

RADCLIFFE'S STEREOSCOPIC PICTURE POSTCARDS

by Bill Main

While the postcards of F.G.Radcliffe are well known by our readers, his stereoscopic views are unfamiliar territory among most collectors. This article attempts to set out some facts and figures in the hope that further information will be forthcoming to assist in a definitive study that will eventually be printed in a future edition of *Postcard Pillar*.

It may come as a surprise to learn that as a professional photographer, Radcliffe took the precaution of carrying more than one camera when he ventured on tours around New Zealand to gather photographs for his scenic view business. In this respect he was following in the footsteps of Alfred Burton, who packed a stereo camera when he went into Fiordland in the 1870s. I would also speculate that as well as his stereographic camera, Radcliffe would have had a variety of cameras from whole to quarter plate.

From the stereographs in my collection and other more established collectors I am able to identify three different editions of cards, from standard stereographs to postcards.

The first and probably the best is a series of cards printed on POP = Printing Out Paper. This is a form of photographic paper which required the operator to place the negative in a printing frame in contact with a sheet of POP and expose it to sunlight. When the paper was browned to the satisfaction of the photographer, it was then taken out of the frame and placed in a chemical to make it impervious to further exposure to light. The resulting print had a reddish brown appearance.

The two prints were then trimmed and placed onto a stiff piece of cardboard. In Radcliffe's case the card was extra thick with a dull grey finish and a bevelled gold edge. On the left and right hand side of the pair of photographs there was sufficient space for two inscriptions. The left hand space had the words COPYRIGHT F. G. RADCLIFFE. In this instance the cards in my collection have the word copyright cancelled out with a black line through the gold type. On the right hand side, the inscription reads BROWN & STEWART, Auckland, N.Z. SOLE WHOLESALE AGENTS. Each stereograph had a title under the right hand photo along with a series number. These were inscribed on the negative in a less cultured hand script than that which adorns Radcliffe's postcards.

There is one unexplained variation in this series. This involves cards that are simply inscribed F. G. RADCLIFFE, Paparoa, Kaipara, N.Z. and are distinguished by silver replacing the gold lettering. Both these and the next series are regulation format 17.5 x 9cms.

The second FRG series of stereographs concerns the *New Zealand Graphic* Series imprint. These were printed on a light weight white cardboard and were

released to readers of *The Graphic*, a weekly illustrated publication which issued these cards free to subscribers from 1907 to 1913 (see *Postcard Pillar* no.52 November 2000 for an article on this series). Generally speaking their appearance is inferior to the POP series described above because the image had to be processed with a mechanical screen that rendered the images into fine textured dots which enabled it to be produced in a printing press. As before, the space on either edge is taken up with F. G. RADCLIFFE AUCKLAND on the left and NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC SERIES on the right. They are also characterised by perforated edge on at least 2-3 sides. This was because they came in a sheet of three each week over the year they were produced.

The final series of Radcliffe stereographs are standard RP size postcards with printed backs which have the words STEREOSCOPIC POST CARD in brown printed on the reverse. For this series, the hand lettered titles have disappeared to be replaced with a plain type along the bottom edge under the left hand photograph. The right hand edge has the words RADCLIFFE & STEWART PATENT.

All editions of stereoscopic views use the same serial numbers.

The POP series and the Stereoscopic Postcards appeared in 1905. Image no.119 Kereru Geyser, Whaka has had transparent tape of some sort applied to the negative which bears the wording PROTECTED F. G. RADCLIFFE and the date of 1/6/05. This ties in neatly with Radcliffe's movements after he sold his farm on the Kaipara harbour and moved to Auckland for two years.

It is interesting to note that fitting a STEREOSCOPIC POST CARD into a conventional stereoscope evidently caused problems. Two cards in my collection have been glued to a stiff piece of cardboard cut to the dimensions of a normal stereo card so they would not fall out of the wire viewing frame.

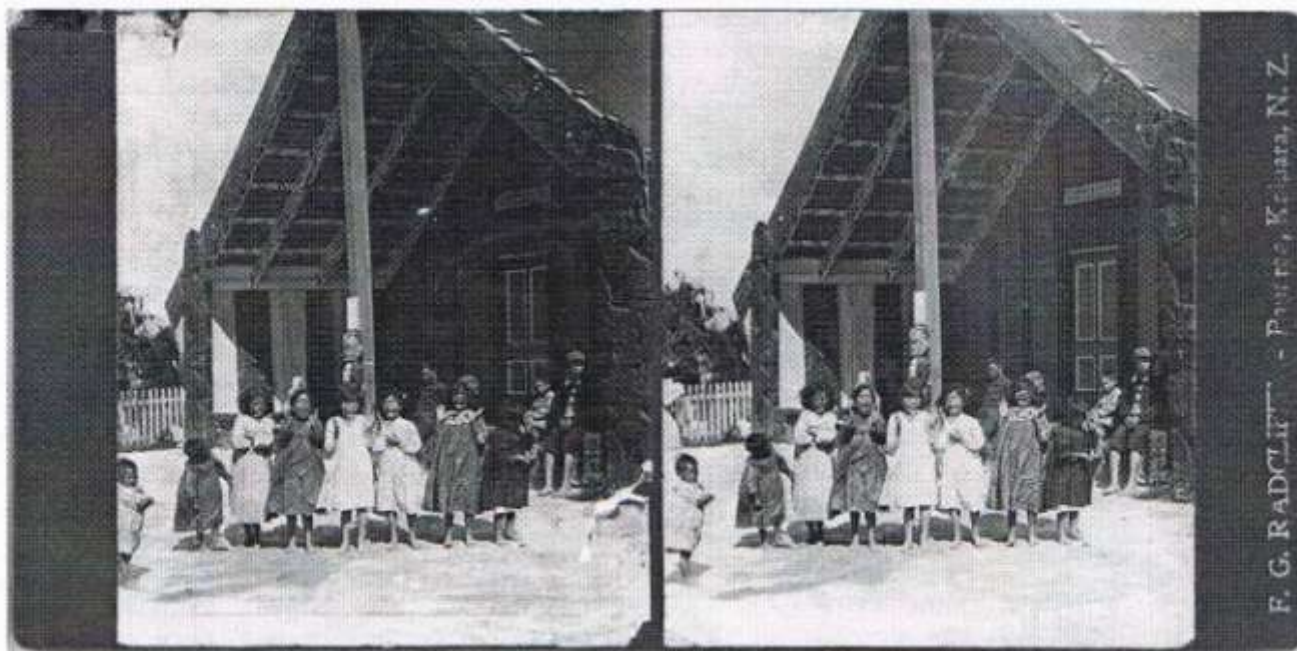
It should be noted that in order to obtain a three dimensional impression from these stereographs, a stereoscope is essential. However, if you have patience and tenacity, you should be able to view the Stereoscopic Postcards without the aid of a stereoscope. Hold the card in front of your eyes and relax your eyes. After a while the blur should fuse and become one image. However, I warn you it is not easy. It took me years to perfect this particular technique. Incidentally you can only perform this on the smaller postcard images. It is not possible to achieve this effect with the larger images because of ocular limitations.

I would welcome hearing from anyone who has examples that are not listed in the catalogue of F. G. Radcliffe stereographs that I have compiled from my collection and others who are acknowledged elsewhere in this article.

CATALOGUE OF STEREOSCOPIC VIEWS BY F. G. RADCLIFFE Compiled with the Assistance of Simon Crawford, Bruce Isted, Alan Jackson and Laurence Eagle.

Cat.no	Title	POP	Grap.	P/C	Cat.no	Title	POP	Grap.	P/C
002	Creek Scene, Paparoa, Kaipara, NZ			X	159	Crow's Nest Geyser, Taupo, NZ			X
003	Creek Scene, Paparoa, Kaipara, NZ			X	160	Dining Room, The Spa, Taupo, NZ			X
006	<i>[Sheep by stream & bush]</i>			X	161	The Bee Hive, Waitapu, NZ			X
008	Gibraltar Rocks, Pahi River, Kaipara,			X	163	Huka Falls, Taupo, NZ			X
010	Pahi River, Kaipara, NZ	X			164*	Aratiatia Rapids, Wairakei, NZ	X		
014	Bush Clematis, NZ		X	X	169	Huka Rapids, Wairakei, NZ			X
015	Arum Lilies,			X	171*	Creek Scene, Paparoa, Kaipara, NZ	X		
021	In Waipu Gorge, North Auckland, NZ		X		181	Auckland Hospital, from Domain,		X	
023	In Waipu Gorge, North Auckland, NZ			X	182	Kawau Island, near Auckland, NZ		X	
035	In Auckland Museum, NZ		X		184	Maori Children, Ohinemutu, Rotorua, NZ	X		
040	On Great North Road, Warkworth, NZ	X		X	188	Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, NZ	X		
042	Otamatea River, Kaipara, NZ		X		205	Maoris Cooking, Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, NZ		X	
044	Gum Diggers, North Auckland, NZ		X		206	Kereru Geyser, Whakarewarewa, NZ		X	
046	Hauling Kauri Logs, North Auckland, NZ			X	208	Hamurana Spring, Rotorua, NZ		X	
047	Hauling Kauri Logs, North Auckland, NZ			X	211	Recreation Grounds, New Plymouth,		X	
053	Felling a Kauri Tree, North Auckland, NZ			X	220	On Wanganui Ascending a Rapid,		X	
061	Whangarei Waterfall, NZ			X	221	Upper Reach Wanganui River,		X	
062*	Whangarei River, NZ	X			222	Parinui, Wanganui River,		X	
063	Whangarei Waterfall, NZ	X			234	Near Houseboat, Wanganui River,		X	
064	On Whangarei River, NZ			X	239	Wanganui,		X	
072	On Whangarei Heads, NZ			X	240	Wanganui From Durie Hill,		X	
073	Pah Point, Whangarei Heads, NZ			X	241	Drop Scene, Wanganui River,			X
075	Mushroom Rocks, Whangarei Heads, NW[sic]			X	251	Wanganui,		X	X
078	McGregors Bay, Whangarei, NZ			X	252	The Houseboat, Wanganui River,		X	X
087	At Whangarei Heads, NZ		X		253	The Houseboat, Wanganui River,		X	X
100	Castle Rock Bay Whangarei Harbour, NZ	X			255	On Lake Rototiti, Rotorua, NZ [Maori Village]	X		
106	No title <i>[Man feeding two cats direct from cow!]</i>			X	260	The Canopy, Waitomo Caves, NZ		X	
107	No title <i>[Man feeding seven cats direct from cow!]</i>			X	262	In Waitomo Caves, NZ		X	
114*	Eagle's Nest, p/u Aust. 15/2/08	X		X	302	Te Anau - Milford Track,		X	
117	Dragon's Mouth Geyser, Wairakei, NZ			X	303	Crossing The Arthur River,		X	
118	Kereru Geyser, Whaka, NZ			X	304	Mount Mackenzie, Te Anau,	X		
119	Kereru Geyser, Whaka, NZ	X		X	305	Lake Ada,		X	
121	Twins Geyser, Wairakei, NZ			X	308	Head of Clinton Valley from Mackinnon Pass,		X	
122	Waikora-hini Geyser, Whaka, NZ		X		309	Mackay Falls, Lake Ada,		X	
125	Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, NZ		X		310	Botanical Gardens, Dunedin,		X	
128	Lake Rotorua, NZ p/u GB. 2/10/07			X	311	Te Anau, Milford Track, [Ferns and Trees]		X	
132	Sanatorium Grounds, Rotorua, NZ [Colourised B/W]		X		312	Foot of Lake Ada,		X	
134*	Sanatorium Grounds Rotorua, NZ	X			316	Lake Ada, Te Anau - Milford Track,		X	
135*	Girls Haka, Rotorua, NZ	X			317	The Arthur River, near Milford Sound,		X	
135	Girls Haka, Rotorua, NZ			X	318	The Clinton River, Te Anau, NZ		X	
136	Ohinemutu,		X	X	319	Milford Sound, NZ,		X	
137	Maori Children, Ohinemutu,	X	X		325	Botanical Gardens, Dunedin,		X	
138	On Lake Rototiti, NZ		X	X	326	Clinton River near Glade House, Lake Te Anau,		X	
141	Okere Falls, Lake Rototiti NZ			X	352	Wellesley Street, Auckland,		X	
143	Tikitere, Rotorua, NZ			X	n.n.	In Auckland Library,		X	
143[sic]	Wairoa Geyser, Waka, NZ			X	n.n.	Arthur River, Te Anau - Milford Track,	X		
144	Maori Whare Rotorua, NZ	X		X	n.n.	Greek [sic] Scene Paparoa, Kaipara NZ			X
149	Maori Women, Whaka, Rotorua, NZ		X	X	n.n.	Swarm of 10,000 Bees Weighed 12lbs 8oz.			X
151	Maori Children, Rotorua, p/u 30/11/05		X	X					
152	Dragon's Mouth Geyser, Rotorua, NZ			X					
153	Eagles Nest Geyser, Rotorua, NZ			X					
155	Twins Geyser, Wairakei,	X		X					
156*	Champagne Pool, Wairakei, NZ	X		X					
158	Mud Volcano, Waitapu, Rotorua, NZ			X					

NOTES: Those marked with * indicate POP variant with silver imprint. The italic titles represent a description of the image supplied by the cards owner



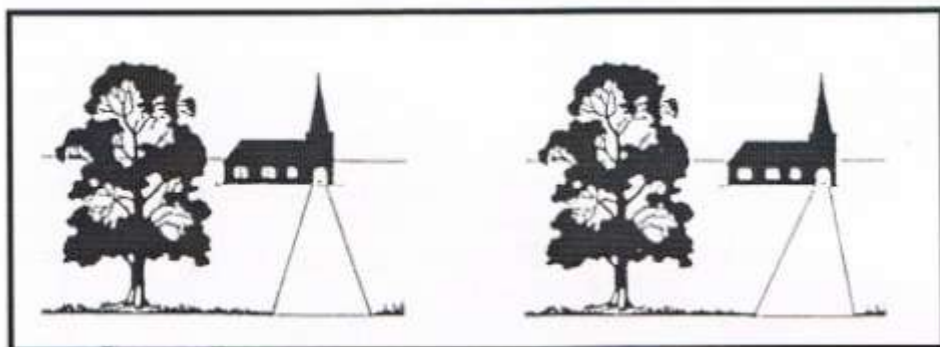
F. G. RADCLIFFE - Paparoa, Kaipara, N. Z.

HOW A 3-D PHOTOGRAPH WORKS

An ordinary photograph appears flat and lacks depth. This is because most cameras only have one eye and can only record the two dimensions of HEIGHT and WIDTH. In a 3-Dimensional stereoscopic photograph the third dimension of DEPTH is added, and objects appear located in space just as they did in the original scene.

Our eyes are about 65mm apart and hence the two images on our retinas are not exactly similar since each eye sees life from a slightly different position. It is only a tiny difference but it is enough for us to experience seeing in depth. Similarly, a 3-D photograph consists of two viewpoints, usually 65mm apart. The differences can be seen in the accompanying illustration. In the right hand drawing the distant church is more to the right of the tree than in the left hand drawing.

If you could see only the left hand picture with your left eye and the right hand picture with your right eye, the two drawings will merge into one three-dimensional image and you will see the church far behind the tree. IN 3-D photography, a special viewer called a stereoscope enables this to happen.



3-D VIEWING WITHOUT A VIEWER

The technique of viewing side-by-side 3-D pairs without a stereoscope is called 'free viewing'. The examples that appear with this issue of *Postcard Pillar* may be 'free-viewed' as follows. Draw the page slowly away from the eyes while fixing each eye on a prominent feature in each picture. Sometimes a stiff piece of cardboard held between the eyes can assist this experiment. Practise and be patient: the effort is worth while.

HISTORY OF THE STEREOSCOPE

The stereoscope was a Victorian optical device that transformed a two dimensional image into one depicting an illusion of the third dimension. It developed apace with the invention of photography and received Royal approval from Queen Victoria during the 1851 Exhibition. For the remainder of the 19th century its popularity was somewhat subdued until the 1890s when interest in it was revived by large concerns like Keystone & Underwood & Underwood who produced viewers and images by the million. This was evidenced in the form of the New Zealand Graphic Series which was distributed to subscribers from 1907 to 1911.

