



BUSINESS SERIES 1

Farming

Farming, one of the oldest industries of New Zealand colonists, is widely covered in Otago and Southland records in the Hocken Collections. The 'run holders', as they were described, invariably had more individual wealth than many other shareholders in the businesses that developed in the 1870s and 1880s after the Otago gold-rush had passed, when southern New Zealand was developing a strong commercial future.

Runholders and Stations

Farming records commence with a wide range of family diaries, the sources easily determined in the Hocken archives database Hakena under 'farming' or 'runholders'. The diaries are for the most part fairly dull, recording the mundane work patterns of each day, the weather (always the weather), cropping, fencing, mustering, shearing, burning off, laying poison for rabbits. But in addition to these regular activities they also included family business, costs of material and stock purchased, gardening, cutting firewood, disputes on fencing, and sharing the work with neighbours. They reflected the farming cycle throughout the year and some even have notes on determining the ages of sheep from their teeth, caring for fleeces and routine farming advice. There is also reference to 'boundary keepers' who had to live in extreme solitude in huts along farm boundaries to keep the stock from wandering and who were subsequently protected by legislation to ensure they were visited once a fortnight. Diaries also reveal that even on the coming of steamers, many farmers still sent their wool by sailing ship, the slower sailing ships attracting cargo by agreeing to pay cartage from the farm to the nearest port. The diaries of Dickson Jardine are a good example of these records.

An MA thesis by Marilyn Campbell titled 'Run holding in Otago and Southland 1848–1876' (1981) explains in detail how land was made available and various runs were established. More specifically it gives an excellent insight into farming conditions, hardships, fencing, shearing, wild pigs and dogs, attacks by keas, dipping, sheep breeds, sheep diseases, cattle, rabbits, boiling-down works, and wool production. Many of the early runholders are listed in Rev J.G. Sinclair's 2003 booklet titled (only available from the Reference Desk) *Who Was Who in Otago Among the Run Holders, Club Members and Company Promoters up to about 1880*.

The research papers of Peter Chandler and Robert Pinney, have extensive information on family genealogy and marriage links with families on other farms and sheep stations. In addition to the diaries and other records in the Hocken archives, a good insight into a number of farming families is contained in the three-volume *Advance Guard*

books published to mark the 125th Anniversary of the Otago Settlement. An MA thesis prepared by E. Y. Speirs has used the extensive Preston family records in the Hocken Collections to summarise the farming activities of this family — *Preston Runholding in the Maniototo and the Mackenzie 1858–1917* (1953). Helen Harraway's MA thesis on 'John Roberts, Man of Business' (1967) is also a useful background to the farming and business activities of Sir John Roberts.

Other books of farming interest include *The Boy Colonists or Eight Years of Colonial Life in Otago* by Rev E.J.S. Elwell (1878); *Reminiscences of the Early Settlement of Dunedin and South Otago* by John Wilson (1912); four books by Herries Beattie, *Mackenzie of the Mackenzie Country* (1946), *Early Runholders in Otago* (1947), *The Southern Runs* (1979) and *More About the Early Runs* (1982); *Sturdy Sons – The story of a New Zealand family* (Orbell) by C. Holmes Miller (1958); *Sailing Ships and Sheep Stations* by Christian Shirres (1964); *Early North Otago Runs* by Robert Pinney (1981); *Glenaray* by Peter M Chandler (1984); *Fifty Years of Sheep Farming in Canterbury, Otago and Southland* by C. W.F. Overton (1948) and *Run, Estate and Farm (Kakanui and Waiareka Valleys)* (1948). The regional histories published for the 1948 Otago centennial also yield useful farming information.

An effective summary of early New Zealand farming activity, with statistical details of such things as crop percentages, acreages per 100 population, livestock numbers, numbers of holdings and average size, freehold and Crown land ratios etc is contained in the two-volume PhD thesis by R.P. Hargreaves titled *Speed the Plough – An historical geography of New Zealand farms before the introduction of refrigeration* (1966).

New Zealand and Australian Land Company Limited

This substantial Scottish company, with a capital of £2,500,000, had its New Zealand office in Dunedin. It owned and managed a number of stations in Canterbury and Otago including 'Acton' near Rakaia, 'Levels' and 'Pareora' at Timaru, 'Hakataramea' near Kurow, 'Totara' near Oamaru, 'Moeraki' at Hampden, 'Clydevale' near Clinton and 'Edendale' in Southland. They comprised a total of 209,986 acres, while the leasehold properties totalled 339,745 acres. After the Crown, it was the second largest landowner in New Zealand. The Hocken Collections holds a hard copy of the Land Company archives prepared by the Scottish Accord Office and also 63 microfilms covering the minute books of the New Zealand and Otago Agricultural & Investment Association 1862–1868, Canterbury and Otago Association 1865–1877 and the New Zealand and Australian Land Co. Ltd. 1866–1962. The microfilms also contain balance sheets, journals, account sales, produce books, as well as letter books and cablegrams.

The company, through its Superintendent, Thomas Brydone, was instrumental in arranging the first shipment of frozen meat from New Zealand in the sailing ship *Dunedin* in

1882. A useful adjunct to these microfilms is a PhD thesis on the company by Mervyn Palmer (1971). The 660-page book provides a comprehensive history of the origins and operations of the company. It was absorbed into Dalgety and Company in 1969 but the NMA Company of New Zealand Limited held its Power of Attorney in New Zealand and further archives appear within the NMA documents. Mervyn Palmer's thesis has also been microfilmed. The General Manager for the Land Company, William Soltau Davidson, wrote a sketch of his life covering the 52 years (1864–1916) that he was with the company, and this is also a useful research document. A 43 page booklet by Gordon Parry, titled *Hakataramea Hundred* covers the Land Company's administration of this station from 1868 to 1968. Original records of the Canterbury Assn. between 1848–1853 are held at reference ARC-0024.

Wright Stephenson & Company Limited

To service the farming industry, to provide finance, to market stock and provide farming services, a number of Dunedin based 'stock and station' agencies were formed. The first of these was Wright, Robertson, established in Dunedin in 1861. Renamed Wright Stephenson in 1865, it eventually became the largest rural servicing company in New Zealand and remains so today. The history of the company is told in *A Century's Challenge* by J.C. Irving in 1961 but with the transfer of the Head Office from Dunedin to Wellington in 1918, few records of the company are held in Dunedin. However the Hocken Collections holds Invercargill Branch records from 1899–1918, Dunedin land sales books 1907–1971, records of the Lawrence Branch 1934–1946 and copies of *The Wrightsonian*, the company staff magazine between 1921–50. A useful, more localised history of the origins of the company and its southern establishment is contained in a jubilee souvenir published by the company titled *Wright Stephenson & Co. Ltd – 1861–1911*. The booklet contains valuable photographs, as well an industry comment on the sale of wool, the establishment of the horse sales and stories of client relationships.

NMA Company of New Zealand Limited

The second agency company was the National Mortgage & Agency Company of N.Z. Ltd., commonly called the NMA Company. It was originally formed in Dunedin by George Gray Russell and John Macfarlane Ritchie as Russell, Ritchie and Co. in 1864 becoming the NMA Company in 1877. The Hocken holds extensive files of the NMA Company from 1865 and as the company was London-based the London head office records from 1877–1975 have also been obtained. It is a most comprehensive archive covering Board minutes from 1877 to 1969, share register details, and extensive accounting records both in Dunedin and London. To gain an understanding of the style of business in earlier times, and the personalities involved, the following letterbooks are held: J.M. Ritchie 1865–1912, George Gray Russell 1873–1881, G.R. Ritchie 1901–1944 and the NMA Company, London 1899–1960. Documents include material from such associated or subsidiary companies as Robertson Bros., Oamaru; J.G. Ward & Co., Invercargill; Levin & Company, Wellington; Longburn Freezing Works; MacEwans Machinery Limited, Dunedin; Murray Roberts & Company, Dunedin and branches of the NMA Company throughout New Zealand. Of particular interest are branch manager's

reports on individual farm accounts, 1928–59, which offer an excellent conspectus of the farming economy in depression, war and post-war boom. The NMA Company developed nationwide and acquired a number of other stock and station agency companies. The Hocken Collections holds records from: Stronach Morris & Company Limited 1893–1970, Murray, Roberts & Company Limited 1879–1881, and records and papers of Sir John Roberts in the period 1864–1906.

A centennial history of the NMA Company, written by Gordon Parry and entitled *N.M.A. The story of the first hundred years*, was published in 1964. *Murray Roberts and Company* by A.A. Roberts was published in 1983 and the history of the first hundred years of Levin and Company was told in *Levins 1841–1941* by Ross Gore (1956).

The NMA Company eventually amalgamated in 1972 with Wright Stephenson and Co., as Wrightson N.M.A., and in 1986 the remaining nationwide stock and station agency, Dalgety Crown, was also absorbed into Wrightson. The Hocken Collections holds some records of the Dalgety Crown, Gore branch, dating back to when the company was Dalgety & Co. in the period 1914–1963. Dalgety itself had absorbed the N.Z. Loan and Mercantile Agency Co. Ltd., and the Hocken holds ledgers 1886–1918 and some account books 1878–1881 from this company. A background to the origins of the British-based Dalgety & Co. is contained in *Dalgety and Company 1884–1935* which was published for the jubilee of the company. Dalgety had its New Zealand origins in Dunedin in the 1860s initially as Dalgety Rattray & Company and later as Dalgety, Nichols and Company.

Reid Farmers Limited

The principal rural servicing company within Otago was Donald Reid & Company, established in Dunedin in 1878. It became a limited liability company in 1900 and was quietly successful throughout every year of its long history. It acquired the Oamaru based Stringer & Co. in 1962; merged with the Otago Farmers Co-operative Assn. in 1974 to form Donald Reid Otago Farmers Ltd., and finally in 1997 took over the rural assets of the Southland Farmers Co-op Ltd., Invercargill. By this time the company was trading as Reid Farmers Ltd. From 1988 the Christchurch-based Pyne, Gould Guinness Ltd. had acquired a 40% interest in Reid Farmers and in September 2001 the shareholdings were restructured in a new company which two months later was renamed Pyne Gould Guinness Limited with representation over much of the South Island. (A background history of the Canterbury firm is available in the book by P.G. Stevens, published in 1969 titled *Pyne Gould Guinness Ltd, the Jubilee History 1919–1969*.)

The Hocken Collections has extensive holdings of these companies which are summarised as follows: Donald Reid & Co / Donald Reid Otago Farmers / Reid Farmers Directors' minute books 1900–1988 as well as annual reports from 1901 to the present. The Hocken Archives also hold minute books of Stringer and Co. in the period 1933–1998 and Otago Farmers Co-op Assn. of New Zealand Limited Directors minute books from 1895 when it was formed until 1976, together with annual reports from 1895–1970. In addition there are sundry financial records

over the period 1910–1963.

A centennial history titled *Donald Reid Otago Farmers* by John H. Angus was published in 1978, and as a Supplement to the 2000 Annual Report, marking 100 years since the first limited liability company was formed, a 16-page summary of the history of the company was distributed to shareholders. A further book written by Alfred Eccles, *Donald Reid, Statesman*, dealing with his political life, was published in 1939.

Wool Dumping

Donald Reid and Co., in partnership with Dunedin shipping agency, H.L. Tapley & Co., formed a wool dumping company called Dunedin Wool Dumpers Ltd. in July 1937. Wool dumping, developed around the turn of the 20th century, was designed to save shipping space by pressing two bales of wool together, to make a cubic package comparable to the space occupied by one bale of wool. Prior to the dumping of wool, bales had been 'screwed' by jacks into the holds of the ships. Shipping companies or Harbour Boards usually provided the dumping equipment and DWD, as the company was known, was one of the first wool brokers to enter this field in New Zealand. DWD later became Wool Dump Holdings Ltd. and eventually part of Dunedin Wool Dumpers (1977) Ltd., which comprised all the leading wool-brokers in Dunedin. Reid Farmers held a 33% interest in this company until it was sold to RF Woollscour in 1987. The Hocken holds the minute books of DWD from 1937 until integration into RF. Woollscour in April 1987.

Wool Scouring

Reid Farmers also formed a partnership with Ferrier Wool Scours in 1980 to form RF Woollscour. Although the Hocken Collections hold no RF Woollscour papers, wool scouring was initially developed by the station owners to reduce the amount of grease and dirt (called moit) in the wool and this reduced the weight for transport. Julie Bremner's book *Wool Scours of New Zealand* (1985) provides excellent coverage of the early washing processes using soap and soda. Eventually the demand was such that commercial scourers took over. In many cases they were associated with fellmongers who removed the wool from sheepskins. Drying and sorting machines were later attached to wool scours from the 1920s. The first commercial scours were developed in the early 1860s in Milton, Green Island, Kakanui, Gore, Heriot, Kaikorai, Kennington, North East Valley, Wakari and West Plains.

Dairy Industry

The first co-operative cheese factory in New Zealand was established by John Mathieson (*The Advance Guard* Vol 1, page 69) at Pukehiki on the Otago Peninsula and the minute book of the Otago Peninsula Cheese Factory Co. Ltd, 1871–1884, is held in the Hocken. Some papers also exist of the Harbour Cone Cheese Co. 1877–1880. The archives also hold records of the Otago Co-operative Dairy Co. Ltd., and its associated factories and dairy companies as well as the Lactose Company of New Zealand Ltd., Edendale in the period 1937–1979. The principal milk supply company in the Dunedin area was the Taieri & Peninsula Milk Supply Co. Ltd and some records of this company, which operated from 1871 to 1942, are held by the Hocken. A useful historical booklet titled *Fifty Years of Co-operation & Development*

in the Dairy Industry 1884–1934 was produced by the Taieri & Peninsula Company in 1934. The development of the dairy industry and the location of all the dairy factories are contained in the book by H. G. Philpott – *A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry* – published in 1937. Peter Petchey's thesis towards his BA titled 'A history of the coastal Otago dairy industry' (1991) is also useful. The first shipment of export cheese, shipped from Port Chalmers in 1881, was lost when the *Tararua* was wrecked, but a consignment of butter on the pioneer refrigerated sailing ship *Dunedin* the following year, successfully reached London.

Frozen Meat Trade

As earlier mentioned this trade was developed by the N.Z. & Australian Land Company, in conjunction with the Albion Line of Glasgow, which fitted the sailing ship *Dunedin* with refrigeration, setting sail from Port Chalmers for London on 15 February 1882, is well documented. In the foyer of the Hocken Collections building there is a fine painting of the ship *Dunedin* by Frederick Tudgay, representing the ship when she carried that first shipment of meat. All subsequent paintings of the vessel, done for various meat anniversaries since 1882, show the vessel incorrectly painted in the colours of the Shaw Savill & Albion. The first freezing works established in New Zealand were at Burnside, just out of Dunedin, and were owned by the New Zealand Refrigerating Co. Ltd. registered in August 1881 (not to be confused with the later Canterbury company of the same name). The Hocken Collections holds the minute books of the company from 1881 to 1886.

The so-called 'bible' of the frozen meat industry is by J. T. Critchall and J. Raymond's, titled *A History of the Frozen Meat Trade* (1912) and the industry is well covered in the following regional histories:

Fifty Years Socold – The story of the South Otago Freezing Co. Ltd., by A. T. Strang (1960)

A History of the New Zealand Refrigerating Co. by Cyril Loach (1969)

A History of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Co. Ltd. by G. R. Macdonald (1958)

The Keys to Prosperity – Centennial History of Southland Frozen Meat by Clive A. Lind (1981) (A thesis prepared in 1953 by V. A. S. Powley provides additional information on the development of the Southland Frozen Meat and Produce Export Company Ltd)

Where it all Began – A history of the Waitaki-Pukeuri Freezing Works, Oamaru 1914/1989 by Terry Perriam (1989)

A Cut Above – Early History of the Alliance Freezing Company (Southland) Ltd. by Clive A. Lind (1985)

Background to the centenary of the frozen meat trade is contained in *Totara Estate* by Martine E. Cuff (1982), and also in *A Century of Achievement* edited by R. A. Barton (1984). *Golden Jubilee* by Dai Hayward (1972) covers the first fifty years of the New Zealand Meat Producers Board. Bringing the story of the meat industry more up to date are *The New Zealand Frozen Meat Trade* by P. S. E. Hereford (1932) and *Meat Acts – The New Zealand Meat Industry 1972–1997* by Mick Calder and Janet Tyson (1999). Another useful reference is *In the Chair – The Public Life of Sir John Ormond* (former chairman of the N.Z. Meat Producers' Board) by P. S. Tait (1989). The Hocken also holds a range of

annual reports issued by the N.Z. Meat Producers Board from 1923 to 1997.

Wool and Skins

The Hocken also holds records (mainly financial) of the Dunedin Wool and Skin Company (1926–1967) but a more valuable resource is the company record of J.K. Mooney & Co. Ltd, established by George Stewart and J.K. Mooney in 1911 to deal in sheepskins, wool oddments and rabbit skins. Mooney withdrew and left the business to Stewart in 1913 and despite some severe financial troubles as commodity prices and exchange rates fluctuated, the company continued until 1977. In the 1920s and 1930s it developed a huge business in rabbit skins with United States buyers and in 1939 the company was the largest exporter of sheepskins out of New Zealand, with branches at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru and Invercargill. The trade in rabbit skins ended in 1952 although after World War 2 large volumes of opossum skins were exported. A brief history of the company is contained in the booklet *J.K. Mooney and Co. Ltd.* (1952) but a more extensive coverage is presented in *Fur to Fashion* written in 1991 by D.W. Stewart, a former director. It provides a comprehensive account of the dealings in wool, sheep skins, rabbit skins, opossum skins, seal skins and the skins of angora, chinchilla, stoats and ferrets.

Lime and Fertiliser

Although there are references to the Lime Company at Milburn, the records are housed with the parent, Milburn Lime & Cement Co., while fertilisers for farmers are covered in Business Bulletin 2 under Manufacturing.

GEMCO — Grazing Syndicate

In the 1960s a group of South Island farmers and investors developed a scheme to organise and manage the leasing of land and the raising of beef. The company was registered as the Grazing and Export Meat Company Limited (GEMCO) and expanded from 1971. When beef prices fell in 1973–74 the viability of the concept failed and the company went into receivership. The Hocken Collections holds the records of GEMCO and its subsidiaries.

Agricultural Machinery

A particularly useful archive is that of the firm of Reid & Gray Ltd, makers of ploughs and other implements. It includes order books from 1880 to 1925, machinery catalogues ranging from 1879 to 1931 and details of ploughing matches between 1888 and 1938. The records also include an unpublished history of the firm, prepared by John T. Gray extending back to its establishment as R. Gray and Son in Uddingston, Glasgow and in Dunedin from 1868. In 1937 the NMA Company acquired a half share with the balance of the capital purchased in 1963, and the Reid & Gray name was then abandoned in favour of MacEwan's Machinery Ltd.

Farm Maps

Maps in the Hocken Collections are often useful in regard to general farming enquiries. In 2003 Rev J.G. Sinclair compiled a most useful two-volume set of maps indicating the boundaries of the very early pastoral runs in Otago & Southland (available from the Reference Desk). Cadastral & topographical maps are weighted in favour of Otago and

Southland but there is also coverage of other South Island areas. Land Office maps from the 1890s to the 1930s showing pastoral runs being subdivided and offered for lease are particularly useful. Land use, modifications and landowners are sometimes included. The collection is not complete but Otago coverage is excellent. Many of the Survey District cadastral maps NZMS 13, and the earlier variant, are useful for locating runs and properties. Some have newspaper cuttings on the reverse relating to the sale of runs.

Farming Associations

The Hocken has records from many Otago branches of the following organisations in the period 1930s to 1990s: Federated Farmers of New Zealand (Otago Provincial District) Inc., Womens Division of Federated Farmers, Country Women's Institutes, Young Farmers Clubs, South Island Shearing & Wool Handling Contest Co-ordinating Society

Agricultural & Pastoral Associations

Records of these Associations held by the Hocken Collections include: Gore A & P Assn. 1907–1959, Otago A & P Assn. 1877–1982, Otago and Taieri A & P Assns. 1863–1997, Otago Peninsula A & P Assn. 1886–1984, Royal Agricultural Society of N. Z., Southern Districts Council, minute book, 1959–1982, and the South Otago A & P Society 1886–1980.

Farming Periodicals

Periodicals held include the *New Zealand Farmer* 1891–92, 1900–03, 1905–06, 1909–18 then 1946–2001; *New Zealand Country Journal* 1877–1898; *Dairy Exporter* 1934–1981, 2003 to the present; and the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture* 1910–1988. The journals of Federated Farmers, and its earlier style as the New Zealand Farmers' Union held by the Hocken, are *Point Blank* 1934–41, *Progress and Farming First* 1939–41 and the *Straight Furrow* from 1941 to the present. The Hocken holds many more recent farming newspapers and magazines and all titles held can be found on the LCoNZ catalogue by doing a search using key words 'Zealand', 'agriculture', 'farming' etc and by limiting the search to 'Journals'. Local newspapers in Dunedin and throughout Otago and Southland contain a wealth of farming news, the most comprehensive coverage coming from the *Otago Witness* 1861–1932.

Farming photographs

There are virtually no specific collections of farming photographs but there is photographic coverage throughout the pictorial and archives collections. Probably the most useful source comes from the glossy photo inserts in the *Otago Witness* from December 1899 to 1928 on hard copy, with the years to 1932 available on microfilm.

Virtually all the material listed is available without restriction. In some cases, permission from the donor may be required, but it is seldom refused for genuine researchers.

Compiled by Ian Farquhar with very helpful assistance from the staff of the Hocken Collections. Edited by George Griffiths for the *Friends of the Hocken Collections*, PO Box 6336, Dunedin and designed by Gary Blackman.