



WHEN A MONOPOLY WAS DEFEATED. Captain Richard Brown floats his merchandise ashore at the infant New Plymouth settlement. An A. H. Messenger drawing.

Richard Brown was a man of purpose

(By A. H. Messenger)

AMONG the many outstanding characters to settle in New Plymouth in the early days of the Plymouth Company's existence was Captain Richard Brown, not to be confused with Major Charles Brown, the first Superintendent of Taranaki.

Born in Dublin in 1804, Richard Brown spent his early days in that city, but later on we find him in Tasmania, employed in a mercantile establishment in Hobart.

At the age of twenty he turned his attention to the sea, joining one of the Tasmanian whaling ships of which quite a fleet operated from Hobart in the early 'forties, most of them seeking their cargoes of oil in New Zealand waters.

In the whaler he paid his first visit to the Bay of Islands and saw for the first time the stalwart warriors of Hone Heke, and the lawlessness of this whaling rendezvous where the tough crews did as they pleased without restraint.

After a cruise among the Pacific islands further north, he returned to Hobart determined to settle somewhere in New Zealand if opportunity offered.

Coastal trade

It was shortly after the company occupied Taranaki, that Captain Brown commenced operating a coastal trade with schooners on the New Zealand coast. This became quite a profitable business and he continued with it for some time.

According to Lieutenant Oudgeon, who knew Richard Brown personally from January, 1850, the latter's first appearance in the New Plymouth roadstead was on board a vessel carrying a quantity of merchandise belonging to him.

He applied for the use of the surf-boats to land his cargo, but this request was refused, the Company at this time usurping the whole of the trade of the port.

Floated ashore

Oudgeon considers that Brown must have had some inkling of this when he packed his goods for they were all in watertight hogsheads.

Each of these barrels was lowered over the side and floated ashore on the incoming tide, being towed to the beach by boats from the ship. Willing hands hauled them ashore, rolled them up the beach, where Captain Brown took charge, knocked in the heads and sold the contents at prices which could not be refused.

Sailing off after this successful trading venture, it wasn't long before he returned with a second cargo, but this time he came to stay and building premises for a store and warehouse near the boatshed, settled down in defiance of the company's edict.

War dance

As a rule he got on well in his contact with the Maoris, but on one occasion in 1847, he had an argument with a Maori about a horse and, losing his temper, struck him on the head with a heavy whip handle.

The victim of this attack called

the whole tribe to his assistance, with the result that some hundreds of them came into town, danced a furious war dance and demanded that the captain should be handed over to them.

For his own safety the authorities shut him up in the town prison round which the Maoris kept watch all night.

In the morning the Captain pacified the Maoris by presenting his horse to them as "tutu" for the injury suffered and there the matter ended.

Whaling

Finding that shore-whaling was still a profitable calling along the Taranaki coast, Captain Brown set up a shore party at Moturoa, under the management of Robert Sinclair.

A fair number of whales were captured during the first season as they migrated northward through Cook Strait, and the oil and whale-bone was shipped overseas when opportunity offered.

On the outbreak of hostilities in Taranaki, Captain Brown was placed in charge of the friendly Maori contingent and proved a keen and efficient officer.

On Saturday, May 26, 1850, while in camp at Waitara, he set out alone to look for a straying horse, and had proceeded as far as the ford on the Waiorongia river when he was suddenly confronted by three of Wiremu Kingi's warriors.

One of these had been formerly employed in the captain's store at New Plymouth, and he it was who fired three shots at his former master.

The first shot was deflected by the captain's revolver-cartridge case and glanced off. The next penetrated his thigh, and the third passed through his left side and lodged in his body.

Swerving aside, his horse turned and galloped back to the Waitara camp where the captain fell from the saddle and was carried to the hospital tent.

In spite of all that the surgeons could do, his wounds proved too serious a nature to give any real hope of recovery and he died on August 21.

Lieutenant Oudgeon stated that "Richard Brown was a strictly honourable and upright man, a good and firm friend, but an unforfeiting enemy. He took the part of Ihaha against Kaitore in the Puketapu feud, and frequently risked his life in endeavouring to assist him. Daring to a degree and brave as a lion, this extraordinary man died about the time the war began."

Well, in his "History of Taranaki," states that "Captain Brown was a man of education and polite manners, a clever improvisator, and convivial, but sober in his habits."



THE GRANGER ON THE

(By Roderick Mann fr

STEWART GRANGER had just a ranch in Arizona. He was bronzed from the fierce desert sun, and was

We were in his Hollywood hotel for suite. His wife Jean Simmons, has wearing pyjamas, sat beside him on the sofa playing with their poodle.

It was one of her few days off from the film Spartacus, which she is making with Laurence Olivier and Kirk Douglas.

Granger was about to cook lunch



JEAN SIMMONS AND STEWART GRANGER

ki," states that "Captain Brown was a man of education and polite manners, a clever improvisator, and convivial, but sober in his habits."

"He was singularly reticent regarding his antecedents and business transactions, strictly just and pleasant in his dealings; but there was an inner inurement in his nature that was impenetrable, and a fire in his eye that forbade too close an acquaintance. To a certain extent he lived and died a mystery."

THESE HAPPY CHILDREN are not in the least bit self-conscious as the photographer catches them in characteristic playtime activities. LEFT: With nose almost touching the paper, Ashley Hodder gets a close look at his painting of the infants' school. ABOVE: Beverly Ward orders groceries for her "family" at the toy telephone.