

Greenstone Trails: The Maori Search for Pounamu. By Barry Brailsford. A. H. & A. W. Reed, Wellington, 1984. 192 pp., 122 figs. Price: N.Z. \$19.95.

BARRY BRAILSFORD is a lecturer at Christchurch Teachers College whose interests have led him to search out and explore the human story of the South Island. In his earlier book *The Tattooed Land* (Wellington, 1981) he brought together Maori history, archaeological recording, museum artefacts and a willingness to tramp the land so as to make a readable compendium of South Island prehistory.

In *Greenstone Trails* he has sought to follow the Maori trails to the greenstone sources. He identifies fifteen major routes and passes and some thirty subsidiary trails. The greatest virtue of this book is that Brailsford has a personal knowledge of most of them which gives him a practical standpoint from which to judge the early historical writings. However, the story does not start with writing. In true Maori fashion it commences with the canoe of Aoraki, the South Island as we know it today, in which the sons of Raki and Papatuanuku came to grief when their 'canoe lifting' prayers failed and the canoe was wrecked. The four sons of Raki climbed on the high side and may still be seen — Aoraki himself being the park known as Mt. Cook with his three brothers beside him. These myths are enjoyable to hear and learn from and were mainly collected by Harries Beattie who published many of them in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and various privately funded books — a legacy indeed.

The myths are used correctly by Brailsford for their knowledge, and the understanding they convey of the geomorphology and geology of the land. This is complemented by a fairly simple geological origin of greenstone and its occurrence along the alpine fault line. The author uses only early European accounts and sketches, particularly by Brunner and Heaphy, to describe Maori knowledge and local techniques for working nephrite. He then follows the trails emphasising that the earlier explorers, who are credited with 'discovering' passes and trails, were originally taken over them by Maori guides. Such a one was Kehu who had first been over to Kumara and Arahura in 1835 and could minutely describe 'mountain, hill, rivers, streams, headlands and other natural features' (p.45). 'The virtue of the Heaphy-Brunner effort lay in their courage in going down a rugged coast where no European had gone before. . . . It had been done many times over many centuries. Now it was recorded in writing for the first time. This was the lasting Heaphy-Brunner achievement' (ibid.). Brailsford follows the same trails, bringing in a wealth of traditional and historical information.

I found the system of numbered footnotes with references at the end of the book a barrier rather than a help, even if the author often prefaces a quote with the name of the author. The Harvard system could have been used to advantage. This book is a readable compendium of information on the greenstone trails known and used by the Maori. The black and white photographic plates are often excellent and many of the eighteen colour plates are superb. One colour plate, of the painting 'The Spoils of War' by L. J. Steele is, however, of doubtful taste. The trails are given in map form, in sketch maps by Maori or Pakeha. The book is provided with a general index, and personal names and place are also indexed.

Perhaps one aspect of the book can be summed up in Barry Brailsford's final

words: 'those who want to know the land in all its closeness. Only on foot can you become part of it and cross the centuries' (p.182).

D. R. SIMMONS

Auckland Institute and Museum

An Illustrated History of Taranaki. By Gail and Ron Lambert. The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1983. 192 pp. Price: N.Z. \$24.95.

GAIL AND RON LAMBERT both approach their chosen subject from a background of familiarity with things historical. From her work, *Peter Wilson: Colonial Surgeon*, Gail Lambert has experience of colonial biography, and Ron Lambert's position as director of the Taranaki Museum would lead to a close acquaintance with historical resources, many of which are utilised in this volume. Both, too, are committee members of the Taranaki Historic Places Trust.

With such a background, the Lamberts are in a position to appreciate, and respond to, the dearth of writing on Taranaki regional history. Their work surveys Taranaki from its geologic beginnings to the present. The brief initial chapters outline the development of the region's landforms, and review the changes in Taranaki's flora and avifauna; and indicate the pattern of pre-pakeha settlement.

The bulk of the text is devoted to the chronological narration of the province's post-pakeha development. This is done through major national and regional events and trends, from colonial settlement through the era of the province's farming growth, on to the age of large-scale petrochemical development. The authors have also tried to indicate major themes, most particularly Maori-pakeha tension, and the long tradition of innovative and persistent Maori protest in the province. The illustrations themselves, many published for the first time, are well reproduced and contribute much to the work, establishing a vivid impression of Taranaki's past. Lack of contextual information limits the historical value, however, of much of this illustration.

Furthermore, the illustrations depict a past almost entirely dominated by pakeha men. Without exception, every act of exertion illustrated in this book is made by pakeha males. Men clear the land, milk the cows, fight wars; men drive the cars, trains and aircraft; men play sport, break the law and work the machines, and men do the clothes for 'Sunday best' photographs. And the women? They feature prominently in only three of more than 130 illustrations.

These partisan impressions cast doubt on the authors' claim to have made a survey of Taranaki's history. Nor does the disclaimer that the work was intended not for professionals but for a general readership absolve the authors from responsibility.

There are notable gaps and deficiencies. For instance, there is no mention of the trade union or women's suffrage movements in the province. Nor is the location of certain valuable manuscript resources spelled out. This problem arises in part because of the authors' decision to have a select bibliography, believing it would assist those readers curious to 'delve further' (p.15). A perusal of what has