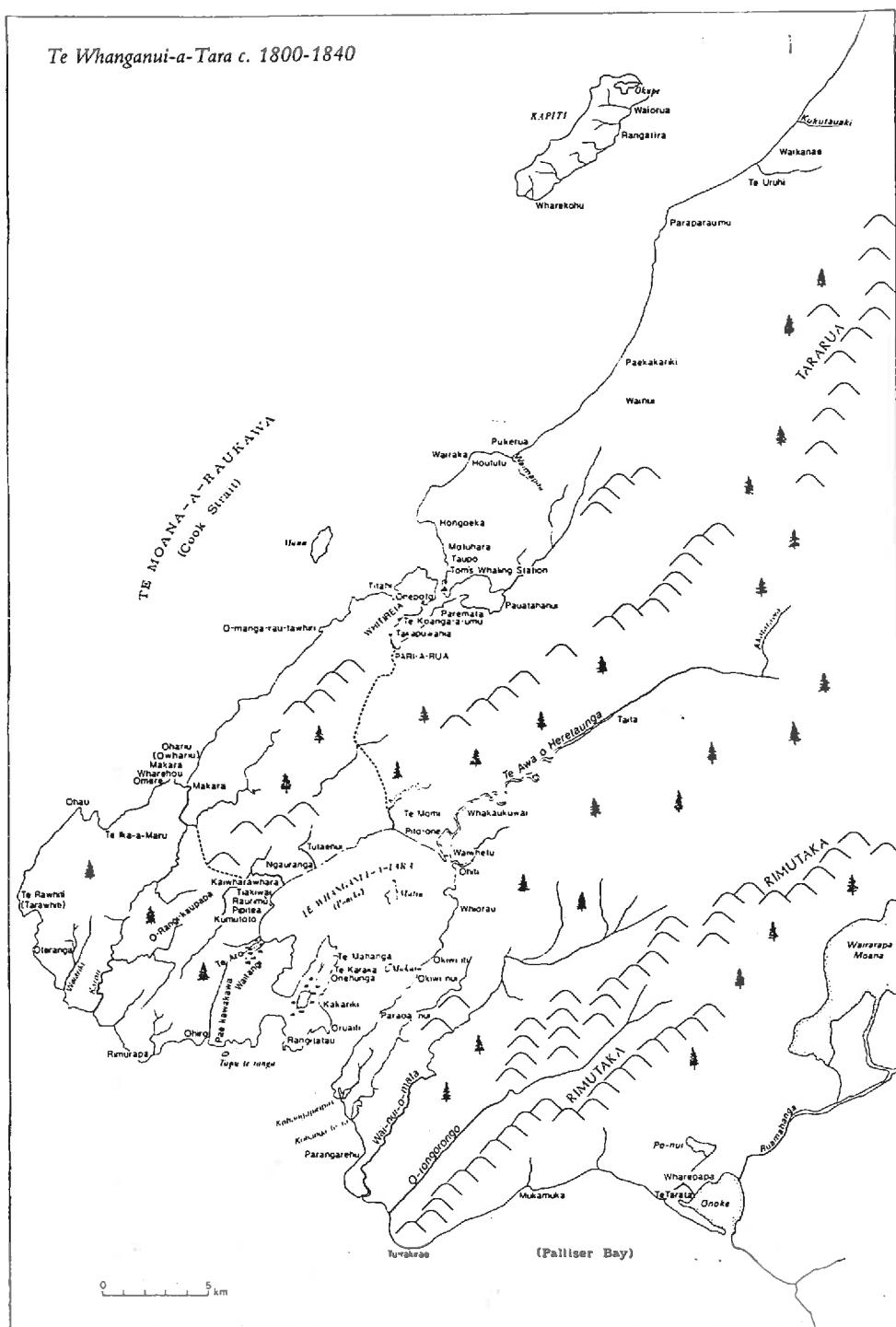
¹³ Burns, Te Rauparaha, p. 177.



In 1833 a second group moved into Port Nicholson. A Te Ati Awa taua attacked Ngati Kahungunu in retaliation for the killing of a Ngati Mutunga chief. In gratitude, Patukawenga of Ngati Mutunga made tapu for Ngamotu the area east of Waiwhetu.¹⁴ At this stage their occupation was temporary as most of the Ngamotu were led by Te Wharepouri and Te Puni to Wairarapa. In 1834 fighting broke out on the Kapiti coast between Te Ati Awa and Ngati Raukawa, who migrated from Maungatautari in Waikato in the late 1820s. Upon their arrival on the Kapiti coast, Te Rauparaha allowed Ngati Raukawa to settle at Otaki on lands bordering those of Te Ati Awa at Waikanae. Competition over resources led to war. Ngati Raukawa called on Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Maru, Ngati Maniapoto, Waikato and Te Rauparaha for support. Te Ati Awa were aided by Ngati Mutunga, some Ngati Toa, and a Taranaki and Ngati Ruanui group who arrived in the area at this time. They moved on to Port Nicholson where they were allowed to settle.

The war ended inconclusively, and Te Ati Awa were left feeling insecure. Ngati Tama and Ngati Mutunga felt unsafe as they opposed Te Rauparaha by aiding Te Ati Awa, and Pomare had dismissed his Ngati Toa wife. Therefore most Ngati Mutunga and Ngati Tama moved to the Chatham Islands in 1835. Before their departure, the Ngati Mutunga chiefs confirmed the gift of land to Ngati Ruanui and Taranaki, and made over the rest of their lands by panui (announcement) to either Te Matangi of Ngati Te Whiti, and his son Te Manihera Te Toru who had lived with them since 1832 or

¹⁴ The various Te Ati Awa hapu who left Ngamotu in 1832 on Te Heke Tama Te Uaua became collectively known as Ngamotu from their last place of residence.



Source: Ballara, 'Te Whanganui-a-Tara', p. 14.

to Te Wharepouri, who returned at this time with his people from Wairarapa.¹⁵

After the departure of Ngati Mutunga and Ngati Tama, the settlement pattern of Te Whanganui A Tara remained unchanged until the arrival of Barrett and the Company. Rawinia Barrett's Ngati Te Whiti and Ngati Tawhirikura kin lived at four of the eight pa in the area. Te Puni and Te Wharepouri resided at Petone and Ngauranga respectively; Wi Tako Ngatata and his father Ngatata lived at Kumototo; and Wairarapa and Te Ropiha Moturoa, Te Wharepouri's father and uncle respectively, resided at Pipitea. The other pa were occupied by other Te Ati Awa hapu and other iwi from the Taranaki region. This included a Ngati Tama settlement at Kaiwharawhara; a mixed Ngati Ruanui and Taranaki group at Te Aro; and Te Ati Awa at Waiwhetu and Tiakiwai.

There are several different accounts of the transaction that took place at Port Nicholson. All are compromised to some extent by the purpose for which they were recorded. The accounts kept by the European participants were written with a view to publication. William Wakefield's journal was sent home periodically as despatches and Edward Jerningham Wakefield later wrote a book. There is a large element of self-justification in these works. Barrett's testimony to the Spain Commission is compromised by the fact that he considered himself to be an agent of the Company.¹⁶ Yet although he supported the Wakefields, at times Barrett's evidence served to undermine some of their claims about what took place.

¹⁵ Ballara says it was the former, while Ehrhardt says that it was Te Wharepouri. See Ballara, 'Te Whanganui-a-Tara', p. 28; Ehrhardt, pp. 8, 27.

¹⁶ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

Maori testimony to the Spain Commission fell into two groups. The first group of Maori witnesses, and in particular Wairarapa, Wi Tako Ngatata and Kaeaea, testified that they did not know that they were selling the land, and that they were misled by Barrett and the Company. The second group consisted of chiefs from Petone, including Te Puni, his son Te Whare, and Mahau. They supported the sale and their evidence often tallied with the European accounts, although there were some important differences. However, their testimony may have been influenced by their struggle for supremacy in Port Nicholson with other groups. The transaction added to the mana of Te Wharepouri and Te Puni, and when they discovered what the transaction entailed, they could not repudiate it without compromising their mana, their supremacy and their right to sell in the first place. Furthermore, the people of Petone enjoyed the benefits of European settlement without any of the costs that other Maori in Port Nicholson had to pay. Their land and cultivations at Petone were reserved for their use, while the other settlements' land was occupied by settlers.

When Barrett piloted the Tory into Port Nicholson harbour, he guided the ship to the area controlled by his relatives Te Puni and Te Wharepouri. Barrett hoped to get a good reception from them to the Company's plan to buy Port Nicholson. Before the Tory anchored off Te Puni's pa at Petone, the ship was boarded by a group of Maori including the two chiefs. According to William Wakefield, they 'hailed Mr Barrett as an old friend and companion in danger,' and Te Puni 'betrayed the most lively satisfaction at being informed that we wished to buy the place, and bring white men to it.'¹⁷ According to Barrett, it was only when Te Wharepouri and Te Puni saw

¹⁷ W. Wakefield, Journal, 20 September 1839, p. 594.

Rawinia and the children that they said they would sell him the land as he had brought their mokopuna to see them.¹⁸ Yet according to Mahau, when Barrett asked if they wanted Europeans to live with them, they did not agree at first.¹⁹ Barrett threatened to take the ship to Kaipara if they continued to refuse. Then Mahau told Barrett he would allow the Europeans to live with him at Petone. Others stood their ground. When Barrett asked Wi Tako Ngatata if he would like Europeans to live with him, he replied 'not at my place.'²⁰

The following day the Barrett family landed at Petone. Rawinia was welcomed by relatives, many of whom had not seen her for five years.²¹ The presence of a woman of mana among her own people must have been influential but the European accounts ignored her. It is likely however that Rawinia used her influence to support her husband and convince her relatives to support the transaction. Following the welcome, the Wakefields claimed to have visited all the settlements in Port Nicholson with Barrett accompanying them as interpreter.²² According to Barrett, he told Maori they were there to buy the land, and the matter was left to them to discuss.²³ However many Maori witnesses denied these meetings were held. Wairarapa said that Wakefield did not go to Pipitea or Te Aro and Wi Tako Ngatata denied

¹⁸ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

¹⁹ Evidence, Mahau, 8 September 1842, OLC 906.

²⁰ Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, OLC 906.

²¹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 74.

²² Ibid, I, p. 78; W. Wakefield, Journal, 23 September 1839, p. 595.

²³ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

attending any meeting.²⁴ They denied that they knew the Company wanted to buy the land, although Edward Jerningham Wakefield claimed Wi Tako Ngatata had taken 'an active and eager part in promoting the agreement and bringing it to a conclusion.'²⁵

At least two meetings were held on 23 September, at Te Wharepouri's pa at Ngauranga and at Te Puni's pa at Petone. The Wakefields attended both with Barrett. Te Wharepouri and Te Puni spoke in favour of the sale. One of their main concerns was their precarious position in Port Nicholson. They were afraid of the various enemies who were pressing in on them -Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Tuwharetoa, and Waikato.²⁶ However Puakawa, a Waiwhetu chief, opposed the sale due to fears 'of the treatment to be expected by the natives from white settlers, and the inexpediency of parting with the homes which they had obtained, after so much suffering'²⁷ Barrett returned to Petone the following day, where he found Maori still holding discussions. They told Barrett 'to make haste' so that the Europeans would come and stop Maori warring amongst themselves. They expected to be attacked at any time by Ngati Raukawa and wanted to have the muskets that had been offered for the land on shore.²⁸ Barrett refused their request and said that they would see the weapons when they were ready to sell. According to Edward

²⁴ Evidence, Wairarapa, 16 July 1842, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, OLC 906.

²⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 89.

²⁶ Evidence, Te Puni, 8 July 1842, Mahau, 8 September 1842, OLC 906.

²⁷ W. Wakefield, Journal, 23 September 1839, p. 595.

²⁸ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

Jerningham Wakefield, the meeting ended at Petone with the transaction being approved by a large majority.²⁹

On 25 September the muskets, blankets, and other trade goods that Colonel Wakefield intended to trade for the land were brought up on to the deck of the Tory to show Maori. These goods were an important consideration in the transaction. Te Puni told the Spain Commission that the people sold the land because of the goods, but he was concerned more with getting Europeans 'to live among them.'³⁰ However Te Puni admitted later that he sold land which did not belong to him as he could not refuse when he saw so many blankets and guns.³¹ Indeed Te Puni and Te Wharepouri tried to obtain as much as they could from the Company and reacted angrily when they thought they had been cheated. To clinch the deal Te Wharepouri insisted on six cases of muskets rather than the five which had been offered.

Barrett was faced with a formidable task in acting as interpreter between Maori and the Company. There are a number of difficulties inherent in translating from one language to another. Words in one language often have no equivalent in another. In this situation the interpreter has to resort to using existing words in that language in another context. This requires the utmost care and skill in explaining the implications to ensure that both parties reach the same understanding. In her study of the Treaty of Waitangi, Claudia Orange found that there were considerable differences between

²⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 82.

³⁰ Evidence, Te Puni, 19 May 1842, OLC 906.

³¹ Taylor, p. 234; W. Shortland to W. Hobson, 9 October 1840, GBPP, NZ 3: 1841, p. 120.

the Maori and English versions of that treaty. 'The [Maori] text failed to convey the meaning of the English version, and the treaty negotiations did not clarify the difference. Each party to the treaty was left with expectations about the power they would exercise.'³²

Similar problems were encountered in Barrett's attempt to purchase Maori land. The European accounts of the Port Nicholson transaction speak confidently of Maori selling the land. However the work done by Phillipa Wyatt and Margaret Mutu on pre-treaty land transactions in Muriwhenua has raised a number of issues. The debate is centred on whether Maori agreed in these transactions to a sale in the European sense of the word, meaning the permanent alienation of land for its exclusive use by individuals or groups outside the hapu. In the Muriwhenua case before the Waitangi Tribunal, the Crown argued that Maori willingly and knowingly alienated land in this fashion. However Mutu has argued that there was little likelihood that Maori in 1840 understood the European concept of a sale, having neither the necessary knowledge of the English language nor any experience of the custom. Furthermore, no matter how good an interpreter was, there were no words in Maori capable of conveying the nature of a sale in European terms. Interpreters tried to adapt existing Maori words such as *tuku*, *hoko*, and *hoatu* to get across their intentions, but these words were inappropriate as they had a different meaning to Maori. Mutu and Wyatt have argued that land passed to the Europeans under a custom known as *tuku whenua*.³³

³² C. Orange, The Treaty of Waitangi, Wellington, 1987, p. 1.

³³ Mutu, pp. 58, 59, 82; P. Wyatt, 'The Old Land Claims and the Concept of "Sale": A Case Study', M.A. thesis, Auckland University, 1991, p. 69 ff.

Tuku whenua refers to the transfer of the use rights to the land only, with the mana whenua (power and authority over the land) remaining with the tribe. Tuku whenua was intended to benefit the tribe and to bind the Pakeha and his descendants into the tribal structure. In return for being granted the use rights to the land, the recipients were expected to give gifts as *utu* (compensation) on a regular basis in recognition of the donor's mana whenua. The rights of settlers on tuku whenua land depended on its continued occupation, and the Maori owners were entitled to use the land for their own requirements as well. When the Pakeha and his descendants no longer needed the land, it was expected that it would return to the tribe.³⁴

Te Ati Awa in Port Nicholson were no more likely than the people of Muriwhenua to have realised that the transaction they entered into with the Europeans would result in the permanent alienation of their land. As the Wakefields realised, Te Ati Awa had never 'sold' land before.³⁵ During the negotiations Barrett placed great emphasis on the fact that the transaction meant that white men would come to live in Port Nicholson and this was literally what Te Ati Awa believed would happen.³⁶ The idea of Europeans living with Maori was not inconsistent with tuku whenua. Maori associated white men with the trade goods that invariably accompanied them. Ernst Dieffenbach, the Company's naturalist, came close to understanding tuku whenua. 'In transferring land to Europeans the natives had no further idea of the

³⁴ Mutu, p. 60.

³⁵ W. Wakefield, *Journal*, 24 September 1839, p. 596; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 85.

³⁶ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 73, 78, 82, 89; W. Wakefield, *Journal*, 20 and 24 September 1839, pp. 594, 596; Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, Mahau, 8 September 1842, Te Puni, 19 May 1842, OLC 906; C. Heaphy, Narrative of a Residence in Various Parts of New Zealand, Christchurch, 1972, p. 4.

nature of the transaction than that they gave the purchaser permission to make use of a certain district. They wanted Europeans amongst them; and it was beyond their comprehension that one man should buy for another³⁷

Te Puni and Te Wharepouri were influenced in their view of the transaction by what they knew about the Pakeha. This knowledge had been acquired from seeing the way that Dicky Barrett and his men behaved at Ngamotu and Te Awaiti. In both cases the Europeans were few in number, adapted to Maori customs, developed close ties with Maori and lived on land which had been allocated to them. When the transaction was discussed at Petone, the whalers at Te Awaiti were held up as an example of what could be expected from the new Pakeha.³⁸ In addition some of the chiefs had been to Sydney with Barrett and Love. Te Wharepouri assured his people that 'I have been in Port Jackson [Sydney], and know the English'³⁹ When Te Wharepouri saw the first ships arriving with immigrants in 1840, he realised his mistake. According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, Te Wharepouri then said

I know that we sold you the land, and that no more White people have come to take it than you told me. But I thought you were telling lies, and that you had not so many followers. I thought you would have nine or ten, or perhaps as many as there are at Te Awaiti. I thought that I could get one placed at each pa, as a White man to barter with the people and keep us well supplied with arms and clothing; and that I should be able to keep these White men under my hand and regulate their trade myself.⁴⁰

³⁷ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, II, p. 144.

³⁸ Dieffenbach, New Zealand and its Native Population, p. 22.

³⁹ W. Wakefield, Journal, 29 September 1839, p. 598.

⁴⁰ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 202-3.

Although the quote refers to Te Wharepouri selling the land, this was the interpretation that Barrett placed on a Maori word such as *tuku*. There is no evidence that Te Wharepouri envisaged his actions would result in the loss of mana whenua. He wanted the white man to live with his people in a way that was beneficial to Maori. A custom such as *tuku whenua* was a means to that end.

The negotiations were part of Te Puni and Te Wharepouri's ongoing struggle for supremacy in Te Whanganui A Tara. Their claim to supremacy was based on the *panui* which gifted the land to Te Wharepouri in 1835, yet Te Puni and Te Wharepouri were in a far from secure position. Te Rauparaha claimed Te Whanganui A Tara as part of his conquests, and Ngati Ira, who had been ejected by Ngati Mutunga, had not given up their claims to the area. Te Puni and Te Wharepouri's supremacy was also challenged by Taranaki, Ngati Ruanui, other Te Ati Awa hapu and members of their own hapu. On one occasion, Te Puni was the subject of a *kanga* (gross insult) by the people of Te Aro.

Though they all recognised Ngati Tama's claim to Kaiwharawhara, the ownership of Pipitea, Kumototo and Te Aro was disputed. Wi Tako Ngatata and Wairarapa claimed to have lived at Kumototo and Pipitea respectively before the arrival of Te Wharepouri and Te Puni.⁴¹ Te Ropiha Moturoa, the son-in-law of Ngati Mutunga chief Patukawenga, claimed he was given Pipitea and Te Aro six months before Te

⁴¹ Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, Wairarapa, 11 July 1842, OLC 906.

Wharepouri arrived.⁴² These claims were disputed. Mahau claimed he had cultivations at Pipitea, Kumototo and Te Aro when Ngati Mutunga were there, but he 'allowed' later arrivals to cultivate Pipitea.⁴³ According to Te Puni, fighting took place over Pipitea. A peace was made which favoured the status quo, but Te Puni continued to claim to be the chief of Pipitea as his mother was their ariki.⁴⁴

The Company's arrival was useful politically for Te Wharepouri and Te Puni. Te Wharepouri told his people that he was known in Europe, that the ship had been sent out to him, and that he would go to England with Colonel Wakefield.⁴⁵ The negotiations were conducted mainly at Petone and Ngauranga, and the two chiefs dominated the Maori side of the negotiations and controlled the flow of information. They told Barrett and the Company that the Taranaki and Ngati Ruanui inhabitants of Te Aro were slaves.⁴⁶ Therefore the Wakefields did not consider it necessary to obtain their agreement to the transaction. Furthermore, Te Puni and Te Wharepouri claimed that those who opposed the deal 'had but little right to speak about the land'⁴⁷ The favourable conclusion to the negotiations confirmed the disputed supremacy of Te Puni and Te Wharepouri in Te Whanganui A Tara.

⁴² R. Tonk, "A Difficult and Complicated Question" : The New Zealand Company's Wellington, Port Nicholson Claim', in D. Hamer and R. Nicholls (eds.), The Making of Wellington, 1800-1914, Wellington, 1990, p. 45.

⁴³ Evidence, Mahau, 8 September 1842, OLC 906.

⁴⁴ Evidence, Te Puni, 8 July 1842, OLC 906.

⁴⁵ W. Wakefield, Journal, 23 September 1839, p. 596; E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 79, 87; Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁴⁶ Evidence, Mahau, 8 September 1842, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁴⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 82.

Barrett was not aware of this ongoing struggle. He told the Spain Commission that he pointed out the principal chiefs to Wakefield, but did not know whether they had a right to sell.⁴⁸ However, he had informed the Wakefields at Te Awaiti about the unsettled state of land ownership in the area, and the dispute between Ngati Toa and Te Ati Awa over supremacy.⁴⁹ He carried out some investigative work in Port Nicholson and found out that the people of Pipitea, Kumototo and Te Aro had rights to land.⁵⁰ However when he told Wakefield that the people of these pa were not willing to sell, Wakefield ignored their opposition and told Barrett that they would be compensated when the settlers took possession of the land.

The signing of the deed recording the transaction took place on 27 September, only a week after the expedition's arrival. It was framed in English legal language, and contained a number of key provisions which Barrett was relied on to convey to Maori. It declared that the signatories were 'the sole and only proprietors, or owners of the lands'; it listed the boundaries; it acknowledged that they had 'sold and parted with all our right, title and interest in all said lands'; and it bound the chiefs 'to assist, defend and protect the ... New Zealand Land Company ... in maintaining the quiet and undisputed possession of the aforesaid land' In return, Maori received the trade goods and a promise that 'a portion of the landed ceded by them, equal to one-tenth part of the whole, will be reserved ... and held in trust ... for

⁴⁸ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁴⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

the future benefit of the said chiefs, their families and heirs for ever.⁵¹ Barrett was asked to translate the deed into Maori for the Spain Commission. This was then translated back into English by George Clarke junior

Listen, natives, all the People of Port Nicholson this is a Paper respecting the purchasing of land of Yours, this Paper has the names of the Places of Port Nicholson, understand this is a good Book, listen the whole of you Natives, to write Your names in this Book, and the names of the places are Tararua continuing on to the other side of Port Nicholson to the name of Parangarehu; it is a Book of the names of the Channels and the woods, the whole of them to write in this Book People and Children the land to Wairaweki [Colonel Wakefield] when the people arrive from England they will show you your part the whole of you.⁵²

The 1500 word deed written in English was reduced by Barrett to 116 words in Maori and failed to cover adequately the main provisions of the deed. Barrett admitted that he had explained the deed as well as he was able to, but there were certain things he could not explain.⁵³ Edward Jerningham Wakefield claimed the deed was read out sentence by sentence in English, and Barrett interpreted it into Maori.⁵⁴ Barrett's difficulty must have been apparent to the Company. Edward Jerningham Wakefield claimed later that the Maori language was 'essentially a poor one ... [which] possesses in particular but few words which express abstract ideas.'⁵⁵ This enabled him to explain away Barrett's difficulty. However the problem was not with the Maori language but with Barrett. George Clarke junior, a fluent Maori speaker, characterised

⁵¹ First Deed of Purchase from the Natives, dated 27 September 1839, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, pp. 641-2.

⁵² Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 90; W. Wakefield, *Journal*, 27 September 1839, p. 597; Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁵⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 174.

the language that Barrett spoke as 'whaler Maori, a jargon that bears much the same relation to the real language of the Maoris as the pigeon English of the Chinese does to our mother tongue.'⁵⁶

There is some doubt as to whether the deed was actually read out. All the Maori witnesses, including those who supported the transaction, denied hearing the deed read out.⁵⁷ According to Te Puni, Barrett told the Maori signatories to come and hold the pen, and 'the Natives did not know what was in the deed'.⁵⁸ Regardless of whether the deed was read out or not, Barrett's translation for the Spain Commission indicated that he was incapable of acting effectively as an interpreter.

Of those chiefs who signed the deed, nearly half were from Te Puni's pa at Petone. No one from Te Aro or Tiakiwai signed the deed, and the chiefs from Kumototo, Kaiwharawhara and Pipitea took little part in the transaction. The chiefs from these pa who signed the deed claimed later that Barrett misled them. Wi Tako Ngatata and Wairarapa said that Barrett told them if they signed the deed, it would be sent to England where the Queen would read it.⁵⁹ Barrett insisted that they knew that they were selling the land, although he admitted stating that if they signed the deed the Queen might send them presents, and the English would know they were chiefs.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ G. Clarke junior, Notes on Early Life in New Zealand, Hobart, 1903, pp. 48-9.

⁵⁷ Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, Mahau, 8 September 1842, Henry Ware, 5 July 1842, Te Puni, 7 July 1842, Wairarapa, 16 July 1842, OLC 906.

⁵⁸ Evidence, Te Puni, 7 July 1842, OLC 906.

⁵⁹ Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, Wairarapa, 11 July 1842, OLC 906.

⁶⁰ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

Given Barrett's understanding of the Maori language, what he tried to say may have been misunderstood. Other actions that Barrett is said to have taken, if true, must have been intended to mislead. Wi Tako Ngatata, Wairarapa and Kaeaea stated that Barrett told them the Europeans did not like the land as it was all mountainous, and the payment was for the sea.⁶¹

There were other significant differences between the deed and Barrett's discussions with local Maori. According to Te Puni, Barrett told them that 'your pahs and cultivations will not be taken from you'⁶² However, this understanding was not included in the deed. There was confusion also over the land that was to be reserved for Maori. The deed specified that one-tenth of the land was to be set aside as native reserves, but Barrett told Maori that they would get a certain undefined portion.⁶³ According to Te Puni, Barrett's words were that 'one side is for you and the other to the Europeans.'⁶⁴ Maori were not told that the native reserves were to be selected in London by lottery and held in trust on their behalf.

The final act of the transaction was the distribution of the goods received from the Company. This was carried out by Te Wharepouri, who took the opportunity to strike a further blow against those who had challenged his supremacy. The goods were divided into six portions. The people of Pipitea and Kumototo had to share one

⁶¹ Evidence, Wairarapa, 11 July 1842, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, Kaeaea, 27 June 1842, OLC 906.

⁶² Evidence, Te Puni, 8 July 1842, OLC 906.

⁶³ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁶⁴ Evidence, Te Puni, 8 July 1842, OLC 906.

portion, and a smaller portion was sent to Te Aro.⁶⁵

The Tory left Port Nicholson on 4 October for Ngamotu. On the way the ship anchored in Cloudy Bay. The Barrett family left for Te Awaiti, agreeing to return shortly to the ship so that it could proceed to its next destination. However they did not return and on 13 October the Tory sailed to Te Awaiti to find them. An illness had left Rawinia too ill to travel, and Barrett would not leave her. As he felt that Barrett's presence would be essential at Ngamotu, Wakefield proceeded to Kapiti, and when he returned to Te Awaiti on 31 October Rawinia had recovered.

Before proceeding to Ngamotu Wakefield conducted negotiations for land in Queen Charlotte Sound. On 2 November a gathering took place in East Bay where Maori discussed the transaction. The Tory waited offshore, with Dicky Barrett, Rawinia and the children on board. By the following day local Maori had agreed to the transaction. Over half the signatories to the deed were from Ngamotu or Puketapu hapu, with whom Rawinia Barrett had kin links. The deed covered a large stretch of territory from Mokau in north Taranaki, down the west coast of the North Island to the top of the South Island.⁶⁶ The signatories had no right to anything but a small portion of the land in the deed and had no hesitation in signing away non-existent rights in return for a payment. The European framers of the deed even unwittingly included in the place names recorded in the deed the name of an iwi, Ngati Ruanui, from south Taranaki.

⁶⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 89.

⁶⁶ Case 374 B, Queen Charlotte's Sound, dated 8th November 1839. Enclosure, No. 2. Final Report, GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, p. 110.

Wakefield gave Barrett a letter at this time in which he claimed to have purchased this vast tract of territory.⁶⁷ Barrett, aware of the absurdity of such a claim, treated it as 'a perfect farce.'⁶⁸ Heberley, a whaling colleague of Dicky Barrett, shared his feelings. 'There was no writing to show the boundarys (sic) or any quantity of land but a certain hill or point so the natives did not know what land they sold, [and] if any person came and offered any trade they would sell it again.'⁶⁹ Yet although he was aware of the shortcomings in the transactions, Barrett was prepared to conduct negotiations for the Company at Ngamotu. According to Heberley, 'Barrett and I agreed to stay [with the Tory] for a time but not for wages'⁷⁰ He did not elaborate, but there are indications that Barrett sought land instead. He later claimed land at Ngamotu as compensation for his services. He was aided in this quest for land by his Ngamotu and Puketapu kin. According to William Wakefield, they were

very desirous that I should become the purchaser of that district [north Taranaki] in order that they may return to their native place without fear of the Waikata (sic) tribes. They will yield all their claims on the district to the Company, but stipulate for the same reservation of land for Mr Barrett and the children of the late Mr Love, as for the native chiefs; these two Englishmen having lived for so many years amongst the Taranake (sic) people during the wars, and having had children born of native wives on the spot, have long been considered as belonging to the tribe.⁷¹

Wakefield believed Barrett's role would be crucial at Ngamotu. He was 'perhaps the

⁶⁷ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 66.

⁶⁹ Heberley, p. 77.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 80.

⁷¹ W. Wakefield, Journal, 2 November 1839, p. 629.

only man who could negotiate the bargain ... [through] his intimate knowledge of the territory I am anxious to acquire, from his personal influence with the chiefs, and from the acknowledged claims he has by his marriage and the birth of his children on the land.⁷² Wakefield felt that the presence of Rawinia and the children would also 'be very conducive amongst the resident natives to an acquisition of territory'.⁷³

The Tory left Queen Charlotte Sound on 11 November and arrived at Ngamotu on 27 November. William Wakefield's first impressions of Taranaki were not particularly favourable. The seas were rough and the roadstead was 'completely open to the north-west, and never accessible but after a long calm or south-east wind, both of which are rare events'.⁷⁴ Despite the good quality of the land, Wakefield predicted that there was little likelihood of settlement in the area in the near future, but he remained anxious to secure the territory.⁷⁵ Wakefield hoped to spend no more than a week in the area, but it soon became apparent that it would be impossible to gather together all the chiefs in so short a time. He proceeded to Kaipara and left Barrett behind to prepare local Maori for the sale. On 28 November the Barrett family landed at Ngamotu with Tuarau (a Te Ati Awa emissary from Port Nicholson), Heberley, and Dieffenbach. According to Barrett, he told the local people that 'I have come to purchase their land and to bring white people among them'.⁷⁶ Tuarau told his Te

⁷² Ibid, 28 November 1839, p. 634.

⁷³ Ibid, 2 November 1839, p. 629.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 27 November 1839, p. 634.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 28 November 1839, p. 634.

⁷⁶ Evidence, R. Barrett, 31 May 1844, OLC 910.

Ati Awa kin how 'he had brought white men to pay them for their land, and to protect them from their enemies ... and then delivered the advice of Te Puni and [Te] Wharepouri, that they should sell Taranaki to their good pakeha'⁷⁷

Most of the region was deserted when Barrett arrived. There were only around 50 or 60 Te Ati Awa left in the area, all of whom lived at Ngamotu.⁷⁸ Rawinia's father was part of this group. The others were mainly of Ngamotu and Puketapu hapu. Kura Mai Te Ra, Rawinia's mother, had been taken captive to Kawhia in 1833 after Waikato laid siege to this small group on Mikotahi. The spread of Christianity among Waikato Maori in the late 1830s had an impact on her plight. In January 1840 Dieffenbach met Kura while he was on his way to Mokau. She was a member of a party of slaves being escorted by Waikato Maori to visit their kin in north Taranaki. Kura expressed to Dieffenbach her 'undisguised joy and sorrow ... when I told her of the fortunes or trials of her daughter and grandchildren'⁷⁹ In May 1840 Waikato released from slavery all of the Te Ati Awa they had taken captive at Pukerangiora and Mikotahi.

If Barrett hoped for an easy time in his dealings with local Maori he was to be disappointed. He claimed they were willing to negotiate for the sale of the land as it would ensure they would be protected from Waikato.⁸⁰ However they would not

⁷⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 103.

⁷⁸ W. Wakefield, Journal, 22 November 1839, p. 633; Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 195.

⁷⁹ Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, p. 167.

⁸⁰ Evidence, R. Barrett, 31 May 1844, OLC 910.

do so until they saw the payment. Barrett's father-in-law, Eruera Te Puke ki Mahurangi, was not pleased by Barrett's return once he learned the purpose of the visit. Eruera told Barrett to leave, but later changed his mind, hoping for a large payment.⁸¹ The goods were a key factor in the negotiations, and there was little more that Barrett could do until the return of the Tory.

Initially, the Barretts lived on the mainland. However the Tory did not make its expected return and in January 1840 two Te Ati Awa slaves from Kawhia warned the locals that Waikato were preparing to descend on Ngamotu to prevent Te Ati Awa from selling the land which they considered their property.⁸² The Barrett family and their guests took up residence on Moturoa Island. The return of the Tory was delayed when it ran aground on a sand bank in Kaipara Harbour. While the ship underwent repairs, William Wakefield boarded another vessel that took him past Ngamotu to Port Hardy on D'Urville Island, where he was expected to meet the first emigrant ships on 10 January. Wakefield wanted to call on Barrett to reassure him, but he feared that the chiefs would disperse if he arrived without the promised trade goods.⁸³ These fears were well founded. According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield 'the natives ... were dead sick of waiting so long for their payment; and without Barret[t] the land would have been sold over and over again.'⁸⁴

⁸¹ Evidence, Edward Pukiki, 3 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁸² Dieffenbach, Travels in New Zealand, I, pp. 163-4.

⁸³ W. Wakefield, Journal, 9 January 1840, qMS 2102, Typescript, ATL, p. 135.

⁸⁴ E.J. Wakefield to E.G. Wakefield, 12 March 1840, cited in NZL, 29 August 1840, p. 202.

William White, an ex-missionary, who arrived with a group of Waikato from Kawhia at this time, attempted to dissuade local Maori from dealing with the Company. He claimed to have bought the land from Te Ati Awa slaves at the Bay of Islands and Hokianga. To strengthen his claim, White endeavoured to buy the land from resident Te Ati Awa at Ngamotu. He was unsuccessful according to Edward Jerningham Wakefield as 'Mr Barret[t]'s influence ... was too great for him, and they [Te Ati Awa] one and all steadfastly declared that they would only sell to Mr Barret[t].'⁸⁵

Edward Meurant of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was more successful. He obtained 100 acres at Moturoa for a mission station from Te Ati Awa. The deed recording the transaction, signed on 13 January 1840, was the first of its kind in the Taranaki region. It was similar to those used on other occasions by the Wesleyans (largely in the North). The deed was written in Maori and Meurant endeavoured to transfer permanently the land to the Wesleyans. To do this he used words such as *tuku* and *hoko*, although this was not the meaning that Maori attached to these words. Small tokens (two blanket and some fishhooks) were given to Te Ati Awa as *utu*, and the deed specified that a further payment was to be made.⁸⁶ This fitted in with the custom of *tuku whenua*, where gifts were given on a regular basis as recognition of the mana whenua of the tribe, although that was not Meurant's intent.

Company representatives arrived finally at Ngamotu on the Guide in February 1840.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 202.

⁸⁶ See p. 119. A copy of the deed was reproduced in H.D. Mullon, These Hundred Acres. The Story of Whiteley Township, City of New Plymouth, New Plymouth, 1969, between pp. 16, 18.

THE DEED OR DOCUMENT
OF SALE OF MOTUROA

Malwaa Tarawehi Aku Schwan,
Hannover 13. 10. 1914

MOTUROA, TARANAKI, NEW ZEALAND.
JANUARY 13, 1840

Richard Bharat
Oswald Carr 1/15 March
Parsons & His mark

"Edmund Murray" 11

"Edward Puke" X His mark.
"Poarama" X His mark

I certify that the above is a correct translation unto English of the document in Maori on the front page hereof. Written the 14th Day of July, 1907.

Joseph J. Freeth,
Licensed Native Interpreter.

*Copy of Document in the Turanuki Museum—
with Original Deed in Mori*

According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, the meeting that took place on their arrival was a relatively straightforward affair. 'After some hesitation on account of a desire for more fire-arms, [local Maori] agreed to sign the deed on the morrow.'⁸⁷ In reality, it was a far from tranquil meeting. Barrett's father-in-law was displeased with the goods offered and resumed his opposition. He knew that double barrelled guns had been included in the Queen Charlotte Sound transaction, and none were offered at Ngamotu. The goods which were offered he considered 'a mere nothing ... [as] when I compared them with my land they appeared very little and my land was very great.'⁸⁸ Others were just as persistent about the absence of the double barrelled guns. Barrett told them that there were none on board the ship but they would get a case when the settlers arrived. However, 'they would not believe me saying that there were guns on board but I did not want to give them to them,' and they refused to part with the land without the guns.⁸⁹ Barrett threatened to leave with the ship if they did not accept the payment. The deadlock was only broken however when Barrett threatened to take his wife and children with him. Then Te Ati Awa gave way.

According to the European participants in the transaction, before the deed prepared by the Company was signed, it was read out and translated into Maori.⁹⁰ However most of the Maori witnesses at the Spain Commission hearings denied hearing the

⁸⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 179.

⁸⁸ Evidence, Edward Pukiki, 3 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁸⁹ Evidence, R. Barrett, 31 May 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁰ Ibid; E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 179.

reading of the deed.⁹¹ Furthermore, the European and Maori participants in the transaction had different perceptions of their agreement. Some admitted that they knew that the deed 'sold' the land,⁹² but others denied it emphatically.⁹³ The problem with these admissions that the land had been 'sold' is that this was the way European interpreters translated Maori testimony for the Spain Commission. If the word used was *tuku*, then what some of the witnesses were acknowledging was that they had allocated some of the land rather than sold it. Some of the witnesses failed to see any connection between signing the deed and the land. According to Taitua, Barrett told him if he signed the deed, it would go to England and his name would become known. It was the trade goods that made an impression on Taitua. 'When I saw the goods I did not think of anything else but put them on my shoulders and walked away.'⁹⁴ E Tua thought the deed was to be sent to England so that they might know his name if he was killed by Waikato. He admitted knowing that the payment was for the land, but he did not agree to 'sell'. Barrett 'brought the goods and took the land.'⁹⁵

E Mane was the only Maori witness to state that he heard Barrett explain the deed and understood that it sold the land.⁹⁶ Barrett extolled the virtues of E Mane to the

⁹¹ Evidence, Awatea, 3 June 1844, Edward Pukiki, 3 June 1844, John Ngamotu, 3 June 1844, Taitua, 4 June 1844, E Haki, 4 June 1844, E Tua, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹² Evidence, Awatea, 3 June 1844, John Ngamotu, 3 June 1844, E Haki, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹³ Evidence, Taitua, 4 June 1844, E Tua, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁴ Evidence, Taitua, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁵ Evidence, E Tua, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁶ Evidence, E Mane, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

Spain Commission, and claimed E Mane told him that the others wished to conceal the fact that they had heard the deed.⁹⁷ However E Mane's testimony was not all favourable to the Company. He claimed that 'a great many did not consent and some did consent' to the transaction.⁹⁸ Furthermore, E Mane stated that he did not understand the boundaries that were described by Barrett, and indicated that Te Ati Awa did not agree to the disposal of land north of the Waiongama river.

The different perceptions that Maori and Pakeha had of the transaction became apparent in 1841. When surveyors arrived at Ngamotu, they found that Te Ati Awa admitted having made a deal only over some scattered pieces of land between Ngamotu and the Waiongama River.⁹⁹ Even in this limited area there is no evidence that Te Ati Awa agreed to a permanent alienation of all their land. The allocation of scattered pieces of land was consistent with *tuku whenua*, and this appears to be what Te Ati Awa intended when they agreed to the transaction.

Furthermore, all the signatories to the deed were from Puketapu or Ngamotu hapu, and the land between Ngamotu and the Waiongama river was the full extent of their territory. Some of the witnesses denied that they were the sole proprietors of the land.¹⁰⁰ Others refused to acknowledge the claims of Te Ati Awa who returned to

⁹⁷ Evidence, R. Barrett, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁸ Evidence, E Mane, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

⁹⁹ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 71, 75-6.

¹⁰⁰ Evidence, E Haki, 4 June 1844, John Ngamotu, 3 June 1844, OLC 910.

the area in the early 1840s.¹⁰¹ This was the result of a quarrel between Te Ati Awa from Port Nicholson and north Taranaki. Resident Te Ati Awa were upset that their kin had 'sold' land in Port Nicholson without considering their relatives who had been left behind to keep possession of their ancestral land.¹⁰²

According to Maori custom, in the absence of a superseding claim based on conquest, those individuals who left their land did not lose all rights to the land until three generations had passed, and this custom also applied to hapu who migrated from their ancestral lands.¹⁰³ Te Ati Awa's right to the land had not been extinguished as Tainui had not settled on the land. However Barrett and the Company treated local Te Ati Awa as the only people with a valid claim to the land occupied previously by the whole iwi, and believed that those who had been driven away by Waikato had forfeited all their rights.¹⁰⁴ Te Ati Awa in Queen Charlotte Sound and Ngati Toa at Kapiti (who had no rights to the land anyway) had signed away their claims to land in north Taranaki. Others with rights to the land were not consulted, in particular those Te Ati Awa who had been enslaved by Waikato or were living at Waikanae and Port Nicholson. Edward Jerningham Wakefield was reproached by Te Ati Awa when he later visited Waikanae. They claimed north Taranaki belonged to them, but Wakefield was dismissive of their claims, telling them that 'they ought not to have run from it; and that we had paid the people who had maintained possession

¹⁰¹ Evidence, Taitua, 4 June 1844, E Haki, 4 June 1844, OLC 910.

¹⁰² D. McLean to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, 17 December 1844, GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, p. 144.

¹⁰³ P. McHugh, The Maori Magna Carta. New Zealand Law and the Treaty of Waitangi, Oxford, 1991, p. 74; N. Smith, Maori Land Law, Wellington, 1960, pp. 94-5.

¹⁰⁴ Evidence, R. Barrett, 31 May 1844, OLC 910.

through great troubles and danger.¹⁰⁵

Barrett's inept handling of the transactions and the different perceptions of the nature of the negotiations led to clashes in the 1840s between Maori and Pakeha in Port Nicholson and north Taranaki. Yet Barrett was not solely to blame. The Company decided before it arrived in New Zealand that Maori wanted European settlers at any cost. Reality was not allowed to interfere with this perception and Wakefield ignored opposition to the sales even when warned by Barrett. Barrett did not participate in negotiations at Kapiti and Wanganui, yet similar problems were encountered to those he took part in. The Company hired as its interpreter John Brook, another whaler, and at Wanganui Spain found that only two chiefs were behind the sale; there were as many Maori who refused to consent to the sale as agreed; the majority of those who consented to the sale had no claim to the land; they denied hearing Brook interpret the deed; and George Clarke junior had difficulty translating Brook's pidgin Maori explanation of the deed.¹⁰⁶ The missionaries were the only people at all capable of acting as intermediaries, and in Muriwhenua even they had been unable to convey to Maori what a sale meant in European terms. However, the hostility that existed between the missionaries and the Company also meant that it was not possible for the missionaries to act as interpreters. As a result, the Company had to turn to people like Barrett to secure what they had travelled so far to find - land for colonisation.

¹⁰⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 232.

¹⁰⁶ Reports by Commissioner of Land Claims on Titles to Land in New Zealand, No. 4 - Petre (Wanganui), GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, pp. 76, 78.

CHAPTER FIVERETURN TO THE EUROPEAN WORLD

The intrusion of the European world from 1840 with the beginning of settlement marked the beginning of a new way of life for Barrett. He moved to Port Nicholson in 1840 and then to Ngamotu in 1841, yet although Barrett was drawn back in to European society, in some ways he continued to live as he had always done. Initially he continued to act as an intermediary between the Company and Maori. However, his influence began to wane with the erosion of the middle ground as co-operation and accommodation between Maori and Pakeha was replaced by dissent and conflict. Barrett's position was an ambiguous one. He remained a marginal figure, both unable and unwilling to enter fully 'respectable' society by giving up his ties to Maori and whalers. He belonged to both worlds and ended his days living in the whaling community at Ngamotu, in much the same way as he began his life in New Zealand.

Barrett decided to abandon whaling at Te Awaiti and join the Port Nicholson settlement when he began to assist the Company in August 1839. During negotiations, Barrett arranged for a clay walled house, similar to those at Te Awaiti, to be built by Wi Tako Ngatata at Te Aro.¹ Although this was some distance from Te Wharepouri and Te Puni at Ngauranga and Petone, the house was situated in the area (now known as Thorndon) that Colonel Wakefield intended to be the site of the town. It was here, and not among his Maori kin, that Barrett would seek employment. However Barrett's move was premature. Captain Smith, the chief

¹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 278; Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

surveyor, rejected Wakefield's choice of Thorndon as the site of the settlement, selecting Petone instead. This left Barrett the sole European inhabitant of Thorndon.

While Barrett was away conducting negotiations for the Company at Ngamotu at the beginning of 1840, the first four settler ships arrived at Port Nicholson from England. The settlers were unsure of what to expect from Maori on their arrival. On the voyage out to New Zealand, the men on the Bengal Merchant drilled under arms in case they were attacked by Maori, and when Maori rushed into the surf to help a boat on to the beach, the European crew feared that they were about to be massacred and fled back to their ship.² Many of the settlers wanted a mission established at the settlement. According to Reverend Buller, they 'appeared to labour under very serious misapprehension on account of the natives; and some observed to me, "If there be not an English missionary here, I do not know what will become of us." '³

Te Ati Awa had their own apprehensions. They were surprised by the large number of settlers, and asked on more than one occasion 'whether our whole tribe, meaning thereby all the people of England, had not come to Port Nicholson.'⁴ Maori and European became reconciled to the presence of each other fairly quickly. The immigrants established themselves along the banks of the Hutt River near Te Puni's pa at Petone, and each English family was adopted by one or two Maori, who constructed huts and supplied potatoes, pigs and firewood to 'their pakeha' in return

² A. Marjoribanks, Travels in New Zealand, Christchurch, 1973, p. 22; Crawford, Recollections of Travel, pp. 43-4.

³ A. Barrett, p. 171.

⁴ H.W. Petre, An Account of the Settlements of the New Zealand Company, London, 1842, p. 16.

for blankets, guns, tobacco and clothing.⁵

However Colonel Wakefield saw a need for a person to bridge the gap between the two peoples. Dicky Barrett arrived back at Port Nicholson on 21 February and a few days later Wakefield appointed him Agent for Natives and Interpreter, with a salary of 100 pounds. Wakefield hoped that this appointment would 'make him the medium between the settlers and their dark neighbours in all disputes in the allotment of the native reserves in lieu of the land now occupied and cultivated by them. This office is absolutely requisite to ensure a good understanding between us.'⁶ Barrett's role was not however to act as an impartial mediator between Maori and European. Instead he was expected to deal with challenges to the Company's title to the land and ensure that the settlement of the European colonists was not impeded. At first, there was little conflict between Maori and European as the colonists settled at Petone, where Maori admitted to the sale of the land. However after heavy flooding on 2 March the settlers pressured Wakefield into agreeing to move the township to Thorndon. This land belonged to the people of Te Aro, Pipitea, Kumototo and Tiakiwai, who denied that their land had been sold. They opposed the survey of their land by pulling up the surveyors stakes.

Barrett supported the Company in its dealings with Maori. His kin at Petone and Ngauranga supported the sale, and Barrett believed that the European settlement of Port Nicholson would benefit Maori. According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield,

⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, pp. 189, 196-7.

⁶ W. Wakefield, Journal, 27 February 1840, ATL, p. 135.

Barrett was 'quite proud of the change which he had aided to produce in the appearance of the place [Port Nicholson] and the prospects of his friends the natives'⁷ Barrett did not see that the changes that were taking place were not the changes that Maori wanted. They wanted a source of trade goods and not to give up their land in the process. Yet Barrett's job as Agent for Natives was aimed at achieving precisely that.

In his negotiations with Maori, Barrett adopted a piecemeal approach, becoming a practitioner of blanket diplomacy. He talked to small groups of Maori who disputed the right of individual settlers to a particular piece of land and placated them with blankets. Barrett's first attempt at blanket diplomacy took place in March 1840 when he dealt with Maori over land that had been set aside for missionaries. In June 1839 the Wesleyan Ministers Bumby and Hobbs had visited Te Whanganui A Tara. They left behind native teachers and three acres of land was set aside by the people of Te Aro for a Mission and church.⁸ When the Company arrived in September, Colonel Wakefield proposed to pay them for the chapels and mission houses they had built at Te Aro, but Te Wharepouri objected, ostensibly because Wakefield had paid for the land with the rest of the purchase.⁹ Reihana, the Anglican native teacher at Pipitea, also claimed to have reserved 60 acres at Te Aro for himself.¹⁰ When the missionary Henry Williams visited the area in November 1839, Reihana told him that he wished

⁷ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 278.

⁸ J.H. Roberts, The Wesleyan Mission in Te Upoko O Te Ika, Wellington District 1839-1885, Christchurch, 1992, pp. 12-14.

⁹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 95.

¹⁰ L.M. Rogers, Te Wiremu. A Biography of Henry Williams, Christchurch, 1973, pp. 234-5.

to return to Taranaki, and Williams bought the land to hold it in trust for Maori.

Although Wakefield refused to acknowledge these claims, he was prepared to offer compensation for the mission houses and chapels. Barrett was Wakefield's negotiator in these purchases. On 31 March Barrett bought the mission house at Pipitea, and he reached a settlement with the people of Te Aro for the land that had been set aside for Williams.¹¹ However the people of Te Aro refused to give up the three acres of land set aside for the Wesleyans. Nevertheless, the Company designated the land as a market reserve.

Barrett's success in these negotiations led to his employment by Captain Edward Daniell to put him in possession of land he had purchased from the Company at Te Aro.¹² Barrett persuaded the Maori landowners to take two blankets to allow Daniell to settle on the land. Following this success, several other settlers employed Barrett to carry out similar negotiations, and Colonel Wakefield gave Barrett 25 blankets to be used at his discretion for similar purposes. However such a piecemeal approach failed to solve the underlying problem and blanket diplomacy proved a failure when Barrett and the Company attempted to apply it on a wider scale. In a meeting at Te Aro, Wakefield and Barrett tried to assuage the discontent of local people with blankets.¹³ Neither Barrett nor Wakefield said that the blankets were payment for the land. Barrett indicated that they were presents. The people of Te Aro saw the

¹¹ R. Barrett to W. Wakefield, 31 March 1840, NZC 108 1/28, NA.

¹² Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

¹³ *Ibid.*

blankets as a request for permission to allow the surveyors to complete their work.¹⁴ Barrett was also unable to placate Moturoa of Pipitea. When Barrett found out that the chief was dissatisfied, he sent him some blankets from the Company store, but the chief feared that the gift would be seen as payment for the land and returned the blankets to Barrett.¹⁵

This was followed by an escalation of the conflict at Te Aro. Samuel Revans, the editor of the local newspaper, attempted to build his house on a section at Te Aro. Initially he was opposed by Maori, but they were persuaded to consent to his occupation,¹⁶ possibly by Barrett through blanket diplomacy. However Revans' servants antagonised the people of Te Aro by calling them slaves and denying that the land was theirs. On 26 August one of the men from the pa attempted to push Revans' house into the sea. A European resisted him and a scuffle ensued as more Europeans and Maori arrived on the scene. Although there were no serious injuries, one of the Europeans ran to Thorndon yelling that Maori were murdering whites. When Willoughby Shortland, the Colonial Secretary, arrived at the pa, it was full of armed Europeans.¹⁷

Three days later, Barrett accompanied Shortland to Te Aro as interpreter. An agreement was reached whereby the people of Te Aro assigned to the Crown the

¹⁴ W. Shortland to W. Hobson, 9 October 1840, GBPP, NZ 3: 1841, p. 120.

¹⁵ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

¹⁶ Taylor, p. 239.

¹⁷ Shortland to Hobson, 29 August 1840, GBPP, NZ 3: 1841, p. 83.

land on which the town had been laid out.¹⁸ They were to retain possession of their pa. Shortland guaranteed that fair compensation would be paid if the land was not found to have been purchased fairly, and he issued a proclamation to prevent further conflict. Until title to the land had been determined, those settlers wishing to occupy any of the ceded land were required to apply to Shortland. 'All persons who shall attempt to take possession without such permission, will be proceeded against according to law.'¹⁹

A less subtle approach than blanket diplomacy was adopted by the Company against a rival European claimant to land in Port Nicholson. David Scott, a flax trader, claimed he purchased land from Pomare of Ngati Mutunga in 1831. Scott left the area in 1834 and did not return until May 1840 when he saw an advertisement that Barrett placed in the *Sydney Herald* advising that the Company had purchased land on both sides of Cook Strait 'with the exception of all previously acquired purchases'.²⁰ The Company refused to acknowledge Scott's claim although Scott believed Barrett was aware of the purchase. Wi Tako Ngatata admitted Scott had purchased the land and built two houses for him, but Barrett demolished them on orders from Colonel Wakefield. Scott's claim was later referred to the Spain Commission for consideration.

When the settlers moved to Thorndon in mid-1840, Barrett's house there was soon joined by many others. According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, Barrett spent

¹⁸ Agreement with the Natives of Pah Taranake, GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, p. 20.

¹⁹ Shortland to Wakefield, 29 August 1840, GBPP, NZ 3: 1841, p. 84.

²⁰ T.M. Barrett, 'David Scott - Early Flax Trader', New Zealand Founders Society Bulletin, XXIV, 1962, p. 8.

his time 'watching the proceedings of the newcomers; sometimes mystifying a whole audience of gaping immigrants by a high-flown relation of a whaling adventure, or some part of his Maori campaign.'²¹ Dicky Barrett was not the only whaler to move to Port Nicholson from Te Awaiti. His friend John Wright started a ferry service and James Heberley became the harbour pilot.²² Barrett's house became a focal point for some of the area's residents. It was reputed to have doubled as a grog shop,²³ and according to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, it was 'always half full of hungry natives, and idle White men who had wandered from the whaling stations, and the large iron pots and spacious table constantly extended his too undistinguishing hospitality to all applicants'.²⁴

Yet Barrett entered the social world of the more genteel settlers as well. He joined a committee established to set up an amusement fund, helped to organise a ball and fete, and most importantly, established Barrett's Hotel.²⁵ Although Wi Tako Ngatata had not intended to give up his land when he built Barrett's house, Barrett claimed the land as his own through Rawinia's tribal affiliations.²⁶ This claim was received more favourably by the Company than Scott's claim had been. Barrett used a 400 pound bonus from the Company to buy a prefabricated building which he erected

²¹ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 278.

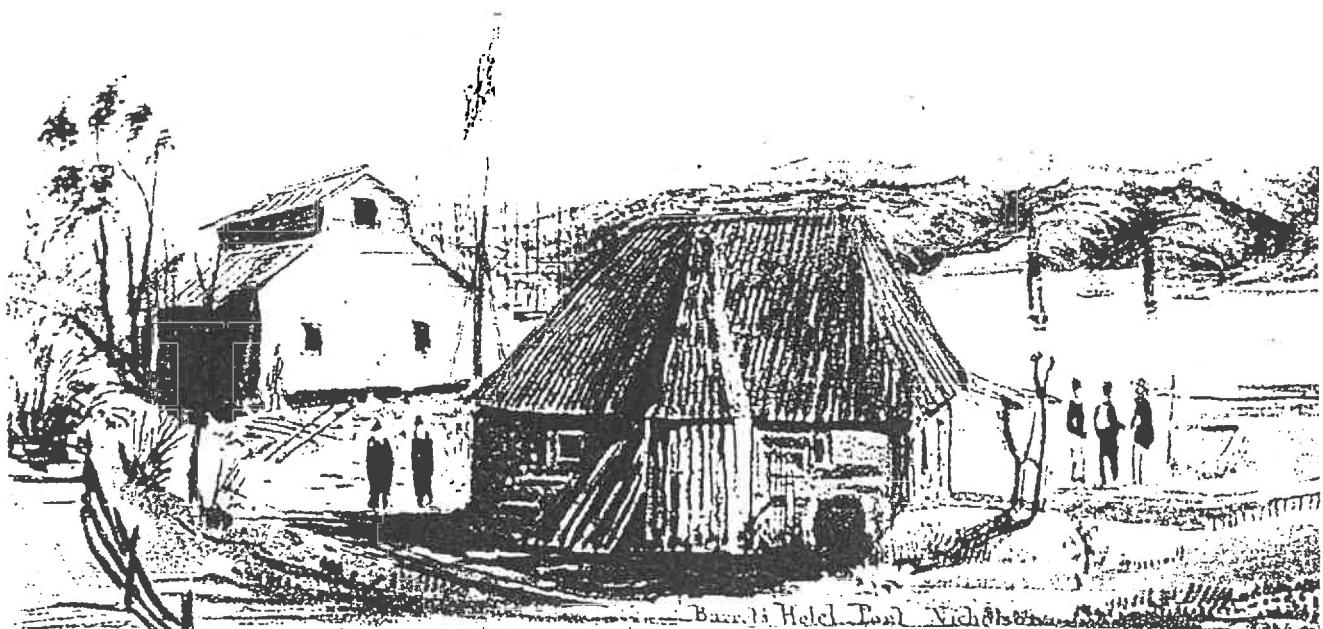
²² *Ibid*, I, pp. 272, 292.

²³ A. Murray-Oliver, Historic Thorndon, Wellington, 1971, p. 6.

²⁴ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 278.

²⁵ NZG&BS, 16 May and 22 August 1840.

²⁶ Evidence, Wi Tako, 20 May 1842, OLC 906.



Barrett's House and Hotel. Source: J. Bremner, 'Barrett's Hotel: The Victorian Rendezvous', in D. Hamer and R. Nicholls (eds.), *The Making of Wellington, 1800-1914*, Wellington, 1990, p. 163.

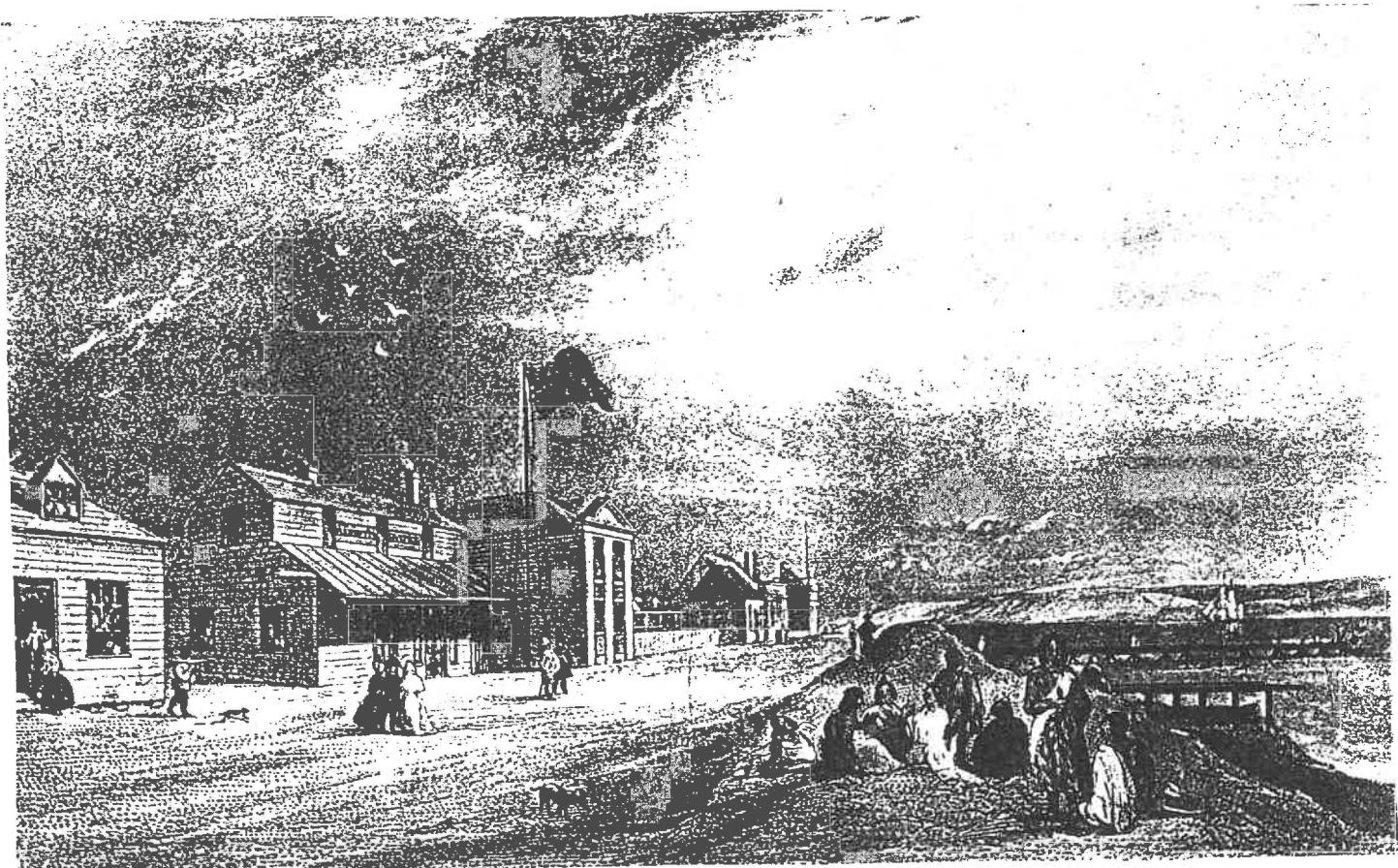
as a Hotel next to his house.²⁷ It proved to be a costly enterprise. By the time it was completed in October 1840, construction costs saw the total cost of the project escalate to 1500 pounds.²⁸

The hotel was a success however and it became the social centre of the settlement, even in an unfinished state. The first public meeting took place on 28 July to discuss the selection of town lands and native reserves. Unfortunately for Barrett, the site of the hotel was picked as one of the native reserves. This did not seem to be an insoluble problem at the time and Barrett did not allow it to dampen his enthusiasm. A select group of the town's leading men attended a grand opening at the Hotel on 22 October. Barrett's whaling friends were not invited. A glowing account of the evening's activities appeared in the local newspaper, although not all the guests were so complimentary. Lieutenant Best thought that 'the dinner was good ... [but] the whole affair was miserably dull' with the entertainment consisting of a harpist who was 'a monstrous beast' and 'a little deformity who bawled yelled and screeched making attitudes and grimaces'²⁹ Towards the end of the evening, the Chairman noted in a speech to the assembled guests that 'they were all aware of the great services rendered by him [Barrett] to the New Zealand Company; and he (the chairman) could not neglect this opportunity of making a public acknowledgement for such service. He spoke of him as a good and honest man, one whose character and whose demeanour they were no strangers to, and of whom they ought to be

²⁷ W. Wakefield to the Secretary of the New Zealand Company, 25 May 1840, NZC 3/1.

²⁸ R.D. Hanson to E. Halswell, 4 September 1841, NZC 108 2/2.

²⁹ Taylor, p. 248.



Barrett's Hotel. Source: S.C. Brees, Pictorial Illustrations of New Zealand, London, 1847, plate 10.

proud of.³⁰

The Hotel attracted the patronage of respectable settlers, hosting a number of meetings and events such as the anniversary celebration ball and the St. Andrews day celebrations.³¹ However the Hotel did not cater exclusively to any one group. The captain of a whaling ship from Hobart often landed his men at Barrett's Hotel and treated them to champagne.³² Barrett kept whaleboats on skids on the beach in front of the Hotel, ready to launch if a whale was spotted in the harbour.³³

Barrett's attention was soon diverted to another enterprise. On December 12 the London arrived from England carrying staff of the Plymouth Company led by Frederick Alonzo Carrington. The Plymouth Company had purchased the right to 50,000 acres from the New Zealand Company, on which it planned to establish a settlement to be called New Plymouth.³⁴ Carrington's first task was to investigate possible sites for the settlement. To assist him, Wakefield recommended that Carrington employ Barrett as pilot and interpreter.³⁵ Barrett was unenthusiastic about the job offer, but agreed to go if he was paid 100 pounds for his services.³⁶ Colonel Wakefield advised Carrington to bear the expense as he 'would probably

³⁰ NZG&BS, 24 October 1840, p. 3.

³¹ L. Ward, Early Wellington, Wellington, 1928, pp. 69, 73, 251.

³² E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 413.

³³ Dominion, 21 August 1922.

³⁴ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 419.

³⁵ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 61-2.

³⁶ Carrington, Journal, 18 and 28 December 1840.

have much trouble and difficulty with the Natives did he not accompany the Expedition'³⁷ The Brougham left on 6 January 1841 with Barrett on board.

The vessel's first destination was Ngamotu, which Colonel Wakefield had recommended to Carrington for settlement. Barrett was planning already to return to Ngamotu to settle on a tract of land which he claimed.³⁸ He therefore set out to influence Carrington to select Ngamotu as the site of the town. This would not only make the land more valuable, but also provide safety against Tainui raids. On 9 January when the expedition landed on shore to calls of 'Haere Mai' from local Te Ati Awa, Barrett mistranslated this deliberately for Carrington as 'an expression wishing white people to come.'³⁹ In addition Barrett emphasised the fertility of the area, describing it as the 'plus ultra' of agricultural districts.⁴⁰ This was just the beginning of Barrett's campaign. On 11 January a party left Ngamotu in Barrett's whaleboat for the Waitara. Aubrey felt that the area did not live up to its reputation. Barrett 'speaks [of the Waitara] in high terms ... [but] its appearance was, however, inferior to the description he had given.'⁴¹ Carrington was concerned that the river mouth was exposed to the north-west and felt that ships would be reluctant to anchor there. Barrett assured him that the north-west wind was infrequent.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid, 28 December 1840.

³⁸ Aubrey, p. 53.

³⁹ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Aubrey to McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean Papers.

⁴¹ Aubrey, p. 54.

⁴² Carrington to the Secretary of the New Zealand Company, 22 September 1841, Carrington Papers, MS 001/2, TM.

The Brougham left Ngamotu on 12 January to investigate Blind Bay, D'Urville Island and Queen Charlotte Sound as alternative sites for the settlement. After a brief investigation of these areas, the travellers returned to Wellington on 24 January. Two days later Carrington told Colonel Wakefield that he had decided on north Taranaki as the location for the settlement.⁴³ This was not a popular choice with later Plymouth Company settlers. Many complained about the lack of a harbour at New Plymouth, for which Barrett was held at least partly accountable. Chilman wrote that 'we might have had the very place chosen by the Nelson settlement ... Mr C[arrington] having actually gone to Blind Bay and talked of fixing the town there, but [he] suffered himself to be led away by a party interested in this place; it is enough to disgust us entirely with the affair.'⁴⁴

Barrett prepared to move back immediately to Ngamotu with Carrington. Edward Jerningham Wakefield believed that Barrett 'had long pined for his ancient residence in that part of the country, and was delighted to carry thither with him, as a boon to his native friends, the avantgarde of a large European population and market for their produce.'⁴⁵ Barrett planned to establish a shore whaling station at Ngamotu, and in a will that he made shortly before he left Wellington, Barrett set out his intentions to purchase and exchange land.⁴⁶

⁴³ Carrington, Journal, 25 and 26 January 1841.

⁴⁴ R. Chilman, Diary, 11 December 1841, MS, NPL.

⁴⁵ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 441.

⁴⁶ R. Barrett, Last Will and Testament, 6 February 1841, Supreme Court, Wellington.

The Brougham arrived at Ngamotu in February and Carrington sited the town a few miles away between the Henui and Huatoki Rivers. The first settlers reached New Plymouth on 30 March 1841 on the William Bryan. Their arrival ended Carrington's control of the settlement, and George Cutfield, the leader of the settlers, took charge. Dicky Barrett became involved in a series of petty disputes between the two men, siding with Carrington against Cutfield. Carrington clashed initially with Cutfield over a prefabricated house sent out to him from England that had been unloaded at Ngamotu. Cutfield rebuffed Carrington's request to raft the house to town as soon as possible, and then attempted to move it through rough seas.⁴⁷ Both Barrett and Carrington castigated Cutfield for his folly. The conflict erupted again after the house was rafted to town. Cutfield delayed construction of the house and when work finally began, the workmen made little progress. Barrett told Carrington that workers in Port Nicholson would have put up one side of the weather board in a day while Cutfield's men took over a week.⁴⁸

Carrington supported Barrett in return in his quarrel with Cutfield over a boat they built. They arranged that Barrett would supply the timber, and Cutfield would provide the labour. The boat would be shared between them. Cutfield planned to use it to unload ships while Barrett intended to use it for coastal trading.⁴⁹ However when it was finished, Cutfield told Carrington that it was the Company's property and was to be used solely for discharging cargo. Carrington knew of the arrangement

⁴⁷ Carrington, Journal, 6 and 7 April 1841.

⁴⁸ Carrington to Cutfield, 29 June 1841, Carrington Papers.

⁴⁹ Carrington to the Secretary of the New Zealand Company, 2 September 1841, Carrington Papers; Carrington to Cutfield, 29 June 1841, Carrington Papers.

between Barrett and Cutfield, and when the issue of the ownership of the boat came to a head, Cutfield was forced to admit that Barrett owned a half share.

In April 1841 however Barrett's alliance with Carrington was threatened by his claim to thousands of acres of land. Barrett claimed that an unspecified amount of land had been reserved for him and Love's family. This had been verbally agreed at Queen Charlotte Sound between Colonel Wakefield and local chiefs. Secondly, Barrett asserted that, according to Maori custom, a parent could not convey the rights of his family to the land. Therefore he reasoned that although his father-in-law had signed the deed, Rawinia and his children had a right to land at Ngamotu. In this case self-interest overrode all other considerations. This claim conflicted with Barrett's support for the Company's position that migrants forfeited all right to the land, and Te Ati Awa had alienated all their land in north Taranaki. Thirdly, Barrett felt that he had been inadequately rewarded for his services. He told Carrington 'the Co[mpany] would never have had a bit of land had it not been for me and unless they now reward me I am not going to give up this.'⁵⁰

Carrington was unimpressed with Barrett's claim and insisted that if it was valid, he could take the land once the town was laid out. Barrett threatened to take the site of the town as part of his claim, but there was little that he could do to enforce the claim. It was not Barrett's last attempt to secure some land. In 1842 he renewed his quest for land, pressing Carrington for a grant of land in addition to the three or four

⁵⁰ Carrington, Journal, 13 April 1841.

acres he claimed at Ngamotu.⁵¹ Colonel Wakefield was prepared to let Barrett have two acres for the whaling station and a garden, but Barrett was unsatisfied with this arrangement and Carrington was unable to complete a survey of the section as Barrett demanded more than two acres.⁵²

Disputes over land were responsible also for clashes between Maori and European in the early 1840s. Relations with Maori had been cordial when Barrett and the Plymouth Company officials arrived in 1841, but the situation deteriorated rapidly. Te Ati Awa asked for the double barrelled guns that Barrett had promised them in February 1840 and Carrington had none to give them.⁵³ This was followed in early March by a dispute over the ownership of the land. Carrington was cutting lines for a survey when several Maori 'danced and flourished their tomahawks.' Carrington believed he 'was within a hair's breadth of losing my life ...',⁵⁴ and asked Barrett to send one of his men as an interpreter. The problem was that Maori and European had different perceptions of the transaction they had entered into, yet initial reports from the settlement played down these difficulties. One of the first visitors to New Plymouth reported that there was nothing to fear from Maori with Dicky Barrett 'having them quite under control.'⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 23 March 1842.

⁵² *Ibid*, 29 June 1842.

⁵³ Carrington to Wakefield, 8 March 1841, Carrington Papers.

⁵⁴ Carrington, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 63.

⁵⁵ NZG&WS, 20 March 1841, cited in Information Respecting the Settlement of New Plymouth, London, 1841, p. 16.

In November 1841 the settlers were alarmed by Waikato incursions into north Taranaki. Some Waikato planted potatoes at Waitara, and a larger body was expected to follow them.⁵⁶ Liardet hastened to the area, accompanied by Reverend Creed as interpreter, to be told that Waikato claimed the land by right of conquest.⁵⁷ Liardet insisted that the land belonged to the Europeans who would resist encroachment. Colonel Wakefield approved of the measures taken by Liardet, but recommended that 'in any further difficulties in the matter I would beg to recommend Mr Barrett's agency with the Natives.'⁵⁸ However Liardet made little use of Barrett's services.

Dicky Barrett was embroiled in a dispute of his own with Maori over Waitara, but this time it was with Te Ati Awa and not Waikato. In May 1840 Waikato released their Te Ati Awa slaves and when they returned home, along with Te Ati Awa from Port Nicholson and Queen Charlotte Sound, they found that their land had been taken. On 15 December Tupanangi, a Waitara chief, told Carrington that the Waitara had not been sold. Carrington was alarmed by the news and took Tupanangi to see Barrett.⁵⁹ In a meeting lasting five hours, Barrett insisted that the land had been purchased while the chief denied having sold Waitara. The meeting ended without any agreement being reached, but this was not to be the end of the matter.

The tension between Maori and European was heightened by the actions of Company

⁵⁶ Liardet to Wakefield, 20 November 1841, NZC 3/21.

⁵⁷ Liardet to Wakefield, 28 November 1841, NZC 3/21.

⁵⁸ Wakefield to Liardet, 29 December 1841, NZC 3/21.

⁵⁹ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 70-1.

officials. In February 1842 Liardet was replaced as Resident Agent at New Plymouth by John Tylson Wicksteed, who has been described as a fussy and self-righteous administrator.⁶⁰ Wicksteed was self-confident and assertive. His approach in dealing with Maori was officious and confrontational. In June 1842 when the rural land was selected by lottery, Captain King, the Protector of Aborigines in New Plymouth, forgot to put in lots for Maori. Carrington decided to allocate two sections to Te Ati Awa that they already occupied and wished to retain, but Wicksteed refused to allow it as the set procedure had not been followed.⁶¹

This was followed on 20 July by a confrontation at Waitara. Some Te Ati Awa cut down trees, drove off the Europeans and declared their intention to keep the whites south of the Waitara.⁶² Wicksteed forced Te Ati Awa to submit by using an armed force of special constables, and wrote that his methods were the only way to prevent clashes with Maori. Yet this did not end confrontations between the settlers and Te Ati Awa. In December some Te Ati Awa fenced in a roadside and sections for a potato ground. Settlers led by Wicksteed pulled down the fence and arrested a Maori who threatened him.⁶³

In May 1842 the Spain Commission hearings began in Wellington. Colonel Wakefield and the Company assumed that the hearings would be a mere formality and that title

⁶⁰ R.G. Wood, From Plymouth to New Plymouth, Wellington, 1959, p. 51.

⁶¹ Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, p. 77.

⁶² J.T. Wicksteed to W. Wakefield, 25 July 1842, NZC 3/21.

⁶³ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 31 December 1842, NZC 105/1.

to the lands 'purchased' would soon be forthcoming. When it became clear that Spain intended to conduct a thorough examination, the Company, and Edward Jerningham Wakefield in particular, began a public campaign against Spain and George Clarke junior, the sub-Protector of Aborigines, who represented Maori. Spain examined all the major participants in the sale during the course of 1842, with the exception of Barrett, whom he was eager to examine. Barrett's role in the purchases, Spain wrote, meant that 'a great deal must, of necessity, depend upon his testimony.'⁶⁴

When Barrett visited Wellington in February 1843 he was summoned to appear before Spain. On 8 February Barrett was examined for a gruelling ten hours by Doctor Evans, the Company's legal counsel, and George Clarke junior.⁶⁵ According to Edward Jerningham Wakefield, Clarke 'sneer[ed] at his [Barrett's] way of pronouncing Maori, and at his unsophisticated narrative of his doings as interpreter at the different sales. Barrett's Maori diction, like that of most of the whalers, was of course not superior to his English; and he had a broad honest way of uttering both, for which Mr. Clarke junior seemed delighted to display his contempt.'⁶⁶ Wakefield's account may be exaggerated, given his campaign against Clarke, but there appears to be some truth to Wakefield's allegations. Clarke came from a missionary family and the missionaries had traditionally been hostile to what they perceived to be the whalers' adverse impact on Maori. Clarke wrote later that Barrett was 'a decent

⁶⁴ W. Spain to W. Shortland, 16 September 1842, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 59.

⁶⁵ E. Meurant, 8 February 1843, Diary, typescript, APL.

⁶⁶ E.J. Wakefield, II, p. 328.

fellow enough among men of his class ... [but] he was very ignorant⁶⁷

Barrett's evidence proved to be influential. He testified that he told Colonel Wakefield that the people of Te Aro and Pipitea were not so willing to sell their land and that he did not tell Maori one-tenth of the land would be reserved for them or that they were giving up their pa, burial grounds and cultivations.⁶⁸ Spain wrote that Barrett's testimony 'was given throughout in a very straightforward manner, and in a way calculated to produce the conviction that he was speaking the truth.'⁶⁹ Spain instructed Wakefield to enter into negotiations with Clarke to compensate those Maori who had not consented to the sale.

On his return from Wellington, Barrett drew closer to Carrington and his circle of friends, spending an increasing amount of time on social visits or dinners with these new friends.⁷⁰ Carrington was one of the disaffected in New Plymouth, and he had a less than cordial relationship with Wicksteed. Carrington's influence soon had an impact on Barrett, who began to admit that there were shortcomings in the deals between the Company and Maori. At the meeting with Carrington and Tupanangi in December 1841, Barrett insisted that the Waitara had been fairly purchased. By August 1843 Barrett admitted to Carrington that neither Tupanangi nor his relations had been enslaved by Waikato or sold their land, and that there were other chiefs

⁶⁷ Clarke, pp. 48-9.

⁶⁸ Evidence, R. Barrett, 8 February 1843, OLC 906.

⁶⁹ Reports by Commissioner of Land Claims on Titles to Land in New Zealand, No. 1 - Port Nicholson, GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Carrington, Journal, 27 March, 2 April, 15 June, 2, 7 and 8 July, 12, 16 and 19 August 1843.

who had not been paid.⁷¹ As a result of the disputes with Te Ati Awa and long talks with Barrett, Carrington came to believe that the land had not been purchased.⁷²

Carrington's employment was terminated by the Company in August 1843. To protect himself against any claim of wrongdoing and to force compensation from the Company for his dismissal, Carrington obtained from Barrett a letter Wakefield sent him in November 1839 claiming to have purchased the west coast of the North Island. As the Company did not purchase north Taranaki until February 1840, Carrington believed that this proved that the land had never been paid for. Barrett did not subscribe to Carrington's theory, but he was prepared to take advantage of the situation. In exchange for the letter, Carrington handed him a certificate stating that he believed the land at the whaling station belonged to Barrett.⁷³

Te Ati Awa dissatisfaction with the sale became increasingly apparent to Barrett. Wicksteed was willing to hand over to Barrett the double barrelled guns that had been promised to Maori when the settlers arrived.⁷⁴ They refused to take them however, preferring to wait for the findings of the Spain Commission. Some Te Ati Awa threatened to burn down Creed's house at Ngamotu, near the whaling station,

⁷¹ Carrington to Lord Howick, 19 July 1844, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 496; Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, p. 85.

⁷² Carrington, Minutes of Evidence, pp. 66-7.

⁷³ Carrington, Journal, 19 August 1843.

⁷⁴ J.T. Wicksteed to W. Wakefield, 30 June 1844, Despatches from Resident Agent New Plymouth of New Zealand Company, J.T. Wicksteed to Principal Agent Col. W. Wakefield 17 May 1842 - 25 December 1847, MS 069/6, TM.

unless he gave the house to them.⁷⁵ Wicksteed was unable to resort to force on this occasion, as Shortland had issued a proclamation that no acts of ownership were to be exercised by Europeans on land claimed by Maori. Barrett's possession of the land at the whaling station was safe enough. With Rawinia and the children living there amongst their kin, Barrett's right to the land was not challenged.

The Spain Commission hearings into the north Taranaki transaction began at New Plymouth in May 1844. Barrett kept the doubts that he had expressed to Carrington about the sale to himself and supported the Company view that only those Te Ati Awa who resided there at the time had any right to the land, and they had sold the land.⁷⁶ This represented a clear break with his Ngamotu and Puketapu kin. There was no pro-sale party amongst his kin as there had been at Port Nicholson, and their testimony often did not tally with Barrett's. On such occasions Spain accepted Barrett's evidence. He felt Barrett had told 'the plain honest truth as to what took place'⁷⁷ Spain was less inclined to believe Te Ati Awa testimony.

Spain found in favour of the Company, and awarded them 60,000 acres. As part of the award, Barrett received the land he had been seeking.⁷⁸ A total of 180 acres was granted to the Barrett family though the land was to be held in trust by the trustees of the native reserves. Many Te Ati Awa were angered by Spain's award. However

⁷⁵ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 31 August 1843, NZC 105/2.

⁷⁶ Evidence, R. Barrett, 31 May 1844, OLC 910.

⁷⁷ Minutes of the Proceedings of the Court of Land Claims helden at New Plymouth before Mr Commissioner Spain, 8 June 1844, GBPP, NZ 5: 1846, p. 69.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-4.

when the Governor arrived at New Plymouth on 2 August he overturned Spain's award, and declared that the land would have to be repurchased. On 25 November the Governor paid 350 pounds to Ngati Te Whiti for a 3,500 acre block of land around New Plymouth.⁷⁹ Settlers living outside this block were forced to abandon their claims and move back into town. Barrett was able to retain his land however.

The Spain Commission hearings in 1844 marked Barrett's last major involvement in the affairs of New Plymouth. After that he concentrated on his whaling business. Many of the party of 40 whalers and their families who accompanied him to Ngamotu in 1841 were men who had been with him since the early days at Ngamotu in 1828 such as John Wright, Bill Bundy and James Bosworth.⁸⁰ Simon Crawley, who worked for Barrett at Te Awaiti, joined him also. Other men drifted in and out of the group. For example George Nye arrived in Wellington in 1840 at the age of 14, and a year later went to New Plymouth. He worked for two and a half years as a whaler before leaving with four companions for Waikanae.⁸¹ Wright, Bundy, Bosworth and Crawley stayed with Barrett to the end.

The solidarity of the group was reinforced by the living arrangements at Ngamotu. In 1840 local Te Ati Awa constructed three houses for the immigrants they expected to arrive shortly. The whalers and their families took up residence in one of the houses. They were constructed of raupo, and the largest was 140 feet long and 18 feet

⁷⁹ Wells, p. 107.

⁸⁰ E.J. Wakefield, I, p. 441; Jervis, NZH, 19 March 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 4.

⁸¹ J. Millen, Colonial Tears and Sweat. The Working Class in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand, Wellington, 1984, p. 36.

wide, with 7 doors and a verandah in front.⁸² The building occupied by the whalers had compartments resembling horse stalls for each family and fire holes, surrounded by three legged iron pots, tin pannikins and cutlery.⁸³

The whalers were isolated physically from the settlers. Carrington decided against siting the town at Ngamotu as Barrett and the Wesleyans claimed land there. There was also a Te Ati Awa village at Ngamotu, and Carrington felt Barrett's whaling station 'to most persons would be a horrible nuisance.'⁸⁴ Instead he fixed the site of New Plymouth between the Henui and Huatoki rivers, a few miles from Ngamotu. For some of the settlers this was still too close. According to Weekes, after the whales were processed, the carcase was sent into the sea, and about two weeks later it would wash up on shore, 'polluting the air with a foul stench.'⁸⁵ When Richard Brown set up a rival whaling station, he landed his first kill on the beach in front of the town. However the stench was so bad that the settlers objected to any more whales being beached in front of the town, and Brown moved his whaling station to Ngamotu.⁸⁶ This physical isolation was reinforced when the Governor overturned Spain's award. Barrett's farm was the only one of consequence belonging to Europeans in the area as this part of the settlement was not in the block repurchased by the Government.⁸⁷

⁸² NZG&BS, 21 September 1840.

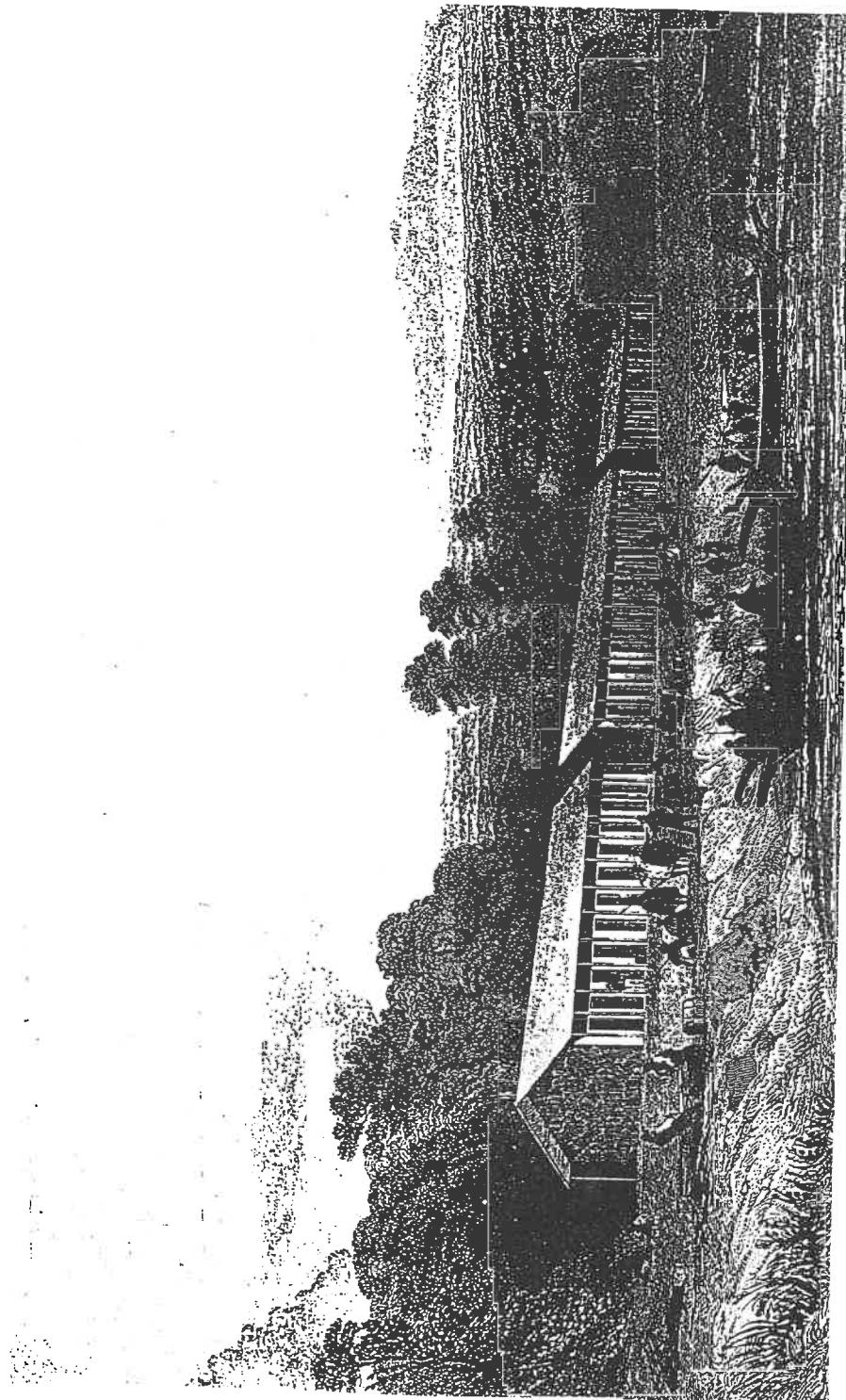
⁸³ Jervis, NZH, 19 March 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 4.

⁸⁴ Carrington, Journal, 25 February 1841.

⁸⁵ Weekes, p. 96.

⁸⁶ B. Scanlan, Taranaki People and Places, New Plymouth, 1985, p. 20.

⁸⁷ Aubrey to McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean papers.



Houses constructed by Te Ati Awa in 1840 for the immigrants.
This later became Barrett's whaling station. Source: Petre, p. 29.

Morton believed that the settlers had a good relationship with the whalers. The whalers provided essential skills. They were boat builders, pilots, carpenters, and coopers. They also provided protection as they were linked by marriage to local Maori who might be hostile. 'And so bonds of both security and utility were forged between whalers and settlers.'⁸⁸ However, Barrett's whalers did not enjoy such a close relationship with the settlers. They were unable to protect the settlers from disputes with Te Ati Awa over land and the Company provided its own workmen, although Barrett acted occasionally as pilot and boat builder.

There were also considerable differences in attitudes and behaviour. Some of the settlers in New Plymouth stuck rigidly to high moral standards. When Horatio Groube, the town's Congregationalist minister, married his pregnant servant, 'the populace were very indignant and expressed themselves in a very vociferous manner.'⁸⁹ The whalers could not measure up to such high standards. They cohabited with Maori women which must have shocked the more 'respectable' settlers. Dicky Barrett was prepared to make gestures towards respectability. On 28 March 1841 the Barrett children were baptised, and Rawinia and Dicky Barrett were married by Reverend Charles Creed, after living together for 13 years. The marriage gave their union legal and moral standing in the European world which they were now part of. This clearly concerned Barrett. He led Aubrey to believe that he married Rawinia in 1839.⁹⁰ Some of the other whalers followed his example. Bill Bundy

⁸⁸ Morton, pp. 248-9.

⁸⁹ R. Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth: Why Did It Occur?', *NZJH*, XX, 1, 1986, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Aubrey, p. 53.

married a Puketapu woman with whom he had been living for some time and Simon Crawley married his Ngai Tahu companion. Others saw no reason to change. Robert Sinclair continued to cohabit with a Ngati Apa woman.⁹¹

The drinking habits of the whalers were also of concern to many of the settlers. The consumption of large quantities of alcohol was a regular part of their lives. In May 1840 due to a food shortage in the settlement Barrett stopped his men's daily ration of rum and to prevent them getting liquor elsewhere, he came to an understanding with the storekeepers that they would not sell alcohol.⁹² The arrival of the Speculator on 27 June ended Barrett's ban on the consumption of alcohol, and after months of enforced abstinence, Barrett's men went on a drinking spree. In what was according to Chilman 'a very usual circumstance', the whalers were so drunk when whales were sighted on 10 July that Barrett had to set out in his whaleboat with a crew made up of local Maori.⁹³

These drunken binges affected the nearby settlers, many of whom took a dim view of drunkenness. During the food shortage, Jervis, the storekeeper, was disturbed one night by someone trying to enter the store. He was certain that it was the whalers trying to get to the alcohol, and he roused a party of Maori near by and headed off to Barrett's station to confront the culprits.⁹⁴ It was discovered eventually that a

⁹¹ Aubrey to McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean Papers.

⁹² Jervis, NZH, 9 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 3.

⁹³ R. Chilman, Diary, 17 July 1841.

⁹⁴ Jervis, NZH, 9 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 3.

neighbour was playing a practical joke on Jervis. However the settlers were so used to drunken behaviour that when the town was struck by an earthquake in 1841, some of the settlers thought that 'some drunken wags were giving the house a good shaking from the outside ... and more than one had called out to the imaginary Saturday night debauchers to go home and go to bed.'⁹⁵ A census carried out in 1843 noted that the deaths of three whalers were due to 'diseases caused by intemperance and the consequences of semi-barbarous conditions.'⁹⁶ One of the whalers was suspected of involvement in a murder in New South Wales.

In the early 1840s the forces of law and order in New Plymouth were virtually non-existent. The Company believed that moral influence and exclusion from social intercourse would be sufficient to repress crime.⁹⁷ This had little influence on the whalers. In 1842 complaints were lodged against a publican for keeping a disorderly house, and a fight broke out the following week.⁹⁸ Steps were taken to establish law enforcement on a small scale. A jail was constructed and magistrates, constables and a gaoler were appointed towards the end of 1841.⁹⁹ On one occasion some drunks, including several whalers, who were imprisoned in the cabin that served as the local jail, lifted up the cabin, heaved it over on its side, and escaped. The people of New Plymouth invested in a stone jail in 1844.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Weekes, p. 104.

⁹⁶ Census, 21 June 1843, cited in Rutherford and Skinner, p. 222.

⁹⁷ Dalziel, pp. 22-3.

⁹⁸ N. Browse, Diary, 6 - 11 January 1842, MS 024, TM.

⁹⁹ J. Newland, Diary, 13 December 1841, Typescript, AU, p. 6; Weekes, p. 58.

¹⁰⁰ Skinner, p. 57.

Liardet, the Resident Agent, held the whalers in contempt. In November 1841 the Oriental was in danger of being driven on to the shore by rough seas and Liardet hastened to Barrett's station to launch a boat to aid the vessel. According to Liardet, although 'we had a large party to launch the boat ... to my disgust, I could not make up a crew to go with me, and most of them were panic stricken by the weather, more particularly the whalers.'¹⁰¹ Doctor Weekes thought that some of the whalers were 'strange fellows'.¹⁰² When the whaling station was shut down temporarily in September 1842, there were some in New Plymouth who were not sad to see the whalers leave. Wicksteed wrote that 'this settlement will not soon again be plagued with a very profligate and troublesome class of person'.¹⁰³

Barrett's whaling business at Ngamotu did not prove to be the financial success that he hoped it would be. During his first season in 1841 Barrett had enough men to crew two boats, and several whales were spotted, but the whalers were unable to catch them as the whaling gear had been left behind accidentally at Wellington. Barrett sent for the gear but it was carried on the Jewess which was wrecked on the way to New Plymouth.¹⁰⁴ Subsequently, he was able to catch only three whales. Barrett had hoped for a good catch to pay his debts, and by August 1840 he owed Wellington merchants Waters and Smith a total of 1300 pounds.¹⁰⁵ To repay these

¹⁰¹ Liardet to Wakefield, 20 November 1841, cited in Rutherford and Skinner, p. 175.

¹⁰² Weekes, p. 96.

¹⁰³ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 30 September 1842, Despatches from Resident Agent.

¹⁰⁴ Jervis, NZH, 19 March 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 4.

¹⁰⁵ R. Barrett to W. Wakefield, 14 August 1841, NZC 108 2/52.

debts Barrett had to sell his only major asset, Barrett's Hotel, to Waters and Smith.

The sale was complicated by Barrett's inability to obtain a secure title to the land the Hotel occupied. R.D. Hanson, attorney to Waters and Smith, approached Edmund Halswell, the Commissioner for the Management of Native Reserves, in an effort to secure a lease. He argued that as the native reserves were intended to benefit Maori, it was just to allow any Maori to erect a house on the reserves and pay little or no rent.¹⁰⁶ As Barrett was married to a Te Ati Awa woman, Hanson argued that Barrett was entitled to the same consideration. Furthermore Colonel Wakefield had intimated to Barrett he could expect to be granted a lease at a nominal rent.

Barrett was prepared to accept a lease for the Hotel land, but he refused to give up his claim to the land his house stood on, next door to the Hotel.¹⁰⁷ However Halswell was willing only to issue a lease to the Hotel land, and insisted on inserting a clause in the deed that the lease could not be sold without the lessors' permission and was forfeit in the event of bankruptcy. Although Hanson considered this unacceptable, the Governor supported Halswell and threatened to seize the land and the buildings on it.¹⁰⁸ The matter was complicated when Waters and Smith declared themselves insolvent in 1842. However a compromise was reached whereby the Native Reserve land that Barrett's Hotel occupied was let to Barrett for 7 years at a

¹⁰⁶ R.D. Hanson to E. Halswell, 4 September 1841, NZC 108 2/2.

¹⁰⁷ Halswell to Shortland, 29 November 1841, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 674.

¹⁰⁸ Shortland to Halswell, 16 December 1841, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 675.

yearly rent of 54 pounds and 5 shillings.¹⁰⁹ In return, Halswell allowed Barrett to issue a sub-lease to Waters and Smith. Shortly after the arrangements were completed, the Governor instructed Halswell that no more contracts were to be entered into involving native reserves where the title was disputed until the Spain Commission had investigated the Port Nicholson claim.¹¹⁰

The sale of the Hotel cleared Barrett's debts, but he was still short of cash to keep his whaling business in operation. In desperation Barrett attempted to raise funds by any means necessary. In September 1841 he charged the Plymouth Company for the aid of his men in discharging the Brougham eight months earlier. However Barrett was publicly challenged by Carrington who had paid Barrett's men previously.¹¹¹ Carrington offered to pay him out of his own pocket. His humiliation in front of Cutfield and King, who were with Carrington at the time, forced Barrett to back down while trying to save face by claiming it was unreasonable for him to have to pay his men and maintain the boats without payment for their services. Barrett's financial position was not improved by the establishment of a rival whaling station by Richard Brown.

Barrett was more prepared for the 1842 season. In February he placed an advertisement for whalers in a Wellington newspaper, and in April a ship arrived at

¹⁰⁹ Halswell to Wakefield, 4 June 1842, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, pp. 677-8.

¹¹⁰ J.A.S. Freeman to Halswell, 23 April 1842, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, p. 681; Shortland to Halswell, 18 June 1842, GBPP, NZ 2: 1844, pp. 681-2.

¹¹¹ Carrington to the Secretary of the New Zealand Company, 22 September 1841, Carrington Papers.

Ngamotu with the whaling tackle that Barrett had been waiting for.¹¹² Yet the 1842 season was also a poor one. The whalers chased their first whale on 4 June, but were unable to make their first catch until 7 August.¹¹³ Since he had already sold his only major asset, Barrett was forced to shut down the whaling station. However the closure was only temporary as Barrett took on Richard Rundle as a business partner, and his financial backing enabled Barrett to resume whaling. However the result was no better than in previous years. According to Wicksteed, the catch in 1843 was 'a miserable result of what ought to have been a most successful season, for never before was there so many whales in the roadstead.'¹¹⁴ The danger of whaling was reinforced when a whale boat was capsized while pursuing a whale and all its crew were killed.¹¹⁵ Barrett continued to pin his hopes on a successful catch to restore his financial position. The 1844 season was more successful. Yet the whaling industry was a fickle one, and more bad seasons followed.

Whaling may have proved to be fatal to Barrett, both physically and financially. According to one source, during the 1846 season Barrett chased a whale close in shore and moved in for the kill. However the whale's tale hit the water with great force, and although it missed the boat, Barrett was knocked unconscious.¹¹⁶ He suffered internal injuries, and died some months later. However this event may be a twentieth

¹¹² NZG&WS, 19 February 1842; Carrington, Journal, 28 April 1842.

¹¹³ Carrington, Journal, 4 June 1842; Newland, Diary, 7 August 1842, p. 8.

¹¹⁴ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 27 September 1843, Despatches from Resident Agent.

¹¹⁵ J. Flight, Diary, 28 June 1843, MS 002, TM.

¹¹⁶ T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8.

century invention. It was supposed to have been based on an account by Wicksteed, yet there is no record of it in the New Zealand Company papers and Wicksteed left no other written records. There is no mention of the incident in nineteenth century histories of Taranaki such as Wells and Seffern. Nor is there any mention of such an event in the diaries of Josiah Flight and John Newland, even though both were in the habit of recording whale catches, and could have been expected to note such a dramatic event. It is clear however that by mid-1846 Barrett's health was ailing, but the cause is not apparent. Wicksteed wrote in June that 'in consequence of Richard Barrett's severe illness, his party is in a great measure disabled.'¹¹⁷ While Richard Brown went on to record a good catch for the year, Barrett's men began to drift away, and those that remained had little luck with the catch. By the end of the season Barrett had only one boat and seven men left, and the season's poor catch produced a mere five tons of oil compared to 37 tons for Brown.¹¹⁸

Recurrent money problems continued to plague Barrett in his final months. He obtained two horses worth 27 pounds on credit from the New Zealand Company and assured them that full payment would be made in the near future. However payment was not forthcoming. According to Wicksteed, 'Barrett has had other heavy losses, but he has a steady man of some capital for his Partner [Rundle] and I have no doubt of being able to obtain payment of the balance at an early period.'¹¹⁹ Barrett died soon after on 23 February 1847. The whaling industry at Ngamotu did not survive

¹¹⁷ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 30 June 1846, Despatches from Resident Agent.

¹¹⁸ NZL 19 June 1847, p. 171.

¹¹⁹ Wicksteed to Wakefield, 1 February 1847, Despatches from Resident Agent.

for long after Barrett's death. The 1847 season was the last season that whaling was carried out at New Plymouth. Richard Rundle fielded a two boat crew of 13 men but they failed to catch any whales and Brown was able to produce only 8 tons of oil.¹²⁰ In November 1847 a number of whalers, including John Wright, Bill Bundy and James Bosworth, retired with their Maori wives on to a block of land that had been promised to them by Wakefield.¹²¹ Rawinia Barrett died on 12 February 1849 and was buried next to her husband. Sarah Barrett married William Honeyfield in 1853, and Caroline Barrett married his brother James in 1865.¹²²

Dicky Barrett's life in New Zealand involved him from the beginning in a close relationship with Maori. He married a Te Ati Awa woman, fought with her people against their enemies and acted in ways that were expected of him by Maori. Yet Barrett never surrendered his Europeanness or his belief in the superiority of the European world and culture. When the European world expanded to include New Zealand, Dicky Barrett assisted the European settlement of New Zealand and he made the transformation back to the European way of life. However the success that Barrett sought eluded him. The beginning of settlement saw the decline of influence and power of people like Dicky Barrett. Furthermore, his whaling business was close to collapse by the time of his demise. Yet after his death, Barrett enjoyed the sort of success that had eluded him in life, and the legend of Dicky Barrett, trader, whaler and interpreter was born.

¹²⁰ E.J. Wakefield, The Hand-Book for New Zealand, London, 1848, p. 193.

¹²¹ Wells, pp. 143-4.

¹²² Mary Anne Barrett died in Port Nicholson in August 1840. The cause of her death is not known.

CHAPTER SIXTHE CONSTRUCTION OF A LEGEND

The way that Dicky Barrett has been depicted has undergone significant changes in the past 150 years. In the 1840s Edward Jerningham Wakefield portrayed Barrett as a fat, jolly whaler who was an expert on Maori customs and language. This image of Barrett was refined in the 1890s as New Zealanders looked to the past with nostalgia and held to what they perceived to be the values of the pioneers. In 1940 Barrett's image was altered again as New Zealanders celebrated 100 years of colonisation. A journal attributed to Barrett appeared and was influential in promoting the view that Barrett was a successful businessman with political influence. Alongside this dominant view of Barrett, there was an alternative image of Barrett constructed by Governor FitzRoy, George Clarke junior, and writers such as Alan Mulgan, and R.G. Wood. They attempted, rather unsuccessfully, to challenge Barrett's depiction as an expert on Maori. In the late twentieth century this view has become more widespread. Most writers have abandoned the assumptions of earlier literature which approved of colonisation and the dispossession of Maori. Instead, the process of colonisation, including the acquisition of Maori land, has come in for attention. Barrett's role in acquiring land for the New Zealand Company has meant that he has not escaped criticism.

When Dicky Barrett arrived in New Zealand in 1828 he encountered an alien world and underwent a process of adaptation to the new environment. However the European settlers who began to arrive in large numbers in the 1840s were not

prepared to undergo this process. They were predominantly Anglo-Saxon and established culturally homogeneous communities where they retained European values and attitudes. These attitudes included a belief that the land was something to be tamed in the name of 'progress' and 'civilisation', and an unswerving assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority over indigenous peoples. The settlers set about transforming New Zealand into an image of 'Home'.

The writing of literature about New Zealand was part of this process of transformation. From the beginning, writing in New Zealand has been 'involved in the process of colonization, in the implementation of European power, in the description and justification of the European presence as normative, and in the simultaneous implicit or explicit production of the indigenous peoples as alien or marginal.'¹ The literature produced between 1840 and 1890 has been called by Gibbons the literature of invasion, as it sought to explain and legitimise the colonisation of New Zealand and the dispossession of Maori.

One of the earliest examples of this genre was Edward Jerningham Wakefield's Adventure in New Zealand (published in 1845), which attempted to defend the New Zealand Company from its critics. Due to the prominent role that Barrett played in the purchase of land from Maori, Wakefield found it necessary to construct an image of Barrett to suit his purposes. Early on in the work Wakefield portrayed Barrett as the stereotypical fat jolly man loved by all who knew him. Barrett was 'dressed in a white jacket, blue dungaree trousers, and round straw hat, he seemed perfectly round

¹ P.J. Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction', p. 28.

all over; while his jovial, ruddy face, twinkling eyes, and good-humoured smile, could not fail to excite pleasure in all beholders.² Wakefield stressed that Barrett was 'thoroughly acquainted with the feelings and customs of the natives, as well as their language' to legitimise Company claims that Maori knew that they were 'selling' their land.³ Lastly, Wakefield constructed Barrett's beliefs to reflect his own. Barrett supported the Company plan for the colonisation of New Zealand; he advised the Company to include the later controversial acquisition of villages and cultivations in the purchases; he admired the good points in the Maori character but knew better than to give them unlimited praise; and he believed a European colony would benefit Maori and prevent the 'disastrous' effects of contact between Maori and whites who were 'outlaws from civilized society'.⁴

Extracts from Wakefield's journal, including some of these characterisations of Barrett, were printed in the New Zealand Journal, a London publication devoted to the dissemination of Company propaganda. Other writers contributed to features on New Zealand that also included flattering views of Barrett. Some of these emphasised the influence or control Barrett was supposed to have exercised over Maori. W. Partridge, a Wellington settler, wrote that Barrett was 'a great man among the natives, who adore him'⁵ One visitor to New Plymouth reported that there was nothing to fear

² E.J. Wakefield, Adventure in New Zealand, I, p. 35.

³ *Ibid*, I, pp. 36-7.

⁴ *Ibid*, I, pp. 36-7, 39.

⁵ W. Partridge to H.S. Chapman, NZL, 1850, p. 293.

from Maori with Dicky Barrett 'having them quite under control'.⁶

This view of Barrett was contested. Governor FitzRoy wrote that it was usually the traders and whalers who were responsible for clashes with Maori through ignorance of the Maori language and customs, insults, deceit and intoxication.⁷ Barrett was fitted into this group, being 'an illiterate whaling master, who had a mere smattering of the native language'⁸ Barrett's testimony to the Spain Commission undermined many of Wakefield's claims about Barrett's expertise. However this alternative view has not until recently had any success historiographically. This was a result of the process of colonisation. European settlers lived on land acquired from Maori and challenges to the legitimacy of the acquisition of land was a direct threat to this occupation. Through sheer weight of numbers, the settlers acceptance of Wakefield's view prevailed at the expense of any alternative interpretation.

Barrett's image underwent further refinements in the 1890s, which marked the beginning of what Gibbons has called the literature of occupation. The era was characterised by a nostalgia for the pioneers, and in harking back to the pioneers the past was romanticised. The literature of the period emphasised that New Zealand was a frontier society. However the emphasis was not on Maori but on the struggle against nature. According to Phillips, 'Pakehas elevated the conquest of the land so

⁶ NZG&WS, 20 March 1841, cited in Information Respecting the Settlement of New Plymouth, p. 16.

⁷ FitzRoy, p. 6.

⁸ Ibid, p. 31.

that they did not have to think about the conquest of the people.⁹ One example is W.H.J. Seffern's Chronicles of the Garden of New Zealand (published in 1896). It devoted considerable attention to the land and the scenery, and celebrated what Seffern called the progressive hand of civilisation.¹⁰ According to Seffern, there was little to tell of the Taranaki region until the arrival of the first Europeans.¹¹ Maori were marginalised and appeared only when they obstructed the efforts of the settlers to transform the land.

In their struggle against nature, frontier workers performed hard, physical work demanding strength and versatility. Out of this frontier experience, people drew generalisations which raised the pioneer into a legend. The pioneer acquired a standard set of characteristics - he was strong, independent, courageous, and versatile.¹² These characteristics were applied not only to pioneers, but also to sporting heroes and political figures of the time. Seddon was described as having a strong and resolute personality; an indomitable will; possessing inner strength; and virility of character.¹³

Barrett came to be described in similar terms. He was powerful, courageous, heroic,

⁹ Phillips, p. 39.

¹⁰ W.H.J. Seffern, Chronicles of the Garden of New Zealand, Known as Taranaki, New Plymouth, 1896, p. 1.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹² Phillips, pp. 16-20, 39; K. Sinclair, A Destiny Apart? New Zealand's Search for National Identity, Wellington, 1986, pp. 10, 12; Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction', p. 48.

¹³ Phillips, p. 237.

resourceful, versatile, and possessed a forceful personality and a strong character.¹⁴ Older views of Barrett were not forgotten either. Wakefield's description of Barrett as a fat, jovial whaler appeared in numerous books and articles.¹⁵ Partridge's account of Barrett was drawn on to describe Barrett variously as highly regarded, deeply admired, adored, revered or even idolised by Maori.¹⁶ As part of the romanticisation of the past, Barrett became a 'colourful' or 'picturesque' character.¹⁷ One technique used by some writers has been to focus on the romance of the whaler who married a 'princess'.¹⁸ The most notable example was Dicky Barrett, a romance novel by Archibald Hood, which focused on the wooing of Rawinia by Dicky Barrett, and the siege of Otaka pa.¹⁹ This type of romance novel was a popular form of literature in the late nineteenth century, and often included captivating Maori women,

¹⁴ Dominion, 21 August 1922; T.H., 21 November 1899, p. 1, 3 June 1978, p. 5; Tullett, pp. 3, 4; P. Wilson, 'Dicky Barrett', New Zealand's Heritage, IV, p. 433; Seffern, p. 6; E.P., 9 September 1946.

¹⁵ Dominion, 21 August 1922; A.J. Waldie, 'Richard Barrett Pakeha-Maori', New Zealand Railways Magazine, 2 May 1938, p. 38; T.H., 4 December 1976, p. 5, 29 March 1941, p. 8 and 31 July 1982, p. 2; Taranaki Museum, Dicky Barrett: a chronicle of a 20 year residence in New Zealand, New Plymouth, 1984, p. 7; A.D. McIntosh, Marlborough. A Provincial History, Blenheim, 1940, p. 38; Scanlan, p. 22; Press, 16 July 1982, p. 14, col. 6; J. Miller, Early Victorian New Zealand, London, 1958, p. 24; E.P., 9 December 1946, p. 12, col. 3; McNab, pp. 350-1; G.H. Schofield (ed.), A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Wellington, 1940, I, p. 43; Wilson, p. 436; A.B. Scanlan, Historic New Plymouth, Wellington, 1968, p. 9; C. & C. Manson, Pioneer Parade, Wellington, 1966, p. 180; Skinner, p. 6; Centennial of Taranaki 31st March, 1941.

¹⁶ Ward, pp. 332-3; A.H. McLintock (ed.), An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, Wellington, 1966, I, p. 161; Schofield, I, p. 43; Dominion, 21 August 1922; Waldie, p. 38; E.P., 9 September 1946, p. 12 and 22 February 1947; T.H., 4 December 1976, p. 5 and 31 July 1982; Press, 16 July 1982, p. 14; Scanlan, Taranaki People and Places, pp. 22, 23; Wilson, p. 433; Taranaki Museum, p. 8.

¹⁷ E.P., 9 September 1946, p. 12 and 22 February 1947; T.H., 4 December 1976, p. 5 and 10 May 1978; A.S., 21 January 1965 and 30 July 1977.

¹⁸ Dominion, 21 August 1922; T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8 and 3 June 1978, p. 5; S.T., 21 May 1978.

¹⁹ A. Hood, Dicky Barrett: With His Ancient Mariners and Much More Ancient Cannon at the Siege Of Moturoa: Being a Realistic Story of the Rough Old Times in New Zealand among the Turbulent Maoris and the Adventurous Whalers ere Settlement took place, New Plymouth, 1890. Reprinted by Southern Reprints, Auckland, 1986.

sometimes princesses, who fell in love with the European hero.²⁰

Evidence that did not fit the carefully constructed stereotypes of pioneers was ignored. In Dicky Barrett, sexual relations outside marriage were frowned upon by the whalers as improper, and Rawinia and Dicky Barrett's de facto relationship was ignored.²¹ Seffern used the part of Jervis' account about the establishment of New Plymouth, but he ignored Jervis' version of the siege of Otaka pa. Other writers followed his lead. Jervis challenged dearly held beliefs about Anglo-Saxon superiority and has not been used as a source in any of the secondary literature on the siege.

Although Dicky Barrett was a fictional account, and Jervis' account was ignored, they were the first of several accounts to appear from 1890 onward about the siege. They were followed by a lengthy account in Seffern's Chronicles in 1896. Accounts by W.H. Skinner were published in the Taranaki Herald in 1899, The Journal of the Polynesian Society in 1910, and Percy Smith's History and Traditions in 1910. Robert McNab included an account of the siege in The Old Whaling Days in 1913.

This growing fascination with the siege at Otaka was the result of an increasing militarism in New Zealand in the 1890s. Most Britons at the time respected achievers in war and had confidence in the supremacy of Anglo-Saxons in military matters. New Zealanders shared this view, but they did not develop a legend about the

²⁰ J. Gries, 'An outline of prose fiction in New Zealand', PhD. thesis, Auckland University, 1951, I, p. 31; L. Jones, 'The Novel', in T. Sturm (ed.), The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, Auckland, 1991, p. 122; W.H. Pearson, 'Attitudes to the Maori in some Pakeha Fiction', JPS, LXVII, 3, 1958, p. 217.

²¹ Hood, pp. 24, 85, 107.

superiority of New Zealand troops until the Boer War as they had won too few successes in the New Zealand Wars.²² This changed in 1899 when New Zealand troops were sent to South Africa. Many New Zealanders believed that the rural way of life was morally and physically superior to urban life, and fears of the feminising influence of city life on men meant that New Zealanders were predisposed to value war as a way to maintain virility.²³ Even though most recruits were from urban areas, a stereotype was developed of New Zealand men as toughened by rural life and suited for war. The qualities that New Zealand troops were imbued with for the next fifty years were of pioneering origin - they were brave, strong, versatile, and possessed a strength of character.²⁴ New Zealand's past was ransacked for examples of European military valour. The siege at Otaka pa seemed to fit into this category.

The siege was interpreted along similar lines to accounts of the New Zealand Wars. According to Belich, 'British stereotypes of their own and of Maori military abilities determined what was acceptable and what was not.'²⁵ Military excellence was seen as being an innate characteristic of Britons, while it was believed that indigenous people lacked the higher mental faculties.²⁶ Therefore, although the primary sources only mention that Barrett was in the pa at the time of the siege, subsequent writers

²² Phillips, p. 134.

²³ Ibid, p. 137; D. Hamer, 'Centralization and Nationalism', in K. Sinclair (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1990, pp. 139-40; E. Olssen, 'Towards a New Society', in W.H. Oliver (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, pp. 250, 263.

²⁴ Phillips, pp. 146, 148, 149, 151, 155.

²⁵ Belich, p. 312.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 322.

embellished his role. William Pember Reeves called Barrett 'the life and soul of the defence'.²⁷ Other writers claimed that the pa would have fallen if it had not been for the determined stand taken by Barrett and his companions.²⁸

Te Ati Awa were by comparison portrayed as irrational for allowing Tainui representatives into the pa, trading with them during the siege, and considering supposedly treacherous peace offers. In Hood's novel, European notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority are very evident. A few Maori were portrayed as noble characters, but only because they behaved in a European manner. Rawinia was literate, spoke perfect English, and read Christian texts. She fell in love with Barrett after he rescued her from captivity at Kawhia, but she was reserved and careful not to show her true feelings.²⁹ Te Wharepouri drilled his warriors and lectured his people 'severely and unstintedly on their pernicious habit of lying or squatting about so many hours of the day in absolute idleness'³⁰

Hood believed Maori to be the most intelligent of the world's indigenous peoples and Te Wharepouri was 'head and shoulders higher than any [other Maori] in intellectual capacity'³¹ Yet even Te Wharepouri was found wanting when he was compared to Barrett. Hood used the siege as a device to highlight the supposed inferiority of

²⁷ Reeves, p. 118.

²⁸ Smith, p. 471; S.P. Smith, 'History and Traditions of the Taranaki Coast', IPS, XIX, 1910, p. 26; T.H., 22 November 1899; E.P., 27 February 1947; Seffern, p. 8; A. Mulgan, The City of the Strait. Wellington and its Province, Wellington, 1939, p. 24; Kelly, p. 392.

²⁹ Hood, pp. 50, 51-2, 62.

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 32-3, 69, 79, 94.

³¹ Ibid, p. 34.

Maori. When the Tainui made an offer of peace, Te Ati Awa were ready to accept it until Barrett intervened. Then they realised 'their characteristic proneness of initially getting captivated by hollow and artful representations', and Te Wharepouri approached Barrett and 'abased his head abashedly, as that of a dog which had given its master grievous offence, and showed the utmost abject contrition for his recent too confiding simplicity'³² Then Barrett came up with a plan and defeated the taua. Rawinia's father said to Barrett that 'to you, and you alone, Pakeha chief, we owe our success to, for, had we Maori chiefs our own way, most likely, by this time, the most of us would have been food for any mouth ready to sink teeth in our pulp.'³³

The marginalisation of Maori and the exaltation of the pioneers was also a feature of the celebration of the centenary of European settlement in 1940. There was a widespread feeling among European New Zealanders that colonisation had been an outstanding success. The country had been transformed from a wilderness into productive farmland, and New Zealanders enjoyed the highest standard of living in the world.³⁴ As part of the celebrations, pageants took place in most towns, including New Plymouth, and they were centred on floats representing historical scenes such as the arrival of the pioneers. These community celebrations of European settlement presented the same selective view of the pioneers that the literature of the time put forward. In March 1941 New Plymouth also celebrated the centenary of the arrival of the William Bryan with the city's first settlers. An entire page was devoted

³² Ibid, p. 93.

³³ Ibid, p. 106.

³⁴ Phillips, p. 40; K. Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, Auckland, 1988, p. 278; Sinclair, A Destiny Apart, p. 239.

to articles on Barrett in The Taranaki Herald, and in a pageant re-enacting the settlers' arrival, a prominent place was given to Dicky Barrett telling tall tales and assisting the new arrivals.³⁵ An account of the pageant noted that Barrett's 'joyful countenance and hearty manner smoothed away all troubles'³⁶

As part of the 1940 celebrations, a National Centennial Historical Committee was established to seek out unpublished manuscripts. One of their discoveries was a reminiscence, attributed to Barrett, which was found in the possession of W.T. Duffin, the husband of one of Barrett's great-granddaughters. A constant change in tenses from past tense to present tense and back again gives the impression that it was written over a period of years. A 17 page typescript which was made in 1940 is now held by the Turnbull Library. The original is no longer extant. It contained an introduction and a conclusion written in the third person by an unidentified author. The rest provided details of Barrett's life in New Zealand, supposedly written by Barrett. It is roughly written and contains a number of basic grammatical errors. Sentences tend to ramble through the frequent use of commas when a new sentence would be more appropriate. There is also a second typescript held by the New Plymouth Public Library. It is a later copy. The cover sheet refers to the death of Duffin in September 1943, and it may be the copy of the journal given to the New Plymouth Historical Society by Mrs Duffin in October 1945.³⁷ There are significant differences between the two typescripts. Most of the grammatical errors were

³⁵ T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8.

³⁶ Ibid., 31 March 1941, p. 6, col. 1.

³⁷ R. Barrett, Diary, Typescript, NPL; T.H., 9 October 1945, p. 7, col. 2.

corrected in the second typescript and entire passages were reworked.

There are many irregularities in the dates and events in the journal that contradict other sources. For example, the six years that Barrett spent whaling at Te Awaiti was ignored. In the journal, Barrett moved directly from Ngamotu to Port Nicholson in 1834. Barrett was depicted as a gentleman with little sympathy for the common man. He complained about labourers being insolent and intoxicated, appealed for law and order, and labelled the European immigrants as outcasts from English society.³⁸ In the second half of the journal some rather grand and false claims were made about Barrett's activities. It portrayed a man who wielded considerable political influence. Barrett brought Edward Wakefield and William Fox to Wellington; dealt with Captain FitzRoy and Charles Darwin; and nominated the successful candidate for Mayor.³⁹

The journal's inaccuracies could represent an attempt by a man looking back at his life to influence the way that he would be seen by posterity. Barrett saw himself as playing an important part in the colonisation of New Zealand and the journal could be seen as a reflection of that belief. There are some writers however who have cast doubt, not only on the accuracy of the journal, but also its authenticity. F.B. Butler wrote that 'this account contains valuable material, but it also contains whatever Mr Duffin thought fit to colour it with, also the dates do not stand investigation (sic), always, with the known facts.'⁴⁰ W.H. Skinner believed that the journal was 'a

³⁸ R. Barrett, Journal, 1827-1847, MS 1736, Typescript, ATL, pp. 9-10, 12, 14.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

⁴⁰ These comments were typed on to the front of the typescript of the journal in the New Plymouth Public Library.

composite sketch said to have been written by Barrett himself but its composition throws doubt and distrust on this. Probably much of it written by a g[rand]-son who has drawn on his imagination. Little real value can be placed on it.⁴¹ This followed a meeting Skinner attended of the New Plymouth Historical Society where a paper was presented by G.H. Davey based largely on the journal. Skinner believed that the journal was written by Dicky Barrett's grandson, Richard Barrett Honeyfield, and later copied by Duffin.

There are indications in the text that it was written after Barrett's death. In the journal, Barrett's host hapu is referred to Ngati Te Whiti, yet Europeans in the nineteenth century referred to them as Ngamotu, from their place of residence. Barrett followed this practice.⁴² Similarly, the local iwi is referred to as Ati Awa, yet they were known as Ngati Awa in the nineteenth century. It is a modern practice to call them Ati Awa to distinguish them from Ngati Awa who reside on the East Coast.⁴³ In addition, there is a reference in the journal a plimsoll mark on the Adventure.⁴⁴ However the plimsoll line was only placed on the hulls of British ships following the passing of the Merchant Shipping Act in 1876.⁴⁵ Wellington is referred to in the journal by the nickname Windy Wellington, which it is often known by

⁴¹ These handwritten comments, dated 20 October 1945, were written on to a copy of G.H. Davey, *The Life of Richard Barrett*, Typescript, NPL.

⁴² Aubrey to McLean, December 1846, McLean Papers.

⁴³ K. Sinclair, The Origins of the Maori Wars, Wellington, 1961, p. 112.

⁴⁴ Barrett, Journal, ATL, p. 4.

⁴⁵ The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford, 1989, XI, p. 1052.

today.⁴⁶ However, Barrett left the town less than two months after its name was changed from Port Nicholson to Wellington, and Henry Weekes indicated that it was referred to as Portnic by the settlers.⁴⁷

There are other details in the journal that Barrett would not have had any reason to falsify. For example, the journal referred to Williams and Holmes who were supposed to have worked for Barrett at Ngamotu. However, there is no record of these men in any other source.⁴⁸ It is more likely that Barrett would have referred to Bill Bundy and John Wright, who were with him from 1828 until his death in 1847. Furthermore, the journal indicated that Barrett persuaded Te Ati Awa to plant flax 30 miles along the coast south of Ngamotu.⁴⁹ However Ngamotu was the southern boundary of Te Ati Awa territory, and the area indicated is in Taranaki territory, which Barrett would have known. There is also no record in the Sydney shipping records of Captain Le Quesne, who is named in the journal as the commander of a vessel that Barrett dealt with on more than one occasion.⁵⁰

The most conclusive indication of the authenticity of the journal is the account of events at Otaka pa in 1832. The journal indicated that Barrett and his men were living on one of the Sugar Loaf Islands at the time of the raid. They saw Waikato

⁴⁶ Barrett, Journal, ATL, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Weekes, p. 77.

⁴⁸ McNab, p. 41; Smith, History and Traditions, pp. 471-2; Wells, p. 11; Jervis, NZH, 16 April 1892, supplement, p. 1, col. 3.

⁴⁹ Barrett, Journal, ATL, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp. 4, 5, 9.

approaching in canoes along the coast and fled to the mainland and warned Te Ati Awa. In the battle lasting eight hours that followed, the Europeans and Te Ati Awa were victorious and drove off the invaders. The enemy dead were then buried.⁵¹ However this account bears little relation to the actual events at Otaka in 1832 or to the yarns told by Barrett to settlers. In these yarns Barrett delighted in reciting in lurid detail the cannibalism that followed the siege and he confirmed that he and his men were living on the mainland at the time; that Waikato approached Otaka from land and not by sea; and that a siege lasting several weeks took place.⁵²

Many of the events in the journal appear to be fabrications or copied from sources that were available in the early twentieth century. One source that was used extensively was Percy Smith's History and Traditions. The account of the arrival of Barrett in the journal is virtually identical, even down to the order of the facts. Similar errors are made. In both accounts, Te Ati Awa boarded the Adventure and indicated that they have plenty of flax and pigs at Ngamotu; when they landed, Love and Barrett were given Ngati Te Whiti wives; the cargo was landed and Te Ati Awa built a house named Patarutu for the Europeans; a large number of pigs were killed and cured; the traders spent at least 3 months at Ngamotu before returning to Sydney (shipping records indicate that the traders actually spent less than a month at Ngamotu); and Te Ati Awa chiefs went to Sydney on the Adventure.⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 6-8.

⁵² Aubrey to McLean, 19 December 1846, McLean Papers; Jervis, NZH, 23 April 1892, supplement, p. 1; Aubrey, p. 54; Weekes, pp. 66-8.

⁵³ Barrett, Journal, ATL, pp. 2-3; Smith, History and Traditions, pp. 444-5.

Another source that was used by the writer of the journal was Barrett's Will. The journal stated that in 1838 Barrett placed an order for cattle farming implements, merchandise, wines and spirits, fermented liquors, furniture, whaling gear, and boat building appliances.⁵⁴ Virtually the same items were named in the Will, in the same order, as Barrett's possessions. There was also a reference in the journal to a block of land known as the Wakawa block at Ngamotu which Barrett was supposed to have gifted to Rawinia. It was described as Number 514 in the Survey General's plan of New Zealand.⁵⁵ When transposing these details from the will, the writer mistakenly used the number applying to the land claimed by Barrett in Wellington.

It appears likely that the author of the introduction and the conclusion wrote the journal. The introduction claimed that Barrett was born in Durham and there are references in the journal that indicate that the writer of the journal believed this also. The journal named Barrett's attorney as George Townshend, the Lieutenant-Governor of Durham, indicating that Barrett came from Durham when he was in fact a Londoner.⁵⁶ Furthermore the conclusion claimed that Barrett was a man of substance, as did the journal. At his death

Barrett was probably the wealthiest man of this period in New Zealand, at his death he owned 110 acres [in] Wellington including businesses of various kinds, he had large Taranaki interests also an estate in Durham. Though Barrett is frequently referred to as a whaler, it is a significant fact that Barrett had never personally engaged in this occupation, he having engaged others to do this work.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Barrett, Journal, ATL, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 1, 9.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

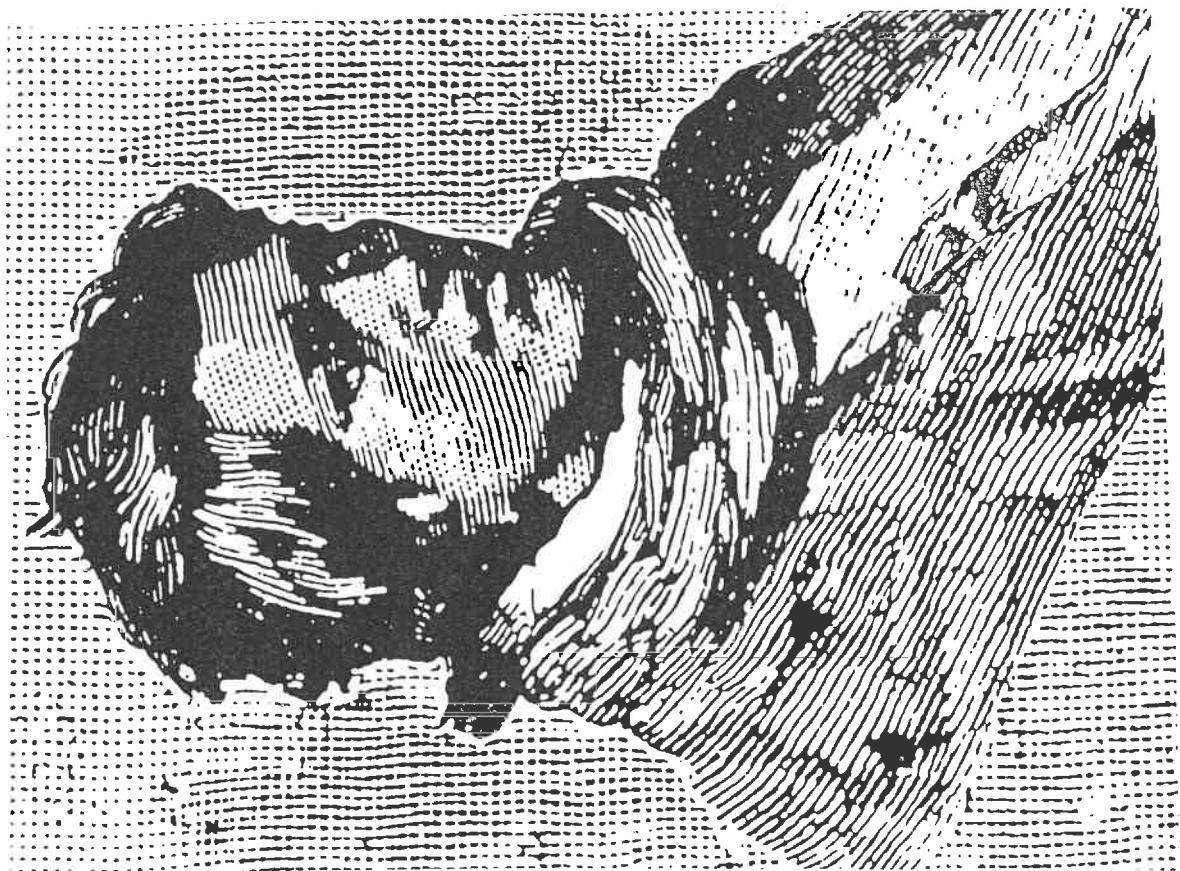
The conclusion covered up Barrett's involvement in whaling at Te Awaiti, as did the author of the journal. The conclusion also stated that Sarah Barrett was born on Moturoa Island, when in fact she was born at the Te Awaiti whaling station. The authorship of the journal can not be attributed with any degree of certainty to any particular person, but the claims made by Skinner and Butler that it was Richard Barrett Honeyfield and / or W.T. Duffin may be correct.

The journal has proven to be a trap for the many writers who have accepted it as an authentic and accurate account of Barrett's life and have used it as a source.⁵⁸ An unsuccessful attempt was made by one of Barrett's descendant to interest Hollywood film producers in making a movie about Barrett's life based on the events in the journal.⁵⁹ Drawings of Dicky and Rawinia Barrett taken from woodcuts in the possession of the Duffins in the 1940s have been used by writers on the assumption that they are contemporary and authentic representations. However they may be the attempt by some later artist to capture the real Barretts. It is not known when they were done, or who the artist was.

Through sheer repetition, the journal has had a major impact on the way that Barrett is perceived, yet it has not replaced Wakefield's construct or later refinements to it. Instead the different images have co-existed side by side, even though there are

⁵⁸ Taranaki Daily News, 29 March 1940, p. 13; T.H., 29 March 1941, p. 8, 4 December 1976, p. 5, 10 May 1978 and 3 June 1978, p.5; E.P., 22 February 1947; S.T., 21 May 1978; Wilson, pp. 433-8; Taranaki Museum, pp. 1-2, 4; Scanlan, Historic New Plymouth, p. 9; Moorhead, pp. 9-10; Davey, pp. 1-6; J. Bremner, 'Dicky Barrett', in W.H. Oliver (ed.), The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Wellington, 1990, I, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁹ S.T., 21 May 1978; T.H., 10 May 1978.



Woodcut drawings of Dicky and Rawinia Barrett. It is not known when they were done, or who the artist was. Source: Taranaki Museum.

elements which are contradictory. For example, the common man portrayed by Wakefield has become a member of the governing class in the journal. Yet there are many similarities. In both interpretations Barrett had a benign influence on Maori and was an authority on Maori. Most writers who have drawn on the journal as a source have sidestepped the contradictions by drawing selectively on parts of both depictions and creating a new construct which viewed Barrett as a successful businessman, but also a man of the people. He was politically influential but also a fat, jolly pioneer. This view of Barrett persisted for some time.

Although the alternative view expressed by FitzRoy in 1846 did not have much impact on historical literature, there were from time to time others who supported his conclusions. These included George Clarke junior's Notes on Early Life in New Zealand (published in 1903). As sub-Protector of Aborigines in the early 1840s, he cross examined Barrett at the Spain Commission hearings in Wellington and was critical of Barrett's abilities as an interpreter. He wrote that Barrett 'was a decent fellow enough among men of his class, but he was very ignorant, and I soon made him show in the course of his evidence that he did not even understand the English meanings of the deed he professed to interpret'⁶⁰

This view was followed by Alan Mulgan in The City of the Strait (published in 1939). Although he portrayed Maori as 'fierce savages' eager for battle, Mulgan showed an understanding of and sensitivity towards the Maori relationship to the land which

⁶⁰ Clarke, pp. 48-9.

was uncharacteristic of the time.⁶¹ Although Mulgan did not question the beneficial nature of colonisation, he noted that Barrett was 'not well qualified' to act as an interpreter, and pointed out the shortcomings of the sale in some detail.⁶²

R.G. Wood in From Plymouth to New Plymouth (published in 1959) shared many of Mulgan's sentiments. Wood described Maori as war-like, elusive, recalcitrant, shrewd and difficult to control.⁶³ He strove to show that the unrest that resulted from colonisation was not due to the pioneers, but was the result of the actions of certain individuals and groups. Chief amongst these were Governor FitzRoy, the missionaries, the Colonial Office and Dicky Barrett. Wood called Barrett 'an adventurer: tough, ignorant and unscrupulous', and a 'schemer' who caused the settlers considerable trouble with his handling of the land purchases.⁶⁴

Neither Mulgan or Wood abandoned the pioneer stereotype but from the late 1960s historians abandoned many of the old assumptions about the beneficial nature of colonisation and Anglo-Saxon superiority. In 1975 the Waitangi tribunal was established to investigate claims where Maori had been affected adversely by actions of the Crown, and in 1984 the Tribunal's jurisdiction was widened to include claims dating back to 1840. This stimulated research into the acquisition of Maori land. Consequently, Dicky Barrett came under renewed scrutiny due to his integral role in

⁶¹ Mulgan, pp. 4-6, 18, 31.

⁶² Ibid, pp. 62, 65, 71, 122.

⁶³ Wood, pp. 71, 72, 77.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 40-1, 157.

the transactions involving the New Zealand Company.

Much of what was said about Barrett at this time was not new. Patricia Burns in Te Rauparaha and Fatal Success (published in 1981 and 1989 respectively), and Rosemarie Tonk in The Making of Wellington (published in 1990) renewed the attack by FitzRoy and George Clarke junior on Barrett's abilities as an interpreter. However they laid new charges against Barrett as well. Tonk accused Barrett of not explaining the political undercurrents of the sale to Wakefield, and encouraging him to ignore the opposition of those Maori who were unwilling to sell.⁶⁵ Burns went further in her attack on Barrett. She was aware that Barrett's journal was inaccurate, but accepted that Barrett was the author and cited it as evidence of Barrett's 'mental confusion' and questioned whether the journal was 'the product of premature senility or some such disorder.'⁶⁶

These views have not gone unchallenged. Some writers have been unwilling to abandon their fixation with the pioneers. David McGill took part in debates against Patricia Burns in the Turnbull Library. In his centenary history of Lower Hutt, McGill defended Barrett's abilities as an interpreter and down played the difficulty of communicating such an alien concept as selling land to Te Ati Awa.⁶⁷ This debate has gone largely unnoticed in Taranaki. Most of the recent historical works on the region have been written by journalists who have been unaware of the new trends.

⁶⁵ Tonk, p. 52.

⁶⁶ Burns, Fatal Success, pp. 124-5.

⁶⁷ McGill, pp. 30-1, 226.

Many of these accounts first appeared in local newspapers, such as Brian Scanlan's Taranaki People and Places (published in 1985) and Murray Moorhead's Tales of Old New Plymouth and Tales of Old North Taranaki (published in 1991). They repeated earlier works in their depiction of Barrett.

One of the more substantial recent local histories by another journalist, J.S. Tullett's The Industrious Heart (published in 1981) followed this pattern. The book was based almost entirely on secondary sources, and was caught up with the preoccupations of the literature of occupation. It focused on progress and development, and ignored the considerable Maori pre-history of the area by claiming that Maori history was little more than a story of inter-tribal warfare.⁶⁸ As there are few Maori living in New Plymouth, Tullett wrote that 'this book is basically a European history of a European settlement.'⁶⁹ Maori appeared only when they interfered with the development of the area by Europeans. Tullett's account of the siege of Otaka pa followed earlier works in emphasising Maori 'atrocities' and 'irrational' behaviour. Barrett's role was given some prominence.

In the colonial era Dicky Barrett was a reassuring figure to many New Zealanders who looked to the past with a sense of nostalgia. The pioneers became role models to be held up and emulated. To meet these needs, Dicky Barrett underwent a transformation in the 1890s and acquired characteristics that became stereotypical for the pioneer. During the 1940s Dicky Barrett underwent another transformation into

⁶⁸ Tullett, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. xvi.

a politically influential and successful businessman. This image co-existed alongside earlier constructions of Barrett as a fat, jolly whaler adored by Maori. In the late twentieth century however, historians have abandoned the old assumptions and studied the past with new insights. Dicky Barrett has been re-examined in this new light, but only in a piecemeal fashion. There is no biography of Barrett available and this thesis has been designed to fill this gap. Barrett was many things that earlier writers focused on - he was generous, hospitable, jovial, kind hearted and friendly. Usually those facets of his character which were less attractive have been ignored. Barrett had an insatiable hunger for land and rewards. He had a limited knowledge of Maori but an abundant confidence in his ability to act as an interpreter. His carelessness in the transactions involving land was matched by his carelessness in business. Any appraisal of Dicky Barrett, trader, whaler, interpreter, needs to take account of all of these aspects of Barrett's personality.

APPENDIXRICHARD BARRETT'S ORIGINS

Little is known about Barrett's English family, and most of what is known is based on hearsay. For example -

- 1/ Barrett is believed to have been born in 1807.
- 2/ Barrett is believed to have been born either in Durham or Rotherhithe, London.
- 3/ An article in the Dominion in 1922 stated that Barrett had a sister.

Other clues in the search for Barrett's family include -

- 1/ There is a copy of a letter in the Turnbull Library from Barrett to an unnamed brother.
- 2/ Barrett's daughters (Sarah Mary, Caroline and Mary Anne) may have been named after relatives.

I have conducted a county by county search of the International Genealogical Index of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. There is a record of a Richard Latter Barrett who was christened in London in 1807. It is my belief that this Richard Barrett is the right one, for the following reasons -

- 1/ There is no record of the birth of a Richard Barrett in Durham.
- 2/ There was only one Richard Barrett christened in England in 1807.
- 3/ The names of the family members for this Richard Barrett include Sarah, Mary and Ann.
- 4/ There is at least one brother and one sister.
- 5/ One of the Barrett children was christened at Rotherhithe. Most of the other children were christened at St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, which is only a few miles from Rotherhithe.

FAMILY DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS -

PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS (?) -

Michael and Mary Barrett

PARENTS -

1/ Matthew Barrett

Christened at St. Martin in the Fields, Westminster on 25 May 1777 (there is only one Matthew Barrett born around the right time so I have assumed that this is the correct one. However, if he was born outside London then this may be the wrong Matthew Barrett).

2/ Sarah Bunce

There is no record of Sarah's birth in the London county records.

Matthew and Sarah were married on 20 March 1803 at St. Botolph, Bishopsgate.

CHILDREN -

1/ Elizabeth Barrett

Christened on 1 January 1804 at St. James Garlickhithe.

2/ Thomas Barratt*

Christened on 26 February 1805 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

3/ Richard Latter Barrett

Christened on 4 March 1807 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

4/ Joseph Barratt*

Christened on 6 March 1811 at St. Mary's, Rotherhithe.

Christened on 19 April 1811 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

5/ Robert Barrett

Christened on 17 March 1813 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

6/ William Barratt*,#

Christened on 9 December 1814 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

7/ Ann Elizabeth Barrett

Christened on 10 January 1817 at St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

* The surname for Joseph, Thomas and William is spelt as Barratt in the records.

The father's name is not recorded for William Barratt. In all the other cases the names of the parents are recorded as Matthew and Sarah Barrett.

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