

# “Messages of Love from Maoriland”: A. D. Willis’s New Zealand Christmas Cards and Booklets 1883-1893

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I have previously explored the beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas card prior to 1883, and the ways that the designers of these cards negotiated the colonial experience of a summer Christmas.<sup>1</sup> This paper examines the development, over the decade following 1883, of the chromolithographic work of A. D. Willis, whose production not only continued the work of creating a niche for New Zealand Christmas cards, but also tried to compete with the large overseas ‘art publishers’ who were flooding the New Zealand market with northern hemisphere iconography. Willis’s Christmas cards are frequently used to illustrate books looking at the 1880s, but there has been no detailed study done of them. The paper therefore documents the cards, their production and reception, explores how they record Willis’s understanding of the art publishing business and the market he was working into, and situates them in relation to broader print culture. Understanding this overlooked chapter in ‘commercial art’ provides useful evidence of the murky interplay between the local, national and transnational identities that marked New Zealand cultural production when artists and designers sought to capture the public’s Yuletide sentiments. Willis’s work also displays two very distinct conceptions of how to represent what was increasingly known as ‘Maoriland’ to an overseas

market – one focused on the land, and the other on Māori. As such, these cards act as a weathervane for what the New Zealand public accepted as New Zealand, artistic and appropriate as a Christmas gift.



Figure 1: A.D. Willis birthday card showing the North Island Thrush / *Turnagra hectori*. Watercolour on celluloid, 110 x 73 mm inserted into cards 159 x 113 mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Reference: E-936-f-010-4

On a cold July night in 1885, members of the Auckland Society of Arts gathered for their annual general meeting. According to the New Zealand Herald reporter, the members were gratified by the society's 'progress,' and the first example given of this progress was the success of the Society's inaugural Christmas card competition.<sup>2</sup> It had been won by "an unassuming young man, holding a subordinate position in an Auckland warehouse."<sup>3</sup> This win marked the first New Zealand highlight in Frank Wright's distinguished career as a landscape artist. However, while his 1884 success excited comment in press at the time, it was quietly culled from the timeline in Wright's 1954 retrospective at the Auckland City Art Gallery.<sup>4</sup> This omission says much about the fate of the Christmas card genre itself. Through the course of the twentieth century, the Victorian recognition of greeting card designing as a valid artistic pursuit was eroded, and the card found itself instead consigned to a quiet, chocolate-boxy cul-de-sac near the intersection between art and design – where it has stayed. Given such current estimation, it is not surprising that a book like Roger Blackley's *Galleries of Maoriland*, which delves extensively into the art world of the period, should not engage with either the Christmas card, its artists, designers or publishers.<sup>5</sup>

While sending Christmas cards may appear now to be a fixed and inevitable practice, in the 1880s the format appropriate for Christmas exchange was still contested, and cards were relatively expensive gifts in their own right. After the Dickens-led revival of Christmas in the 1840's, many Christmas customs had evolved quickly, but card sending was not one of them. Books were initially a more common bearer of Christmas cheer.<sup>6</sup> Dunedin bookseller Joseph Braithwaite's 1880 publication of Vincent Pyke and Frances Ellen Talbot's *White Hood and Blue Cap: A Christmas Bough with Two Branches* is one local example of the continuing tradition of exchanging books "designed for holiday reading" at Christmas.<sup>7</sup> Braithwaite's 'shilling shocker' cost the same as the first photographic Christmas cards that began to be published in Dunedin that year by the Burton Brothers, in association with J. Wilkie & Co.<sup>8</sup> To justify what might appear a considerable expense in buying a card versus a novel, consumers needed a reason to value them. In this case, the mechanisms for creating this value were a demand for the local and for novelty.

Christmas cards had only hit craze proportions in Britain in the late 1870's, but the buzz around them quickly translated into the volume of imports of primarily chromolithographic British cards.<sup>9</sup> New Zealand photographers like the Burtons and Wilkie were the first to respond to this new market opportunity, with a number of producers, particularly

around Dunedin, offering cards. And despite most photographers who created cards catering for defined regional markets, Nathaniel Leves' 1882 "Comet Card" demonstrated that a locally-produced Christmas card could command national admiration.<sup>10</sup> In Whanganui, Archibald Duddingston Willis clearly decided it was possible to replicate Leves' photographic success in the more demanding category of chromolithography.<sup>11</sup>

A bookseller, printer, entrepreneur and soon-to-be politician, Willis had arrived in New Zealand as a 15 year old, having earlier been apprenticed to the prominent British printers, Eyre and Spottiswoode.<sup>12</sup> After working all around New Zealand as a printer on a variety of newspapers, he became a partner, with John Ballance, on the *Wanganui Herald* before setting up a stationery shop and printing works in 1872.<sup>13</sup> He had only dipped his toes into the Christmas publishing trade before 1883.<sup>14</sup> However, beginning that year, he used Christmas cards to promote his chromolithographic business, publishing cards for nine of the next ten years and gaining a nation-wide reputation for the quality of his work. Two sample books of his cards in the Turnbull collection collectively cover his production until 1888, and Te Papa's collection contains many of his post 1891 cards. Until now, however, the dating of these cards has been largely speculative. Rosslyn Johnson, in her monumental thesis on New Zealand's colour printing, did a case study on Willis and documented some dated adverts for his cards,<sup>15</sup> but she did not look at Christmas cards in great detail, and did not have access to *Papers Past*. Here I have used advertisements and editorial comment from *Papers Past* to date all cards conclusively (see appendix).<sup>16</sup> This means, in turn, that it is possible to trace the development of Willis's design approaches through the period.

During 1882, Willis had brought out a set of floral Christmas cards hand-painted by "a Wanganui Lady."<sup>17</sup> In early 1883, he followed this by producing another line of cards, hand-painted by a number of local artists onto 'gelatine' (celluloid) and inset into a printed mount.<sup>18</sup> He claimed to have over 150 designs, comprising a mix of images of birds, flowers and local scenes.<sup>19</sup> These could be mounted as both Birthday and Gift cards (figure 1). One of the Turnbull sample books, which was likely assembled in mid 1885,<sup>20</sup> contains sixty-three different native bird images from this series, displayed as birthday cards. Willis initially seems to have encouraged postal ordering,<sup>21</sup> so these designs could be created according to demand. Given their prominence in the sample book, they must have continued to be popular for several years. As the *Wanganui Herald* noted, "besides creating a large local

demand," through the production of these and the 1882 Christmas cards, "the nucleus of a trade was formed with the leading towns of New Zealand and Australia."<sup>22</sup>

In 1883, chromolithography seems to have been in the New Zealand air. As a technology it was promoted as bringing art to the masses, and there was an evident demand for colour.<sup>23</sup> In Auckland, Upton & Co. published six chromolithographic cards of New Zealand plants, designed by Miss Eames.<sup>24</sup> These were almost certainly printed overseas – as the vast majority of New Zealand coloured work continued to be. Willis, however, recognised the need for a local alternative. Being a bookseller, he sold chromolithographic items from the large firms in Britain, the US and Germany,<sup>25</sup> and he would have been aware of Australian chromolithographic cards.<sup>26</sup> He therefore understood the market, and knew that it would accept images of the natural world as appropriate for a Christmas card.<sup>27</sup> According to an advert that he inserted into *Freethought Review*, for his new cards, he contracted a British artist to do a set of views and native plants.<sup>28</sup> The advert focused strongly on the "views of special interest....that are so well worth preservation," but also talks about the "charm of foliage and flower." His motivation for publishing the cards, he said, was to "supply the special want long felt by residents of the Colony who may wish to send their friends on the other side of the world pictorial illustrations which .... convey an adequate idea and a tasteful realisation of the land we live in."<sup>29</sup> The views he chose, however, were not focused on the inhabited colony. Rather, they showed highlights of natural beauty: three volcanoes, two lakes and Mitre Peak (figure 4). This focus on uninhabited iconic views is typical of the strategies of cultural colonisation that Peter Gibbons says allowed settlers to imaginatively possess the land.<sup>30</sup> And the choice was probably also influenced by the current fascination with the picturesque, a mode that, in applying familiar conventions to unfamiliar subject matter, allowed the new and the strange to be encountered safely.<sup>31</sup> Flowers were also a default Christmas iconography,<sup>22</sup> and Willis must have believed that there would be a greater demand for the plants than the views, since he published 14 of the former (figure 2) and 6 of the latter (figure 3). As Patricia Zakreski points out (using a northern hemisphere analogy) Christmas cards were perennial money-spinners precisely because, like flowers, they worked on an annual cycle, dying off and needing replenishing – again providing novelty within a comfortably familiar context.<sup>33</sup>

Certainty of demand would have been imperative for Willis as he planned this ambitious venture. Chromolithography was a

demanding form of printing, involving building up the image on 12 separate lithographic stones. Whereas photography was comparatively easy to embark on, chromolithography demanded a much greater investment in equipment, and needed skilled labour.<sup>34</sup> The *Wanganui Herald* pointed out the considerable difficulties and expense involved. Putting in the plant had meant enlarging the premises, ordering new machines, installing electric lighting (“the first on the coast”) and increasing the staff.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, it noted that Willis had the “advantage of having the services of a careful artist in Mr Potts, who closely studies each subject to which he sets his pen. The floral representations bear ample evidence of this.”<sup>36</sup> William Potts had recently arrived from England.<sup>37</sup> He was highly skilled, and his art pleased not only the *Herald* but its competitor the *Wanganui Chronicle*, which put aside any differences in a show of local pride. It praised Potts and noted that the quality of the work was so high that “these products of a Wanganui house .... should hold their own against any of the coloured cards, prepared by Home or Australian firms.”<sup>38</sup> The *Herald* a few days later compared Willis’ cards to another set depicting New Zealand plants that had just been produced by the famous British firm Marcus Ward and Co., saying that “the comparison is most decidedly in favour of the Wanganui article, in every respect – in fidelity to nature as well as artistic effect.”<sup>39</sup>



Figure 2: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts (artwork), Christmas Cards, 1883. Left: Whero-who plant. Right: Poroporo plant. Both 145x105mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ. References: E-936-f-019 -2 & E-936-f-019-1.

Outside the bubble of Whanganui, the reception was more mixed. Like overseas counterparts, Willis used the tactic of sending samples to newspapers.<sup>40</sup> In Christchurch, the *Star* relegated discussion of local cards to the end of an article on what was available, and concluded, after quoting Willis’ claims about the cards being the equal of overseas companies, that despite “some surprisingly good results... the claim has yet to be made good.”<sup>41</sup> The *Grey River Argus* felt that although “scarcely up to Home work for depth and brightness of colouring... they are really very good for all that,” seeing them as “a very promising beginning for the colony in this line of art.”<sup>42</sup> This view was shared by the *Otago Daily Times* which, having earlier said that Willis’s work was “creditable, though plain as regards finish,”<sup>43</sup> wrote an article on Willis’s chromolithographic venture, noting the difficulties involved, the advantages of producing work locally rather than having the cost of imports, and praising the work as bearing comparison with imported cards.<sup>44</sup> The most positive response was from the ODT’s Dunedin competitor, the *Evening Star*, which felt that the samples sent to the paper did indeed fulfil Willis’s claims.<sup>45</sup>



Figure 3: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts (artwork), Christmas Card of Mt Egmont, 1883, 87x127mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Reference: E-936-f-024-3. The image has echoes of Charles Heaphy’s iconic picture, however Potts has here shown a less tamed vista, and has exaggerated the mountain less – though the clouds disguise the second vent and make the mountain seem more symmetrical. Note that the greeting is visualised as a 3D object, complete with reflections in the water – a technique adapted from an 1882 Australian card by John Sands (reproduced in Hancox, 2008 p.15).

At a shilling for the larger cards (the earlier handpainted birthday cards were, by comparison, 1s 3d and 1s 6d), the cards did not sell out immediately, though the following year Willis claimed that 3000 copies had been sold in Whanganui alone.<sup>46</sup> Despite the marketing, Willis was still advertising “a large stock....on hand” in mid-December.<sup>47</sup> Willis’s stated reasons for publishing these cards, and the responses to them, seem fairly straightforward (i.e. it was generally understood that they served to help settlers share the sights of their new land with friends and relatives at ‘home’). Nevertheless, greetings cards are more theoretically complex than they might initially appear. Functionally, they are produced for a market of people who buy them as gifts and mementos to send to others, who in turn may discard them, or store them in an album that can be privately reminisced over, or publicly displayed for others. To add to that, they are normally a mix of image and text, and relate to a Christian festival. These factors collectively create a host of thorny issues before ever one begins to talk about the subject matter and its artistic treatment, both of which introduce another range of formal issues, social contexts and power relations into the mix. For example, Willis’s designs showed either images of plants or views of landscapes – genres that can be seen as fitting into an interpretative framework which Judith Adler sees as the scientific tourist’s “impartial survey of all creation,”<sup>48</sup> Tony Hughes-D’Aeth terms the “world-as-gallery,”<sup>49</sup> and Susan Stewart calls the collecting of “souvenirs of external sights.”<sup>50</sup> However, while the cards might perhaps have ended up being used by some as picturesque tourist collectibles to feed the nostalgic narratives of the collector,<sup>51</sup> greetings cards typically operate more as gift than souvenir. They thus function differently to other mass-produced items which were created to be used and disposed of.<sup>52</sup> Instead, greetings cards are better understood as social and celebratory items that were probably placed in an album with the future-focused intent of displaying them to friends.<sup>53</sup> This sense of feeling with others via printed ephemera is, according to Susan Zieger, an inherent quality of mass print culture.<sup>54</sup> Seen in this light, while the act of sending images of their new environment cannot escape the broader charge of cultural colonisation,<sup>55</sup> it also bespeaks the emotional investment of the senders. Ironically, this sharing and celebrating of a collective investment in the local and national, serves to reinforce the transnational nature of card practice when the cards were sent to the intended recipients overseas.

In 1883, consumers choosing cards to send across the world had been given a choice as to whether to continue the Christmas

tradition of sending images of flowers, or whether to send miniature Romantic landscapes. In 1884, Willis produced twenty-three new view cards and only one of plants. The consumer had clearly spoken. Willis had also evidently realised that having two thirds of his cards showing North Island views was a demographic and marketing mistake. If the earlier cards were constrained by scenes that the artist had managed to visit, the new cards appear to be the beginnings of a project to construct a record of New Zealand as a scenic wonderland. Over the preceding decade, tourism had been expanding,<sup>56</sup> and tourist views generally concentrated on sublime, untamed nature.<sup>57</sup> Willis’s cards reflected this, and eighteen of the new cards showed the South Island: the tourist hotspots of Queenstown and Fiordland garnering eight, two showing Dunedin, and the rest spread around the main centres and iconic attractions like Mount Cook. In the North Island, he concentrated on Wellington, Auckland, Thames and the alluring beauties of Taupo and the Bay of Islands. This coverage was praised by the *Evening Star* which took credit for having recommended such subjects, predicted good sales and said they were “by far and away the best samples of chromolithography yet turned out in the colony.”<sup>58</sup>

Willis must have taken note of some of the other critiques of the cards, because he advertised in *Freethought Review* that he had made many changes while in the process of reprinting copies of the previous year’s cards. The earlier of the two Turnbull sample books contains repeats of two images (Lake Rotorua and Mitre Peak) presumably included so that the salesman could show the improvements.<sup>59</sup> These primarily relate to the rocks and the definition of the mountain (Figure 4), but Willis evidently did not intend to simply repeat the previous year’s approach with his new images. A border was introduced around the image of all, allowing newer images to be distinguished from the discounted earlier stock, and to create unity as a series. It is also likely that he started using photographs as the basis for the images. With 288 separations to prepare for the 24 cards (not to mention doing the food labels and ball programmes that were also being produced at the works),<sup>60</sup> Mr Potts the lithographer would have been too busy to travel the length of the country in search of new scenes. And using photographs, worked up by Potts, would explain why Robert Coupland Harding, in gifting his Willis sample book to the Turnbull in 1911, noted that his cousin (Lydia Harding – later Mrs Swain) had been responsible for the designs of the floral borders, but does not mention her doing the scenes themselves.<sup>61</sup>



Figure 4: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts (artwork), Christmas Cards of Mitre Peak, 1884 & 1883, 104x69 & 106x72mm. The card on the left is the 1884 reprint of the 1883 original on the right. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. References E-936-f-026-4 & E-936-f-027-3.

Lydia Anne Harding only turned twenty in 1885, but her influence can be seen in that the borders around the cards became progressively more complex and interesting from then onwards. The bulk of the 1884 cards continued the 1883 approach of being a miniature painting with a textual greeting written gratuitously over the background. Integrating text and image was always a challenge for greeting card designers, who could not use the illustrated press, which largely kept text and image separate, for inspiration. Earlier designers tended to imagine the text as being on a piece of card, with plants surrounding it (see Figure 9). For them, the greeting was the primary object. By the 1880's, however, the image was starting to overpower the text, and in Willis's cards the image is dominant. Yet even during 1884 there were some signs of experimentation with this relationship. The image of Timaru Breakwater had the greetings message carried in the beak of a flying bird. In the Tararu Creek image (figure 5) the greeting was written on a painting on an artist's easel, and this idea of having a painting within the card was extended, when, in the Breaksea Sound card, the view was included as if it were on a large painting or placard, which also carries the greeting. Here the message is hammered home that the scene is, literally, 'picturesque.' The image-within-an-image is held by a Māori figure who blends into a staged landscape of birds, flax and cabbage trees, creating a lavish and realistic border which, typically for much picturesque colonial imagery, treats the country's space, landscape and indigenous people as part of a single discourse,<sup>62</sup> signifiers of the exotic "other."<sup>63</sup>



Figure 5: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts (artwork), Christmas Cards, 1885. Left: Tararu Creek, 127x87mm. Right: Breaksea Sound, 105x145mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. References: E-068-040 & E-936-f-025-1.

For his third series, in 1885, Willis reduced the number of new cards to twelve (eight South Island and just four North Island views) but began to experiment with more visually challenging approaches that reference both the scrapbook (the most likely display venue for cards) and the 1880s photograph album - the latter typically with its square or oval vignettes surrounded by printed floral designs. The circular tondo in the image of Stewart Island (figure 6), could also reference both the telescope or a porthole.<sup>64</sup> However, scrapbook allusions are more prevalent, as with a card of Lyttleton Harbour, where a *trompe l'oeil* effect is utilised to make it appear that the image has come away from the page in one corner, revealing a greeting message behind it.

Collecting coloured cards in a scrapbook can be framed as creating a compressed sense of abundance.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, images in the 1880s periodical press were also trying to become more abundant,<sup>66</sup> drawing together multiple scenes into a single montage. The covers of the *Illustrated London News* between the years 1880 - 1885, demonstrate this progression. At the start of the period barely any included vignettes. By the end, these are frequent. Tony Hughes-d'Aeth sees this as typical of both the British and American press at the time,<sup>67</sup> and Willis's artistic team was certainly picking up on such effects. Having, in 1884, introduced the idea of an image within an image, they explored it further in 1885. In one card, a page, apparently from a photograph album displays a mockingly full-colour image of Lake Wakatipu, which leans against a Nikau palm (see figure 6). In another,

a small girl holds a sizeable painting of Docharty's Bay, Dusky Sound with the message "A Merry Christmas" in a landscape of trees and flax plants (figure 6 below). This format helps make the view appear more obviously artistic and gives it a greater sense of scale than it otherwise would have. And the girl holding the painting plays to the Victorian fascination with childhood, framing a colonial child within an arcadian landscape. This parallels how the Breaksea sound image (figure 5) showed Māori in a similar role, probably with the expectation that this reference to the exotic could help make a connection with an overseas audience.<sup>68</sup> And a Child, dressed for summer, strange plants and a strange people all helped evoke a strange and wonderful Christmas for people shivering in the northern hemisphere.<sup>69</sup>



Figure 6: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts & L. Harding (artwork), Christmas Cards, 1885. Left top: Docharty's Bay, Dusky Sound, 71x103mm. Left bottom: Nikau Palm & Lake Wakatipu, 145x104mm. Above: Stewart's Island, 104x72mm, Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. References: E-936-f-028-1, E-068-018 & E-068-024-2.

Not all the 1885 cards were as formally inventive, with a mix of approaches occurring. Whilst all had a border around the edge of the card (rather than around the image), some had a much thicker, ornate (and less successful) treatment. The same applies to the 1886 cards. One of the North Shore was almost a conventional view, but still used the illusion of a corner of the scene being tucked over, thus hinting that the receiver should place it in a scrapbook. The most album-like card is the scene of Mount Arthur, Nelson (figure 7), but whereas a photograph inserted in an album would be separated from the surround, here the image is treated like a window or arch through which the imagery spills forward onto the page. This effect links the image to the viewer's reality, creating a consensual space between viewer and viewed, and one that emphasises the depth of the framed image.<sup>70</sup> Other cards, like that of the Grahamstown Goldfield treat the central image like a discrete picture, with foliage sitting behind it – though this coherence is subverted by a portion of the image leaking gold-laden earth, implying that it is too bounteous to be contained by the frame. Here two spatial conventions co-exist playfully, but the effect is primarily scrapbook-like, with the image treated as a precious exhibit. The Manawatu Gorge card makes this connotation even more obvious.<sup>71</sup>

If the early images had been miniature paintings, and the 1886 images had experimented, 1887 was the point at which this more lavish style came to fruition. The idea of a card within a card was expanded upon, but instead of using a wide variety of formats, the 1887 cards chose to expand on the Grahamstown and Manawatu Gorge approaches. The latter, in particular, led into some of Willis's most spectacular card designs (figure 8).

Here the design unifies the card with the illusion of two separate images (one picture-like, one giving telescopic detail) floating within a floral nest. It is an arrangement that fragments in order to create a more abundant and unified sense of the subject's reality.<sup>72</sup> Using *trompe l'oeil* to show objects arranged on a card, was labelled a *Quodlibet* by George Buday.<sup>73</sup> Roger Blackley shows that this term, deriving from 17th century Dutch 'hotchpotch' pictures is better applied to more purely *trompe l'oeil* effects.<sup>74</sup> However one describes it, the multi-view format was increasingly used through the 1880s. A selection of overseas cards (figure 10) demonstrate how framing changed over the preceding decade, and how cards moved towards demonstrating greater abundance and complexity in the imagery while diminishing the importance of the greeting text.



Figure 7: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts & L. Harding (artwork), Christmas Cards, 1886. Left top: Mt Arthur, Nelson. Right top: Grahamstown Goldfield. Both 104x72mm. Above: Manawatu Gorge, 105x144mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. References: E-068-016-1, E-068-017-2 & E-068-012. Few of Willis's cards focus more on human activity than nature. The Grahamstown card positions New Zealand as a land of opportunity, and perhaps references the six months a young Willis spent in the goldfields.



Figure 8: A. D. Willis (publisher), W. Potts & L. Harding (artwork), Christmas Cards, 1887, Top: Kiwi and Lake Wakatipu, 72x104mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington NZ. Reference: E-068-006-2. Bottom: Pink Terraces, 105x144. Collection of the author. (Turnbull reference: E-068-002).





Figure 9: Five cards of the types imported to, and sold in, New Zealand which demonstrate the development of framing devices through the period. Below left: Louis Prang card from 1876. Centre: Uncredited card used in 1883. Above left: Frank Vernon card, copyrighted in 1882 and used in 1884. Above right: Uncredited card used in 1886. Below right: Uncredited card used in 1887. All cards from the collection of the author.

What is also clear, looking at the later international cards is that, despite Willis's work improving, it was difficult to compete with the high quality of chromolithographic printing coming from some of the British and German houses. This would prove the hardest issue for Willis to conquer, and by 1887 his adverts took on a slightly plaintive quality when he felt it necessary to remind the public to "support local industry."<sup>75</sup> The problem was not his marketing. He continued to send cards to newspapers – though with less frequent responses – but primarily he seems to have travelled himself to promote sales.<sup>76</sup> He also had a clear sales pitch: "What is the use of sending English cards back to England. Send N.Z. Christmas Cards home."<sup>77</sup> And the work, although reviews had tailed off, had been generally well received. In 1888, the *New Zealand Times* described Willis's offerings that year as "gems in their way,"<sup>78</sup> while the *Wanganui Chronicle* congratulated him on "their success as works of art."<sup>79</sup> Robert Coupland Harding described that year's cards as "exceedingly good."<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, Harding's later description of Willis's sample book as showing the "first crude attempts" at New Zealand Christmas cards, has some validity in terms of the printing, if not the designs.<sup>81</sup> A mix of dynamic design and underwhelming finish is evident in the cards that elicited such positive responses, Willis's final two coloured views (Figure 10). They used designs by Margaret Olrog Stoddart,<sup>82</sup> then a high-profile graduating student at the Canterbury College School of Art.<sup>83</sup> The effect of the surround is lavish, but Potts' transfer lithographic printing, compared to top European work, is slightly heavy-handed.



Figure 10: Margaret Olrog Stoddart (designer), William Potts (lithographer), A. D. Willis (publisher). West Coast, N.Z. Christmas Card, 1888. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Reference: E-068-050. Stoddart was a 23-year-old just completing seven years of study. She had already garnered a considerable reputation as a botanical artist. Her design appears not to have considered the greetings text, which is fitted around the image uncomfortably.

These two cards are something of an oddity, relative to the rest. They don't claim to show specific places, but rather are generic scenes. And this was the first year since 1883 that Willis did not publish twelve or more cards. The reasons for this are, I think, two-fold. Firstly, if one plots his images across the country, by 1887 he had ticked off most areas bar the predominantly Māori regions of the King Country, Northland and the East Coast. There were eight scenes around Queenstown, six each around Rotorua and Auckland, four each for Milford and Dusky Sounds, as well as Taupo and Thames, three around Christchurch, two each for Wellington, Dunedin and New Plymouth and a single image for most other centres. He therefore now had a catalogue that could be reprinted, and by the start of 1888 he perhaps felt no real need to add to it. However, Margaret Stoddart's designs (which she may well have submitted to Willis speculatively in order to have a real printed outcome in her graduating show),<sup>85</sup> offered something Willis clearly desired – recognition for the artistic quality of the work. And it would be this that saw him concentrate his 1889 production on his magnum opus *New Zealand Illustrated* rather than doing Christmas cards.

1889 was therefore the first year since 1882 when Willis produced no Christmas cards. This hiatus must have allowed him to do some thinking about the competition for the Christmas market. Overseas firms like Raphael Tuck could market 3000 different designs a year.<sup>86</sup> Novelties such as cards in strange shapes, folding cards in gold leaf, and handpainted cards on porcelain were coming from all the big overseas firms, and an article in the *Press*, after discussing these and many more, then went on to talk about "ordinary chromolithographed cards."<sup>87</sup> Although the Christmas card craze was still at its peak, the public was evidently being seduced by imported choice, while coloured lithographs of the sort Willis had been doing were losing their cachet. Furthermore, there was another area of competition emerging. If, at the start of the 1880's, cards had cut into the Christmas book market, by the late 1880s there was a serious publishing response.

In 1887, John Watt, a bookseller in Willis Street, Wellington, announced "The Book of the Season," noting that this "little work makes a good substitute for either Birthday, Christmas or New Year cards."<sup>88</sup> The work was a 32-page booklet called *As Time Glides On*. Written by George Thompson Hutchinson, costing 1s 3d, and published by Hodders, it consisted of "the months in Picture and Poem," and, according to Watt's advert, had 60,000 copies pre-ordered. This was, in fact, the tip of an iceberg that had been some years coming. Although the lavish £1 Christmas gift books of poems and pictures had effectively died out

by the late 1870's,<sup>89</sup> (roughly in tandem with the rise of the Christmas cards), it seems to have arisen from the ashes in a cheaper guise. Booklets of 16 or 32 pages, targeted to the Christmas market, had been available in the US from around 1882, and appeared in Britain by 1885.<sup>90</sup> And publishing houses made a point of advertising that booklets could be sent instead of cards. However, the game-changer came in 1888 when the large British Christmas Card publishers Raphael Tuck and Hildesheimer & Faulkner replied to this threat by making their own booklets.<sup>91</sup> An example of these is *The Jackdaw of Rheims* (figure 11), which is printed in a mix of black and white illustrations and two



Figure 11: Cover and spread from Raphael Tuck's 1889 booklet *The Jackdaw of Rheims*. Author's collection. It was reviewed in the press as a Christmas card, despite being 32 pages long, and advertised as the "booklet of the season." The cover was printed chromolithographically using six colours. The left page was printed in three tones of brown, while the right-hand image was printed letterpress, using wood-engraved illustrations.

or three-coloured sepia images. With so many fewer stones to use, such booklets could be produced at not vastly more than a 12 colour chromolithographic card. Abruptly, Christmas card advertising became 'Christmas Card and Booklet' advertising.

As both a publisher and a bookseller, A. D. Willis would have noticed this change, and there was other food for thought. The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, for which *New Zealand Illustrated* was produced and which Willis would have attended, may have provided him with ideas for a change of direction. The exhibition articulated a response to the crisis of national identity during the 1880's that had seen leading intellectuals, as James Belich puts it, "forging a picture of the Maori past for Pakeha ideological purposes."<sup>92</sup> The exhibition contained an extensive section relating to the "anthropology of the aborigines of the colony."<sup>93</sup> This included objects like the 300-year-old flute played

by Tūtānekai to Hinemoa.<sup>94</sup> The effect on non-intellectuals interested in New Zealand's national identity must have been significant. The *Auckland Weekly News* published a chromolithograph entitled "The Advent of the Maori: Christmas A.D. 1000" in its 1889 Christmas



Figure 12: A. D. Willis (publisher), G. Sherriff (artwork), Christmas Card, 1890: A Maori Speech (Korero), 87x128mm. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Reference: A-015-007.

supplement.<sup>95</sup> Willis, ever sensitive to a trend, debuted in 1890 (the 50th year of New Zealand's colonisation) with a very different set of offerings.

The new series of Christmas cards used the cheaper-to-produce, but artistic, sepia.<sup>96</sup> The plants, frames and views remained, to remind one of the earlier cards, but it is culture instead of nature that takes centre stage. New Zealandness had expanded from natural environments (with the occasional building or town scene) to exploring what made New Zealand unique. Jock Phillips sees the "view that any distinctive New Zealand cultural identity could be based in some way upon the Maori," as typical of the 'Maoriland' thinking in the 1890s,<sup>97</sup> and Roger Blackley's book shows how this focus came to affect many aspects of cultural production.<sup>98</sup> This approach was not, however, unique. Nationalism, in many parts of the world, was looking to earlier cultures and myths.<sup>99</sup> Certainly, New Zealand life, according to the following write-up in the *Auckland Star* equated to Māori life.

The approach of Christmas is already heralded by displays of Christmas cards in the shop windows. Among the New Zealand designers of these popular tokens of goodwill, Mr A. D. Willis, lithographer of Wanganui, has taken the lead, and his designs for this season are again of a novel and attractive character, and are intended to illustrate interesting phases of New Zealand life. ... The views comprise : A Maori Canoe (Waka) Race, A Maori Speech (korero), Maori Going to Market in Canoe, The Home of the Maori (kainga), Maoriland, The Old Style and the New, A Family Repast (kai). ....Friends abroad will undoubtedly value much more highly cards of New Zealand design than English cards, however beautiful, and the novelty of such missives from Maoriland will cause them to be specially prized among the gifts of the season.

Talking about “interesting phases in New Zealand life,” calling New Zealand ‘Maoriland,’ and both Willis and the *Star* including the original Māori words in the titles – all acknowledged that Māori culture was fundamental to an understanding of New Zealand identity. And the cards were well received, with the *Taranaki Herald* saying Willis had “quite outshone his former efforts” with their “natural and artistic manner.”<sup>100</sup>

Apart from figure 12, images of the 1890 cards have proven particularly difficult to locate, but one that appeared on Trademe is worth mention.<sup>101</sup> *Maoriland, the Old Style and the New* shows two elderly Māori, one in traditional garb with a whare in the background. The other is dressed in European clothes, with a wooden house and fence behind. There is no caricature of ‘the old’ but the implication is clearly one of progress bringing assimilation. And the card’s design also, subtly, gives a similar message relating to the Christmas card format which, by 1890, was appearing old. *Trompe l’oeil* is used in the card to make the image appear like it is the cover of a 16-page booklet. Willis was the first New Zealand publisher to appreciate and respond to the booklet trend and, alongside his 1890 Christmas cards he published a 2s 6d booklet called *Hinemoa*, which was described as “the first booklet ever produced in New Zealand.”<sup>102</sup> His booklets have been discussed in other contexts, but only Barry Hancox noticed the Christmas connection. He quotes Willis as saying, in the front of his 1893 booklet *Under the Southern Cross*:

This little Booklet is issued in the hope that it will be a change from a mere Christmas card, as a memento to send to European friends, to whom it may convey an idea of the scenery and lands by which we in New Zealand are connected, but which they may not have an opportunity to behold.<sup>103</sup>



Figure 13: A. D. Willis (publisher), G. Sherriff (illustrator), W. Potts (lithographer), Christmas Booklet, 1890: Hinemoa. Courtesy of Dunedin Public Library. Having illustrations with imagery that melts out of the frame shows continuity with Willis’s Christmas card production.

Much the same point is made in the *Wanganui Herald’s* advance notice of *Hinemoa*. The paper said that “the get up will be exactly on the lines of the booklets we have been so familiar with of late, and which have to a very great extent taken the place of Xmas cards, etc.”<sup>104</sup> The industry, it is made clear, was evolving, and Willis’s production was keeping pace. And, after the 1888 experiment with Margaret Olrog Stoddart, Willis involved more high-profile artists. Lydia Harding made way for well-known local painter, George Sherriff, while the booklet’s poet, Eleanor Montgomery, was someone who Willis had previously published.<sup>105</sup> The Arawa story of Hinemoa came from Sir George Grey’s *Polynesian Mythology*, which had been republished in 1885.<sup>106</sup> Grey’s translation was printed on the inside covers, while the illustrated poem filled the remaining twelve pages. The story of Hinemoa and Tūtānekai was a prime candidate for what Blackley identifies as Maoriland cultural appropriation.<sup>107</sup> It enjoyed huge popularity at the time, and there would be at least twelve 1890’s poetic versions,<sup>108</sup> not to mention music, brochures, and later film.<sup>109</sup> Peter Gibbons sees such work as part of a process whereby settlers constructed a manageable version of ‘the

Maori.<sup>110</sup> Len Bell similarly talks about the art of this period as being concerned with “drama, anecdote and fiction. Myths... being created about Maori by Europeans for Europeans.”<sup>111</sup> Montgomery was clearly working in this manner, picking up on the poet who most influenced this particular genre – Longfellow, whose *Hiawatha* functioned similarly.<sup>112</sup>

While Montgomery was always acknowledged in her booklets, George Sherriff was only ever known by his initials, and did not sign the 1890 cards that he is generally credited with. Nevertheless, Sherriff was named as *Hinemoa’s* illustrator in the abovementioned *Wanganui Herald* article. He was also quick to correct what he saw as an error in its reportage. The paper had said that in *Hinemoa* “the German style has been closely followed by Mr G. Sherriff, the artist, and Mr W. Potts the lithographer.”<sup>113</sup> Sherriff wrote :

You remark that I am producing the illustrations to *Hinemoa* after the German style. My illustrations are produced in the usual manner in sepia, and are thoroughly original in every way. It is the lithographer, Mr Potts, who is attempting to reproduce them after the modern German illustrated booklet form. I trust you will kindly excuse me for correcting the error, as the article reads as though I was copying from the German.<sup>114</sup>

To Sherriff, the booklet was a German form – or at least was coming from German publishers based or operating in Britain, like Tuck, Hildesheimer and Ernest Nister. However, a few days later William Potts wrote in to correct perceived errors in Sherriff’s response:

In the first place I am a lithographic artist and not a lithographer. I am producing for Mr Willis exact reproductions of Mr Sherriff’s illustrations to *Hinemoa* in the manner I reproduce my own drawings and not in any German or other style. As Mr Sherriff’s drawings are original, and I reproduce them, I cannot see what Germany has to do with them.<sup>115</sup>

Apart from providing useful clues as to the booklet form, and exemplifying the status invested in the terms ‘artist,’ ‘lithographer’ and ‘original’,<sup>116</sup> this exchange (which must have resulted in some frosty relations at Willis’s works) demonstrates the seriousness with which both Sherriff and Potts undertook this work.

It is easy, with hindsight, to see *Hinemoa* as typical of a ‘Maoriland’ approach, but most of the work that forms this corpus

occurred later. In 1890 Sherriff may have been justified in thinking that he was forging something original in New Zealand, though it was hardly “original in every way.” The format was borrowed, and the typeface of a style that had been popular in the mid-1880’s,<sup>117</sup> and was employed by Tuck in booklets like the 1888 *Songs, Carols and Chimes*. However this melding of transnational form and local content appears to have been a success. Willis garnered more good press for his 1890 products than he had for any of his earlier attempts. The measure of this can be seen the following year, when Wildman & Lyell in Auckland were advertising works “by the eminent colour printer, Mr Willis of Wanganui.”<sup>118</sup> The *New Zealand Herald* similarly wrote a piece that exemplifies Willis’s growing reputation, and acknowledgement that his works were art. After introducing him as “that most industrious and persevering producer and disseminator of New Zealand art” it went on to say:

Year after year Mr. Willis has toiled on amidst many discouragements in his attempts to show the outside world that we can produce something besides frozen mutton and kauri gum, and we are pleased to hear that his efforts are at last beginning to be appreciated. The great success of last year’s Christmas booklet – “*Hinemoa*” – has induced the publisher to follow on with something on the same lines, but the work of both the artist and poet, and last, but not least, the printer, is this year immeasurably superior.”



Figure 14: A. D. Willis (publisher), G. Sherriff (illustrator), W. Potts (lithographer), Christmas Booklet, 1890: The Land of the Moa. Courtesy of Dunedin Public Library. A (misdated) copy of this work can be seen online at: <https://archive.org/details/MontgomerySherriffTheLandOfTheMoa1890>

That follow-on, in 1891, was *The Land of the Moa* (figure 14). It is worth noting here that the booklets, like the Christmas cards, have been routinely misdated in libraries and collections. Fortunately, newspaper advertising and comment provides definitive dates, and hence we can also follow something of the development of these works.

The title 'Land of the Moa' predates the booklet. The phrase was an alternative description for New Zealand, and was also the title of a 9x5' painting by George Sherriff, which had been exhibited at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886 (where it was the largest work displayed).<sup>119</sup> It was described in the *New Zealand Herald's* review as "a wild lake scene, surrounded by rugged, glacier-crowned mountains."<sup>120</sup> In 1890, this work was the main prize in Sherriff's Art Union Lottery, where it was valued at £70.<sup>121</sup> Given that Willis and Sherriff would have been planning *Hinemoa* at this point, it can hardly be a coincidence that Willis arranged for Sherriff to illustrate a booklet the following year with the same title as the painting. However, when completed, the booklet's treatment could hardly be more different. Whereas the painting was searching for the Romantic sublime, with a bleak and expansive aspect, Sherriff adapted the booklet to the Christmas card approach – realising that a popular audience needed more of a commercial sublime.<sup>122</sup> If the painting was full of empty space (a marker of the highbrow), the booklet was packed and abundant. The central image retains elements of the painting of Wakatipu, but a volcano has been added, along with a waterfall, Māori village and lush framing foliage. The aim is to orchestrate a quick emotional response to New Zealand in as many ways as possible. This agglomeration is slightly less marked in the somewhat disjointed images within the booklet, but what the pictures lack, the poet more than makes up for, with some heady hymns to native flora and fauna, which would have been remarkably difficult for non-locals, who could not distinguish one bird from another, to follow.

The interesting thing about the advertising in 1891 is that, unlike with *Hinemoa*, the identity of the G. S. initials was barely acknowledged. This may have been Sherriff's choice, but it may also be that Willis has simply purchased the artwork, as he did with Sherriff's painting of *The Latest Scandal*, which he then published as a lithograph.<sup>123</sup> He may therefore have felt no particular need to acknowledge the artist, rather than promoting his own Willis brand – much as overseas Art Publishers like Raphael Tuck routinely did. Certainly the Willis brand was blossoming. The *Auckland Star* had this to say:

While the foreign goods are so attractive, we in the colonies prefer in sending missives Home to send something characteristic of the land we live in. A demand sprang up years ago, and has been admirably met by Mr A. D. Willis, colour printer of Wanganui, whose publications incidental to the Christmas season have extended his reputation far and wide.<sup>124</sup>

The paper went on to praise *The Land of the Moa* (without mentioning Sherriff) as "a charming publication....the work compares very favourably with that done either in America or Europe," and to say of the new series of Christmas cards that "they are really charming, and in point of artistic merit even superior to those of last year."<sup>125</sup> The cards' subject matter in part continued the approach of the previous year, with educational images of Māori life with their Māori names (figure 15), but there were also new, primarily comic, elements. *Thoughts of Christmas* depicts a smiling Māori woman with an unsuspecting pig. *A Christmas Greeting in Maoriland* has an amusing encounter between playful Māori and put-upon Pākehā. These have something of the humour of Sherriff's *The Latest Scandal* (which showed a group of Māori women laughing about the latest gossip), but here it is more at the expense of Europeans than Māori, who are shown as completely at home in their environment. Whether Māori would have found these cards as entertaining as Pākehā is unclear, as there is no evidence directly related to Māori consumption of any of the cards. But, as Blackley has shown, Māori did consume art on their own terms,<sup>126</sup> and there is evidence that *The Latest Scandal*, at least, amused. "A crowd of laughing Maoris" was reported as gathering around a Napier shop window where the title of the displayed print had been translated,<sup>127</sup> while in Auckland a similar group responded to the picture with "great gusto."<sup>128</sup>

By 1892 Sherriff was probably knee deep in Mt Somers stone dust, carving the Lion Monument for Whanganui's Queen's Gardens War Memorial, but he still undertook another commission from Willis. This was the booklet *Tiki's Trip to Town* (figure 16), a largely pictorial piece with a text by James Duigan (editor of the Willis-friendly *Wanganui Herald*). Smaller and cheaper (at 1s 3d) than the other booklets, it came the closest to matching a Christmas card in price. It has been regarded, since Betty Gilderdale's work on New Zealand children's book history, as a children's book.<sup>129</sup> This may be the case, but there is absolutely nothing in the advertising to mark it as such. What it claims to be is "humorous



Figure 15: A. D. Willis (publisher), G. Sherriff (artwork), W. Potts (lithographer), Christmas Cards, 1891. Above: Thoughts of Christmas. Right top: Maori Nose-Rubbing ("Hongi oha"). Right bottom: A Christmas Greeting in Maoriland. All courtesy of Te Papa, purchased 1995. References: GH012086, GH004844 & GH012089. Te Papa's records incorrectly date these and other similar Willis cards to c.1900's and use their greeting texts as their title rather than the script captions that Willis advertised with.



sketches of a Maori boy's visit to town."<sup>130</sup> This is similar wording to how Sherriff's *The Latest Scandal* had been marketed by Willis the previous year – i.e. that it “hits off the humourous side of Maori Life most graphically.”<sup>131</sup> Its vignette illustrations are also similar in style to the previous year's Christmas cards (compare figures 15 and 16).



Figure 16: Double page spread from *Tiki's Trip to Town*, an 1892 Christmas Booklet illustrated by George Sherriff, lithography by William Potts, published by A. D. Willis. Author's collection.

At all events, this connection with Sherriff's previous work allows us to see how *Tiki* fits into the artist's oeuvre – something that Caroline Campbell was not able to make sense of.<sup>132</sup> Campbell also misses the connection of *Tiki's* vignette format with Sherriff's previous Christmas cards, seeing this instead as typical of children's illustration.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, in the closest and most extensive reading of any of the Willis works discussed here, Campbell's conclusion that “the figurative treatment of the main and supporting characters is an attempt by an immigrant artist/illustrator to articulate an indigenous reality contradicting the aims of colonial agencies of power,” seems a fair assessment of Sherriff's approach.<sup>134</sup>

The bulk of Willis's 1892 work was, however, done by a different artist. In 1891 *The New Zealand Herald* had reported that Willis had engaged two Auckland artists for his next year's production,<sup>135</sup> however only one eventuated, and it is less easy to ignore the 'colonial agencies of power' in some of his pieces. Kennett Watkins was by far the most high-profile artist Willis had yet employed, and he not only drew six Christmas card designs, but also the main booklet of the year *The*

*Tohunga* (figure 17). This again had poetry by Eleanor Montgomery which, as a review put it, aimed to “reproduce in English verse the kind of naturalism and savagery which we understand to be the characteristics of Maori verse.”<sup>136</sup> The artwork, however, seems to have been almost universally appreciated, and described as “real works of art.”<sup>137</sup> It was certainly more cohesive than *The Land of the Mōa* and the consensus seems to have been that “nothing could be more suitable than this pretty little book as a Christmas card for sending to friends at home.”<sup>138</sup>

Watkins' set of six cards for 1892 were similarly well received. Apart from their stronger sepia colouring (as opposed to the bluish grey of Sherriff's earlier cards) several of them follow the pattern of their predecessors fairly closely, with cards like *A Native Pet* (figure 18) providing an intimate view of Māori life. However, Watkins also introduced new elements. He had worked hard to establish himself in the high-status genre of history painting.<sup>139</sup> With only 50 years of Pākehā history to play with, the genre almost by default propelled New Zealand painters into depictions of historical Māori, a territory which Watkins regarded as an inheritance.<sup>140</sup> Thus, instead of documenting Māori life in the present, as Sherriff had, Watkins began to show historical customs in cards like *A Maori Challenge*.



Figure 17: Cover and spread from *The Tohunga*, an 1892 Christmas booklet, illustrated by Kennett Watkins, lithography by William Potts, Published by A. D. Willis. Courtesy of Dunedin Public Library.



For these cards, an explanatory text was added to the back. If the ideology is implicit in the images, it is explicit in the texts. The gist of the *Maori Challenge* text is that uncivilised races taunt their enemies, whereas with the introduction of European guns, this primitive custom has stopped. The task of fully analysing these images and their accompanying texts is beyond the scope of this paper, but Watkins' version of Maoriland is clearly shot through with colonial attitudes that attempt, as Roger Blackley puts it, to "rescue the Māori past on behalf of Pākehā successors."<sup>141</sup> It also, rather more than Sherriff's work, falls victim to what Stafford and Williams have called "the Maoriland habit of splitting the present from the past, the actual from the ideal."<sup>142</sup> An honoured place in the past did not guarantee a place in the colony's future. And the fact that these cards were a commercial enterprise opens them to the critique that they, like other Maoriland work, were motivated more by economic benefit than any intrinsic interest in Māori.<sup>143</sup> How much these texts were Willis's doing, and how much they were Watkins' ideology is unclear, though their appearance in tandem with Watkins' arrival is suggestive. That they tapped into contemporary sentiment is, however, quite evident. The *Auckland Star* noted that "the subjects....are well chosen and the letter-press description on the back of the card makes these messages of love from Maoriland specially suitable for transmission to friends abroad."<sup>144</sup>

Willis's final year of Christmas card production was 1893, and Watkins again provided the artwork. *The Observer* called them "a set of six exquisite cards illustrative of New Zealand life and scenery [that would] give folks in England an idea of what Maoriland is really like."<sup>145</sup> The cards moved from a three-colour sepia to the tinted lithograph form and are both technically and artistically more ambitious than the previous year's offerings. The subjects also vary from *A Travelling Party* (figure 19), an image of Māori life with a descriptive and fairly neutral text, to cards that very much explore the impact of European settlement. In *Colonial Progress*, the Māori included are, like the native bush around the frame, simply symbolic of the old and untamed. Within the picture of progress (Watkins' picture-within-a-picture here stages this like a drama), the land is being tamed, and the accompanying text charts the stages. Progress is seen as inevitable and European. There is a more nuanced approach in *Oar Versus Paddle* which seems to document real boat races. The description allows Māori paddling prowess, but the introduction of sleek rowing boats means that four Europeans can take on (and beat over a longer distance) the Māori waka. Progress again inevitably favours the Pākehā.



Figure 18: A. D. Willis's 1892 Christmas cards. Illustrated by Kennett Watkins, Lithography by William Potts. Top: A Maori Challenge. Above: Reverse of A Maori Challenge. Right: A Native Pet. Centre: Courtesy of Te Papa, Purchased 1995. References: GH012085 & GH004846.



Figure 19: A. D. Willis's 1893 Christmas cards. Illustrated by Kennett Watkins, Lithography by William Potts. Top: Oar versus Paddle. Above: Colonial Progress. Right: A Travelling Party. Courtesy of Te Papa, Purchased 1995. References: GH004848, GH012081 & GH012082.

The *Wanganui Chronicle* agreed with the *Observer* that the cards were “most artistically got up, ....are eminently suited for the purpose intended, and will give people outside the colony a very favourable impression of picturesque New Zealand.”<sup>146</sup> It also praised Willis’s new Christmas booklet – *Under the Southern Cross* (Figure 20) which reunited George Sherriff with Eleanor Montgomery, who provided an introductory poem.<sup>147</sup> This was a booklet of views and was perhaps a response to a very nicely designed *West Coast Sounds* booklet published the previous year by J. Wilkie & Co., with illustrations by Robert Hawcridge.<sup>148</sup> It demonstrated that a booklet of views was viable, and hence it is not surprising to see Willis – always aware of market trends – responding to it. However it did not just include views of New Zealand. The *Southern Cross* connects many places and some pages show other lands and islands. In this booklet, New Zealand identity moves beyond the national to be located geographically and conceptually within the Pacific – and commercially in Australasia.<sup>149</sup>

Despite the good reviews of the year’s offerings, 1893 was Willis’s Christmas swansong. He would produce no new designs, though his previous cards and booklets continued on sale for several years,<sup>150</sup> and the type of Christmas imagery he had helped popularise would continue in Christmas Issues of journals like the *New Zealand Graphic*.<sup>151</sup> There are several reasons for this retreat from a format that had helped establish him as a leading art publisher. Firstly, 1893 saw Willis elected to the House of Representatives, replacing John Ballance in the Wanganui seat. Secondly, sometime between 1893-4, William Potts left.<sup>152</sup> Given that Willis’s Christmas card production began in earnest with Potts’ arrival, and stopped with his departure, it seems likely that he was a driving force in their conception. And with no Potts, and with Willis in Wellington, there was clearly a decision to consolidate production. By 1893 Willis’s printing works was highly successful across multiple fields (books, labels, playing cards etc). Now he could put more work into these lines. And quitting the Christmas market as a publisher did not prevent his profiting from it as an importer and bookseller.

Looking back, however, Willis would have been able to reflect on a successful decade of Christmas production, that had helped promote his hometown as a publishing centre. He had, with Wilkie and the Burton Brothers, forged a place for the local in the teeth of competition from the giants of print culture. He had been attentive to the trends in that stationery industry and responded quickly – including being the first New Zealand publisher to publish Christmas booklets. He had also produced a catalogue of New Zealand views which

encompassed most of the country and collectively recorded what was considered at the time to be 'picturesque New Zealand.' He had also managed to convince people across the country of the validity of these pieces of ephemera as being "the highest style of art,"<sup>153</sup> had tapped top local talent and, latterly, could call on one of the leading artists of the day to produce works for him.

This paper is not the last word on Willis's work. Rather it has sought to shape an armature on which subsequent studies might be sculpted. Nevertheless, some broad themes have emerged, with the two halves of the production having quite different trajectories. The first half was about refining the chromolithographic technique, developing a distinctive visual language with which to address the local audience while remaining accessible to overseas recipients. There was an increasing sense of New Zealandness being related to its unique, wild and awe-inspiring landscape – a development which superseded and incorporated the earlier focus on flora and fauna. The 'view' here becomes more collectible than the specimen. In none of this is Willis markedly different from what was going on around him, but he was very aware of current cultural shifts – as his quick understanding of the need to create visual abundance demonstrated.

Nineteenth century print culture could easily act as a transnational force for cultural colonisation. Willis was inevitably part of that culture. His work in the 1890s attempted to address New Zealand's cultural distinctiveness, thereby becoming an early exponent of the type of Maoriland approaches that are now largely discredited – seen as "imprisoning Maori within an imagined past" while manufacturing identity from an appropriated mythology.<sup>154</sup> That Willis would, to twenty-first century eyes, fail spectacularly to properly respect the unique identity and position of Māori was, given his cultural background, fairly much inevitable. The cracks are particularly evident in the cards created for him by Kennett Watkins. Nevertheless, within his own context, Willis's interest in promoting the Māori language through his cards is one indicator that he was trying to do more than just make money, and was perhaps encouraging a base-level of cultural understanding via his publications. Indeed, he would later purchase the rights to *Kōrero Māori: First Lessons in Māori Conversation* and publish a fifth edition,<sup>155</sup> suggesting that he was serious about promoting Te Reo Māori. There is, clearly, a great deal more that needs doing to understand Willis's work in relation to the broader issues that Phillips, Bell, Stafford & Williams, Gibbons and Blackley, in particular, have defined. There is also more to be said about the ways that commercial art, the picturesque, the middlebrow and the Christmas card come together. However, for these discussions to be complete, the photographic Christmas cards of the

period also need to be considered. Therefore, these will inform a future paper. For now, I hope that the above has shown that the work of this Whanganui chromolithographer deserves a more central place in these discussions than it has hitherto received, and that, by documenting Willis's development, it has established a clear basis from which these discussions can begin.

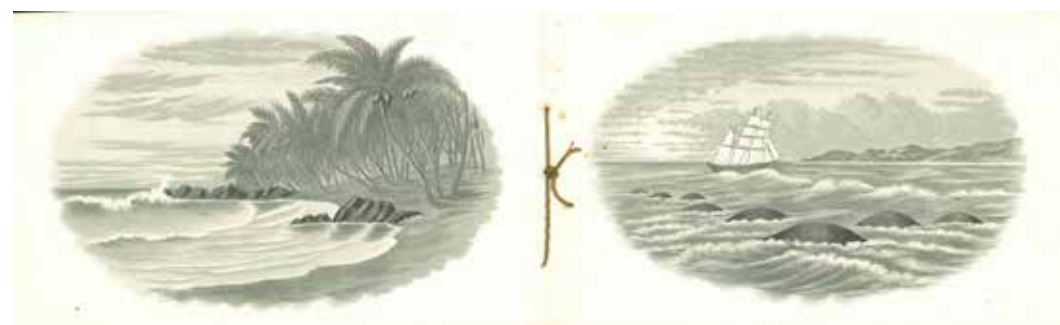
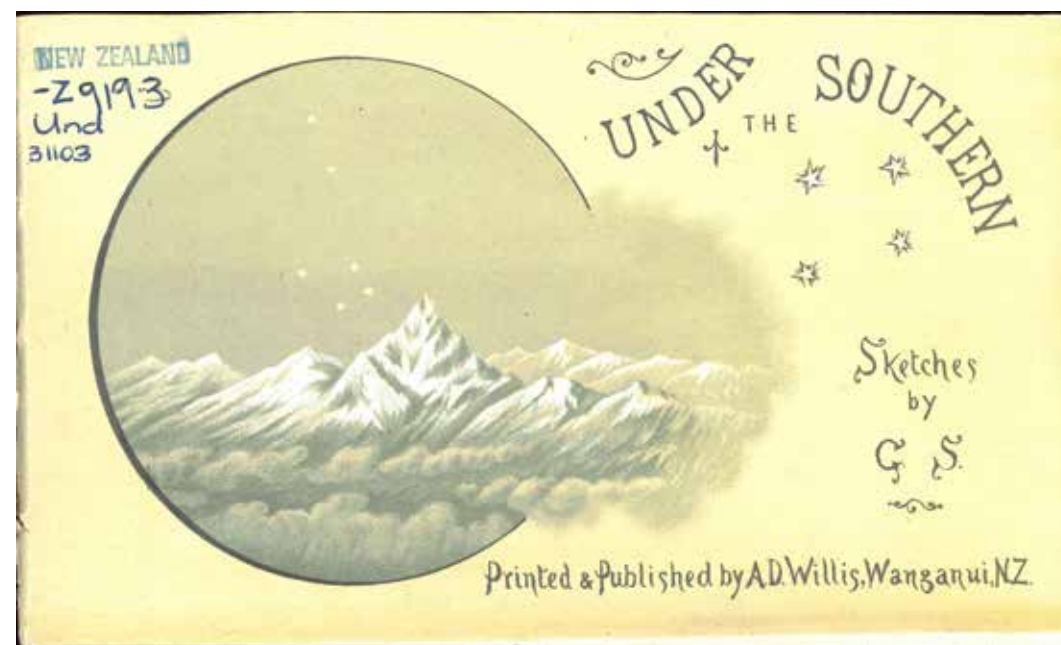


Figure 20: A. D Willis's 1893 Christmas Booklet, *Under the Southern Cross*. Illustrations by George Sherriff, lithography by William Potts. Courtesy of Dunedin Public Library. The cover illustration combines Sherriff's love of alpine scenes, and Willis's love for exploded frames. The rebus in the title has flummoxed librarians, but advertising confirms that the word 'cross' is intended.

## APPENDIX:

A.D. Willis's Christmas cards 1883-93

NB. The cards are listed in the order they appear in the source and with original spelling. The first two years were located in "Freethought Review," while the remaining cards were sourced from newspaper adverts and comment. The cards' titles are deduced from several sources, prioritised as follows: the card itself; Willis's adverts; other adverts; newspaper editorial comment. Some titles have been shortened.

1883: Poroporo; Tutu; Nikau Palm; Karaka; Tawa; Titoki; Houhi; Ponga Fern Kareao; Mock Orange;\* Karamu; Black Mairie; Whero-whero; Pohutukawa; Ruapehu; Mitre Peak; Rangitoto Island; Mount Egmont; Lake Manapouri; Lake Rotorua.

\*The Mock Orange was advertised, but no copy exists in the Turnbull's sample books.

1884: On the Dart River (Otago); Mount Campbell; The Kaikouras (Marlborough); Entering Milford Sound; In Milford Sound; Paikakariki (Wellington); Waitangi Falls (Bay of Islands); Waitakere Falls (North of Auckland); Lake Taupo; Lake Mavora (Otago); Among the Ranges, Queenstown (Otago); Wellington Heads; Lyttleton Harbour; Timaru Breakwater; Port Chalmers and Otago Heads; Ocean Beach, Dunedin; Breaksea Sound; Otira Gorge; Tararu Creek; Bowen Falls, Milford Sound; Entrance to Dusky Sound; Mt Cook; A Merry Christmas.

1885: Nikau Palm / Lake Wakatipu; Cabbage Tree / Picton; Pitau Fern / Rangitata Gorge; Lake Mavora / NZ Flowers (Manapouri); Pink Terrace, Lake Rotomahana; View of Wanganui / Floral Design; New Plymouth Breakwater / NZ Flowers; Stewart's Island / NZ Berries; Lake Kanieri, West Coast; Docharty's Bay, Dusky Sound; Lyttleton Heads; White Terrace, Lake Rotomahana.

1886: Lake Wanaka; Akaroa Harbour; Rotokakahi (Taupo); Manawatu Gorge; Napier; Queenstown (Lake Wakatipu); North Shore (Auckland); Te Aroha; Mount Arthur (Nelson); Waitukere, Lower Falls (Auckland); Coromandel; Grahamstown Gold-field (Thames).

1887: Port Road, Nelson\*; Cromwell; Pink Terrace and Floral Design; White Terrace and Floral Design; Mount Egmont from New Plymouth; Kawau, Sir George Grey's Residence; Tarawera Eruption; Lake Wakatipu; Tauranga; Oamaru Breakwater; Rangitikei River; Waiwera, Auckland.

\*Port Road, Nelson was advertised, but was not included in the Turnbull's sample books

1888: Early Sunrise, NZ; West Coast, NZ

1890: A Maori Canoe (Waka) Race; Maori Going to Market in Canoe; The Home of the Maori (Kainga); A Family Repast (Kai); Maoriland – The Old Style and the New; A Maori Speech (Korero).

1891: Her Best Friend; Thoughts of Christmas; Maori Nose Rubbing (Hongi oha); A Christmas Greeting in Maori Land; Pig Hunting in New Zealand; Dolce Far Niente.

1892: A Maori Challenge; Maori Hospitality; Natural Hot Baths; Preparing Dinner; A Maori Pa; A Native Pet.

1893: On the Waikato; Colonial Progress; In a Kauri Forest; A Travelling Party; Hinemoa; Oar Versus Paddle.

A.D Willis's Christmas Gift Booklets 1890-93:

1890: Hinemoa

1891: The Land of the Moa

1892: The Tohunga; Tiki's Trip to Town

1893: Under the Southern Cross

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## ENDNOTES

*I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their suggestions which have materially improved the resulting piece. I would also like to thank Dr Oliver Stead, Curator of Drawings, Paintings and Prints at the Alexander Turnbull Library and Julian Smith, Reed Rare Books and Special Collections Librarian at the Dunedin Public Libraries for their help with arranging images for this paper.*

- 1 Peter Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," *Backstory*, no. 3 (2017).
- 2 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Auckland Society of Arts," July 16, 1885: 6.
- 3 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Auckland Society of Arts," November 10, 1884: 11.
- 4 Una Platts, "Frank and Walter Wright: An Exhibition Held at the Auckland City Art Gallery," (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1955): 12. Wright's workplace is, however, identified as the furniture shop, Winks & Hall, where he worked as a packer.
- 5 Blackley focuses on colour lithography only in relation to illustrated supplements. Roger Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2018): 185-7.
- 6 Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture 1855-1875* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011): 26. Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* began the trend for Christmas literature, according to Jude Piesse, *British Settler Emigration in Print, 1832-1877* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016): 49
- 7 Mount Ida Chronicle (Naseby), "Untitled," December 18, 1880: 2. Note that this reference confirms that the book was published in 1880, and not, as usually given, 1881.
- 8 Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 11. On J. Wilkie & Co, see: Rosslyn Joan Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea: A Study of the Colour Print Products, Printers, Technology and Markets in New Zealand, 1830-1914" (Doctoral Thesis, Victoria University of

- Wellington, 2002):247-8. Although Johnston gives their entry into the printing trade as 1885, their 1882 Christmas card calls them 'printers and stationers.' Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 17.
- 9 "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 9-10.
  - 10 *Ibid.*, 14-17.
  - 11 There has been controversy around the spelling of Whanganui since it was founded. Whanganui is now the official name of the town, and I use it when speaking of the town in contemporary terms. However, when accessing Whanganui papers, I use the name as it was spelt in the nineteenth century – Wanganui.
  - 12 Eyre and Spottiswoode were printers to the Queen and did chromolithography. They would become a major producer of Christmas Cards from 1879. Gleeson White, *Christmas Cards and Their Chief Designers* (London: Studio, 1895): 24.
  - 13 Randal Springer, "Willis, Archibald Dudingston," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1993. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2w26/willis-archibald-dudingston> (accessed 28 September 2019).
  - 14 Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 12.
  - 15 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 312.
  - 16 Please note that all newspaper references in this paper were accessed online.
  - 17 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "The Taupo Road," November 21, 1882: 2. See also Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 12.
  - 18 As was the case with British firms, it is likely that the bulk of the artists were women. The arts were one of the socially acceptable ways women could earn a living. Almost half of the jobs listed as suitable for women in *The Young Ladies' Treasure Book: A Complete Cyclopaedia of Practical Instruction and*

- Direction for all Indoor and Outdoor Occupations and Amusements Suitable to Young Ladies*, (London: Ward Lock, c.1880): 334, were arts-related. The book is anonymously authored.
- 19 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Advertisements," March 3, 1883: 3.
- 20 Though Willis published twelve cards in 1885, the book contains only four smaller sixpenny cards and one larger shilling card from that year. This suggests that the album was put together to promote Willis's full stock, but at a time when only one stone's worth of cards had yet been printed.
- 21 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 311.
- 22 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Local Industries: Caxton Printing Works," August 22, 1883: 2.
- 23 Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 67-70. See also Jay T. Last, *The Color Explosion: Nineteenth-Century American Lithography* (Santa Ana, CA: Hillcrest Press, 2005).
- 24 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Advertisements," October 20, 1883: 4. An example of one of these is printed on the cover of *Mail Coach* in association with G.I. Robertson's article which mentions them. G. I. Robertson, "The Christmas Card: Its Origin and Early Use in New Zealand," *The Mail Coach* 51, no. 1 (2014): 15.
- 25 He was noted for his links to overseas printers. Caroline Anne Campbell, "In the Realm of the Imagined: Representation and Identity in Australasian Illustrated Junior Fiction 1890 -1920" (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2009): 109.
- 26 Examples of these primarily floral cards are reproduced in Megan Martin, "Bessie Rouse's Scrap Album & the First Australian Christmas Cards," Sydney Living Museums, <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/bessie-rouse-scrap-album> (accessed September 10, 2019).
- 27 Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 116.
- 28 Freethought Review (Whanganui), "New Zealand Christmas Cards," October 1, 1883: 8.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Peter Gibbons, "Cultural Colonisation and National Identity," *New Zealand Journal of History* 36, no. 1 (2002): 10-11.
- 31 Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, "Pretty as a Picture: Australia and the Imperial Picturesque," *Journal of Australian Studies* 21, no. 53 (1997): 105.
- 32 Gilderdale, "Summer Scenes and Flowers: The Beginnings of the New Zealand Christmas Card, 1880-1882," 9-10.
- 33 Patricia Zakreski, "The Victorian Christmas Card as Aesthetic Object: 'Very Interesting Ephemera of a Very Interesting Period in English Art-Production'," *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 2 (2015): 125.
- 34 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 294.
- 35 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Local Industries: Caxton Printing Works," August 22, 1883: 2.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 297.
- 38 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Local and General," September 1, 1883: 2.
- 39 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Wanganui Herald," September 4, 1883: 2. Willis's chief competitor in the local stationery business, H. I. Jones, advertised a set of New Zealand floral Christmas cards by another of the major British firms, Charles Goodall & Sons, as well as his own range of hand-painted cards. Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Advertisements," October 27, 1883: 3.
- 40 Georgia Barnhill details a number of tactics used by American lithographers, from selling direct in the shop, to using agents and marketing through editorial write-ups. Georgia B. Barnhill, "Business Practices of Commercial Nineteenth-Century American Lithographers," *Winterthur Portfolio* 48, no. 2/3 (2014):227-9. Willis used all of these approaches. Newspaper samples are more visible in 1883, but in 1884 he was using Joseph Braithwaite as his agent for the South Island. Evening Star (Dunedin), "Evening Star," October 15, 1884: 2.
- 41 Star (Christchurch), "Christmas Cards," October 8, 1883: 3.
- 42 Grey River Argus (Westport), "Grey River Argus," October 1, 1883: 2.
- 43 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), "Christmas Cards," September 25, 1883: 3.
- 44 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), "Lithographic Productions," March 13, 1884: 4.
- 45 Evening Star (Dunedin), "Christmas Cards," October 5, 1883: 2.
- 46 Freethought Review (Whanganui), "New Zealand Christmas Cards," October 1, 1884: 8.
- 47 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Advertisements," December 15, 1883: 3.
- 48 Judith Adler, "Origins of Sightseeing," *Annals of Tourism Research* 16, no. 1 (1989): 24.
- 49 Hughes-d'Aeth, "Pretty as a Picture: Australia and the Imperial Picturesque," 99.
- 50 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993): 139.
- 51 Ibid., 139-40; 150.
- 52 Zakreski, "The Victorian Christmas Card as Aesthetic Object: 'Very Interesting Ephemera of a Very Interesting Period in English Art-Production':" 123.
- 53 For a fuller discussion of these issues see: Peter Gilderdale, "Hands across the Sea: Situating an Edwardian Greetings Postcard Practice" (PhD, Auckland University of Technology, 2013): 154-7. Jennifer Black gives a similar picture related to trade cards. Jennifer M. Black, "Exchange Cards: Advertising, Album Making, and the Commodification of Sentiment in the Gilded Age," *Winterthur Portfolio* 51, no. 1 (2017).
- 54 Susan Marjorie Zieger, *The Mediated Mind: Affect, Ephemera, and Consumerism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018): 4.
- 55 On this, see Gibbons, "Cultural Colonisation and National Identity."
- 56 On this, see: Margaret McClure, *The Wonder Country: Making New Zealand Tourism* (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2004).
- 57 Anne Maxwell, "'Oceana' Revisited: J. A. Froude's 1884 Journey to New Zealand and the Pink and White Terraces," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, no. 2 (2009): 378.
- 58 Evening Star (Dunedin), "Evening Star," October 15, 1884: 2.
- 59 Freethought Review (Whanganui), "New Zealand Christmas Cards," October 1, 1884: 8.
- 60 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), "Lithographic Productions," March 13, 1884: 4.
- 61 National Library, <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.94038>
- 62 Hughes-d'Aeth, "Pretty as a Picture: Australia and the Imperial Picturesque," 100.
- 63 For useful discussions on postcolonial theory within contexts similar to those being examined here, see: Olwyn Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914" (PhD, Victoria University, 2015): 249-53, and Alan Robert Cocker, "Picturing Colonial New Zealand: Charles Spencer's Images of the 'Eighth Wonder of the World', the Pink and White Terraces," *International Journal of the Image* 2, no. 4 (2013): 25-28.
- 64 Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, *Paper Nation: The Story of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886-1888* (Carleton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2001): 60-63. Hughes-d'Aeth favours the telescopic, with its connotations of teleology, however more immigrants would have experienced the porthole than the telescope.
- 65 Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlour: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 24.
- 66 On this move to abundance in an equivalent genre, see Alison Hedley, "Advertisements, Hyper-Reading, and Fin De Siècle Consumer Culture in the Illustrated London News and the Graphic," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 51, no. 1 (2018).
- 67 Hughes-d'Aeth, *Paper Nation: The Story of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886-1888*: 203.
- 68 J. O. C. Phillips, "Musings in Maoriland – or Was There a Bulletin School in New Zealand?," *Historical Studies* 20, no. 81 (1983): 529.
- 69 Alison Clarke, *Holiday Seasons: Christmas, New Year and Easter in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007): 70-1.
- 70 Hughes-d'Aeth, *Paper Nation: The Story of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886-1888*. 209 & 212-14. This effect is also discussed in relation to the later work of Robert Hawcrige in Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914," 125-5.
- 71 For a detailed study of this approach, see Hughes-d'Aeth, *Paper Nation: The Story of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia 1886-1888*: 221-2.

- 72 Ibid., 216.
- 73 George Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card* (London: Spring, 1954): 116.
- 74 Roger Blackley, *Stray Leaves: Colonial Trompe L'oeil Drawings* (Wellington: Adam Art Gallery & Victoria University Press, 2001): 3.
- 75 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Advertisements," September 27, 1887: 2.
- 76 i.e. North Otago Times (Oamaru), "North Otago Times," September 4, 1886: 2. Although Willis clearly enjoyed travelling and promoting his business, the existence of sample books suggests the use of travelling salesmen as well. Willis was certainly using travellers ('bagmen') to promote his wares by 1897. D.F. McKenzie and K.A. Coleridge, *Printing, Bookselling & Their Allied Trades in New Zealand Circa 1900: Extracts from the Cyclopaedia of New Zealand Compiled as Materials Towards a History* (Wellington, New Zealand: Wai-te-ata, 1980): 131.
- 77 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Advertisements," November 10, 1886: 2.
- 78 New Zealand Times (Wellington), "Untitled," October 15, 1888: 4. The Wanganui Chronicle, Lyttleton Times, Press and New Zealand Mail all carried variants of this story.
- 79 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "News of the Day," November 3, 1888: 2.
- 80 Quoted in Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea." 315.
- 81 National Library, <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.94038>.
- 82 Johnston quotes Harding in *Typo* saying the designer was a Miss Stoddart. Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 315. My attribution to Margaret Olrog Stoddart comes from the fact that the Star's report of her graduate show, where she exhibited Christmas cards printed by Willis (see note 83) fits with the timing given in her biographical record. Julie King, "Stoddart, Margaret Olrog," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s37phies/3s37stoddart-margaret-olrog> (accessed 27 September 2019).
- 83 She exhibited the cards at the School's exhibition in 1889, *Star* (Christchurch), "School of Art," February 7, 1889: 3.
- 84 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 304.
- 85 Ibid., *The Star* discussed her work in a paragraph that talks about "the application of an artistic education to the ordinary practical requirements of a trade." If Stoddart was trying to demonstrate this, approaching a good printer of Christmas cards would be the logical way to get her designs realised.
- 86 Lincolnshire Chronicle (Lincoln, UK), "Christmas Publications," November 25, 1887: 3.
- 87 Press (Christchurch), "Amongst the Christmas Cards," November 22, 1888: 6.
- 88 New Zealand Times (Wellington), "Advertisements," November 24, 1887: 8.
- 89 Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture 1855-1875*: 10.
- 90 I am working on a fuller paper looking at this hitherto undocumented area and will give fuller details there.
- 91 Shields Daily News (Tynemouth, UK), "Raphael Tuck & Sons," December 4, 1888: 1; Irish Times (Dublin), "Christmas Cards and Christmas Booklets," November 26, 1888: 6.
- 92 James Belich, "Myth, Race, and Identity in New Zealand," *New Zealand Journal of History* 31, no. 1 (1997): 14; 16.
- 93 Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910*: 37.
- 94 Ibid., 38.
- 95 Leonard Bell, "The Representation of the Maori by European Artists in New Zealand, ca. 1890-1914," *Art Journal* 49, no. 2 (1990): 146.
- 96 They were probably, like the 1891 cards, lithographed in three colours of brown on a cream background. Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 322. This is the same process used for the sepia illustration in *The Jackdaw of Rheims* (figure 11), and sepia booklets are credited with causing this change in Christmas card design in a later review of Willis's work: South Canterbury Times (Timaru), "New Zealand Art Publications," August 30, 1892: 2.
- 97 Phillips, "Musings in Maoriland – or Was There a *Bulletin* School in New Zealand?" 527.
- 98 Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910*.
- 99 Bell, "The Representation of the Maori by European Artists in New Zealand, ca. 1890-1914," 145.
- 100 Taranaki Herald (New Plymouth), "Advertisements," October 16, 1890: 2.
- 101 There are some Willis collectors with much deeper pockets than mine. I screenshotted the card at the time, but have neither copyright, or resolution to reproduce it here.
- 102 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Advertisements," September 23, 1890: 2.
- 103 Barry Hancox, "Southern Hemisphere Christmas Greetings Cards: Part One," *NZ Ephemera*, no. 1 (2008):18.
- 104 *Wanganui Herald* (Whanganui), "An Important Colonial Industry," May 24, 1890: 2.
- 105 E.E.M. Montgomery, *Songs of the Singing Shepherd*, (Whanganui: A.D. Willis, 1885). This work includes some poems of the Banjo Patterson bush ballad type which counterbalance her florid later work.
- 106 Bell, "The Representation of the Maori by European Artists in New Zealand, ca. 1890-1914," 145.
- 107 Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910*: 227.
- 108 Phillips, "Musings in Maoriland – or Was There a *Bulletin* School in New Zealand?" 530.
- 109 Bell, "The Representation of the Maori by European Artists in New Zealand, ca. 1890-1914," 148.
- 110 Gibbons, "Cultural Colonisation and National Identity," 13.
- 111 Leonard Bell, *The Maori in European Art* (Wellington: A.H. & A. W. Reed, 1980): 92.
- 112 Phillips, "Musings in Maoriland – or Was There a *Bulletin* School in New Zealand?" 529-30.
- 113 *Wanganui Herald* (Whanganui), "Arrival of the Monowai," May 27, 1890: 3.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 *Wanganui Herald* (Whanganui), "Illustrating Hinemoa," 29 May, 1890: 2.
- 116 The implication here is that a 'lithographic artist' has higher status than a lithographer. However Olwyn Canton found that in Wilkie's establishment the lithographer was of higher status than an 'artist'. Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914," 113. On this, see also Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 219-22.
- 117 On Robert Coupland Harding's earlier use of similar typefaces like *Harper*, see Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914," 48-56.
- 118 Auckland Star (Auckland), "Advertisements," September 29, 1891: 3.
- 119 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Wanganui Herald," August 17, 1886: 2. The quoted review is correct about the size, but then conflates Sherriff's work with Kennett Watkins' *Haunt of the Moa*.
- 120 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Colonial and Indian Exhibition," July 27, 1886: 6. This fits with the image on Artnet, where it is described as being of Lake Wakatipu: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/george-sheriff/land-of-the-moa-lake-wakatipu-K55VwYKb9CeT-5bMsEZMag2>
- 121 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Advertisements," March 3, 1890: 3.
- 122 This term has been used sporadically in a variety of contexts, but does not seem to have been defined definitively. It is at times used in a similar way to 'kitsch' as a marker of middlebrow taste.
- 123 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "One Man, One Vote," May 1, 1891: 2. For the image, see: <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.193282>
- 124 Auckland Star (Auckland), "Christmas Publications," October 8, 1891: 9.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 e.g. Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910*: 72; 96; 99.
- 127 Daily Telegraph (Napier), "Town Edition," August 29, 1891: 3. It is worth noting that we can't know with certainty whether the amusement was on the picture's terms or whether it was seen as amusingly bad.
- 128 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Untitled," September 19, 1891: 5.
- 129 Betty Gilderdale, *A Sea Change: 145 Years of New Zealand Junior Fiction* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1982): 38.
- 130 Wanganui Herald (Whanganui), "Advertisements," October 8, 1892: 1.
- 131 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Advertisements," September 26, 1891: 3.
- 132 Campbell, "In the Realm of the Imagined: Representation and Identity in Australasian Illustrated Junior Fiction 1890 -1920," 118.
- 133 Ibid., 189.
- 134 Ibid., 193.
- 135 New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Untitled,"

- September 19, 1891: 5. It is likely that the second artist was Louis Steele, with whom Watkins had collaborated.
- 136 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), "Books," December 17, 1892: 5.
- 137 South Canterbury Times (Timaru), "New Zealand Art Publications," August 30, 1892: 2.
- 138 Otago Daily Times (Dunedin), "Books," December 17, 1892: 5.
- 139 Blackley, *Galleries of Maoriland: Artists, Collectors and the Māori World, 1880-1910*: 63.
- 140 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 141 *Ibid.*, 67.
- 142 Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872-1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006): 269.
- 143 Kynan Gentry, *History, Heritage, and Colonialism: Historical Consciousness, Britishness, and Cultural Identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015): 232-3.
- 144 Auckland Star (Auckland), "Untitled," October 4, 1892: 8.
- 145 Observer (Auckland), "Amongst the Christmas Cards," November 11, 1893: 6.
- 146 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Local and General," October 19, 1893: 2.
- 147 This booklet should not be confused with Wilkie's 1899 booklet of the same name (albeit with the subtitle "Christmas Greetings from Maoriland") which was advertised in the Lake Wakatip Mail (Queenstown), "New Zealand Christmas & New Year Cards and Booklets," November 10, 1899: 4. This booklet is reproduced and discussed in Barry Hancox, "Southern Hemisphere Christmas Greetings Cards – Part Two," *NZ Ephemera*, no. 2 (2009): 24; 29.
- 148 This booklet is illustrated and discussed in Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914," 123-7. Cantlon deals extensively with Hawcridge's oeuvre in chapter three.
- 149 Although this conception could seem like a nod to Froude's *Oceana*, Willis would likely have been influenced by his *New Zealand Illustrated* author, Edward Wakefield's opposition to it. Maxwell, "'Oceana' Revisited: J. A. Froude's 1884 Journey to New Zealand and the Pink and White Terraces," 387.
- 150 In particular, Wildman & Lyell went on naming Willis's goods - e.g. Observer (Auckland), "Seasonable Novelties at Wildman and Lyell's," December 8, 1894: 19; Auckland Star (Auckland), "Advertisements," October 24, 1895: 6; Auckland Star (Auckland), "Advertisements," October 22, 1898: 3. In the 1896 advert, Wilkie's *West Coast Sounds* booklet is mistakenly ascribed to Willis.
- 151 On these, see Cantlon, "Peripheral Visions: Design in Ephemeral New Zealand Print c.1880 – 1914," 278-81. Note that Watkins provided illustrations for a story in the 1895 issue (p.281).
- 152 Johnston, "Colour Printing in the Uttermost Part of the Sea," 298.
- 153 This phrase occurs in a Wildman and Lyell advert: New Zealand Herald (Auckland), "Advertisements," November 12, 1892: 4.
- 154 Stafford and Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872-1914*: 268; 270.
- 155 Wanganui Chronicle (Whanganui), "Local and General," February 10, 1899: 2. This was the fifth edition of a book originally published in the 1870's and credited as being written by a "Pakeha-Maori."



A. D. Willis 1893 Christmas Card: *Hinemoa*, 104x144mm. Kennett Watkins (illustrator), William Potts (lithographer). Courtesy of Te Papa, Purchased 1995. Reference GH012088.