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NEW ZEALAND POSTCARD PUBLISHERS

This is the first in a series of thumbnail sketches of early N.Z. picture postcard publishers, based on data extracted from sources such as Wise's annual Trade and Alphabetical Street Directories 1900 - 1930, early phone directories, and miscellaneous other sources such as contemporary newspaper advertisements. If any reader can add useful information to what little is provided here, I would be pleased to receive it.

#1 ERNEST DE TOURET

Publisher (from about 1908-9) of the "Gordon Real Photo Series". His cards bear, on the address side, a motif of a kookaburra within a double circle with 'NEW ZEALAND' at base. Very occasionally, 'E. de T.' also appears inside the top of the circle. The abbreviation 'E.T.' often appears as the photographer's credit on the photo itself.

First listed in Wise's Directory in 1909 (not in earlier editions). From 1909 to 1911, listed as both a 'photographer' and a 'photographic stock dealer & importer'. Address: James Street, Whangarei. Did he operate a photographic studio at this address? In the 1912 - 1918 editions of Wise's, listed as 'photographer' only. Then he appears to have switched trades. In the 1919 edition, occupation given as 'theatre manager' only. From 1920 to 1926, he was not listed at all in Wise's. But from 1927 to 1930 (and possibly after), he reappeared as 'photographic stock dealer and importer', but now at 161 Hobson Street, Auckland (his surname now being spelt 'de Tourett').

All cards published by him are of the 'real photo' type. What may have been his earliest cards are a series of Auckland views taken during Fleet Week (celebrating the visit of the U.S. Fleet) in August 1908. Code numbers seen on these cards range from '323' to '344'. They bear the inscription 'Real Photograph by Ernest de Tourret, Whangarei, N.Z.', but were not published by him. They bear the publisher's imprint 'C.B. & Co. Ltd.' (Charles Brett & Co. Ltd of Auckland?).

To complicate matters, the 'Gordon Series' title was also used by Gordon & Gotch Ltd on some of the few PPCs they published. Their imprint, however, does not bear the kookaburra logo and reads 'THE GORDON (G.G.) REAL PHOTO POSTCARD', or simply 'G & G'. Most of their cards were printed in the U.K.. All of de Tourret's cards, on the other hand, were produced in N.Z., and it may well be that, because of his photographic expertise, he did all the production work himself.

Gordon & Gotch's premises were at 13-15 Cuba Street, Wellington in 1909. By 1915, they had expanded to 13-19 Cuba Street. So far as I am aware, there was no commercial connection between de Tourret and Gordon & Gotch.

I would be particularly interested to see photocopies of any de Tourret cards bearing views of small towns. This might enable us to build up a better picture of how much of the country he covered. He was certainly a major publisher during the later years of the postcard boom (from 1909 on).