

JOSIAH MARTIN

1843-1916

TEACHER, PHOTOGRAPHER, POSTCARD PRODUCER

Josiah Martin was born in London, England, on 1 August 1843, the son of Charlotte Bromley and her husband, Josiah Martin. His father was an actuary. The young Josiah's first job appears to have been in an insurance office. He was in business as a coal merchant when, in London on 24 March 1864, he married Caroline Mary Wakefield. They emigrated to New Zealand a few years later with an infant daughter. After a period farming and running a school at Maungaturoto, Josiah Martin settled with his family in Auckland, where he was involved with the Royal Insurance Company.

In 1874 Martin founded a private academy, later to become Grafton District School, where he was headmaster. He was a gifted and innovative teacher. In January 1875 he opened the Auckland Model Training School in the Choral Hall in Symonds Street, in which he was shortly after joined by the Reverend E. Browne. Based on similar schools in Germany, Britain and Australia, it aimed to provide a practical and technical course of instruction to students, and practical training for pupil-teachers. It was the first model training school in Auckland.

Martin was also a founding member of the committee of the Auckland School Teachers' Association, formed in June 1873. This group worked towards educational reform and a comprehensive scheme of national education. But his school and his other educational interests were superseded by the introduction of a national system of education in 1877. This event coincided with failing health which compelled him to resign his headmastership in 1879.

Martin now concentrated principally on photography. During 1879 he toured England and Europe, and while in London visited the Royal College of Chemistry, where he made a study of the latest improvements in rapid 'instantaneous' photography using the new gelatin bromide process. On his return to Auckland he opened a photographic business with a studio on the corner of Queen and Grey streets in partnership with W. H. T. Partington, employing the new dry-plate process. After the partnership was dissolved he opened another studio in Edson's building, Queen Street. Martin later sold the portrait business to Charles Hemus and transferred his premises to Victoria Arcade. He favoured topographical and ethnological subjects. As well as selling prints he exploited the market for lantern slides and stereographs.

In an address to the Auckland Photographic Club in May 1890 Martin recalled his early experiences with wet-plate photography when he visited the thermal regions of Tarawera and Rotomahana in 1876. He was to visit the area many times and was there on the eve of the eruption of Mt Tarawera in 1886; some of the photographs he took after the eruption were reproduced by photolithography in the Auckland Evening Star

In 1894, when he offered a selection of 60 New Zealand photographs of ethnological subjects to the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University, he also offered to supply similar photographs of Fiji, Samoa and other Pacific islands. He appears to have visited the islands in 1898, and in 1901 travelled there with S. Percy Smith. He published an account of this trip in *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* and also contributed articles and photographs to the *Auckland Weekly News* and the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*.

Martin gained an international reputation for his ethnological and topographical photographs. His work was exhibited in London at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 and he won a gold medal at the Exposition Coloniale in Paris in 1889. His photographs are held in the art collections of many major institutions around the world.

Always willing to share his knowledge, he was editor of *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* for several years. He was a member of the Auckland Photographic Club and a foundation member and twice secretary of the Auckland Society of Arts. He lectured frequently, not only on photography but also on scientific subjects. Intensely interested in many aspects of science, particularly physics and geology, he was a fellow of the Geological Society of London. His most important lecture, 'The terraces of Rotomahana, New Zealand', was delivered to the society in London on 9 February 1887. Martin was a member of the Auckland Institute for 40 years, serving on its council from 1881 to 1892 and as president in 1889, and regularly spoke to members on both scientific and popular topics. He was also a frequent speaker at the YMCA and delivered a series of popular lectures on physics under the auspices of the Park Road Mutual Improvement Association.

Josiah Martin died on 29 September 1916 at his home in Northcote, Auckland, aged 73. He was survived by three daughters, his wife having predeceased him. In 1958 his daughters presented his collection of negatives to the Auckland Institute and Museum. His photographs provide a record of changed landscapes and societies. Martin was one of the first photographers to realise the commercial potential of photography to encourage tourism, but he was also aware of the need for conservation of the landscape and of the role of photography in providing a documentary record. Above all else he gave leadership and guidance to the developing photographic profession in New Zealand.

GORDON MAITLAND
[DICTIONARY OF NEW ZEALAND BIOGRAPHY]



Vol. 1.3 JANUARY, 1900 [No. 3]

SHARLAND'S NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHER

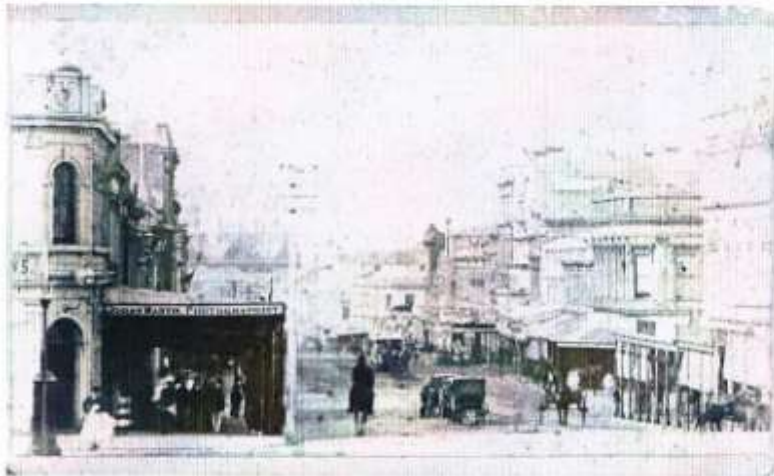
BEING THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION OF SHARLAND'S NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL

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Top left: The back of Martin's cabinet photos carried this very decorative design.
 Bottom left: Josiah Martin's premises in Queen Street were captured by Edwin Willmott on a *carte de visite* in the 1880s.
 Top right: *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* was a publication which grew out of a pharmaceutical journal which was distributed monthly. Sharland's was a importer and wholesale druggist company. The surge of interest in amateur photography coincided with the company's rise in New Zealand around the turn of the 20th century. Martin took up editorial duties for the photographic section in 1892, carrying on until 1910. In the 1960s when Sharland's closed down in Wellington, a bound set of their publications was donated to the Alexander Turnbull Library where they are available to researchers.
 Bottom right: Josiah Martin.



"VAVAU HARBOUR." By the Editor,

When Josiah Martin took over the job of editing *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* in 1892, deploying photographs was an expensive exercise in comparison with hand setting type. The cost of getting a 'block' made from a photograph was considerable, requiring photoengraving a zinc plate. However, after a block had been made for a particular publication, there was nothing to stop it being used again and again for other publications. "Vavau Harbour" was one which may have appeared in the *Weekly News* before being employed by Martin for his publication.

JOSIAH MARTIN BY BILL MAIN

I first came across the work of Josiah Martin when I was researching my book *Auckland Through A Victorian Lens - [1977]*. What impressed me most at the time was his role as editor for *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer*, where he became a devils advocate for photographers. For instance he took the Government to task for what he described as establishing "Indiscriminate outlets of tourist photographs," giving away prints and slides of New Zealand scenery through high commissions throughout the world, thus depriving commercial photographers of a good income. Of course, as a prominent producer of magic lantern scenic studies, it could be reasoned that Martin was in fact protecting his own interests; but that is coincidental to the general good he did by speaking out as he did for the profession from a journal that reached 2,000 readers.

Although I read all the editorials and articles he wrote in the 1970s, I can't actually recall him ever referring to postcards in any form or fashion. Despite this inexplicable lapse, we know he was active in the postcard trade, supplying sets of lithographed views under his name and other firms like S.M. & Co. Although his contribution to the postcard trade is documented in the collector's guide book which Alan Jackson and I produced a couple of years ago, this is the first attempt to identify the depth of his commitment in this speciality.

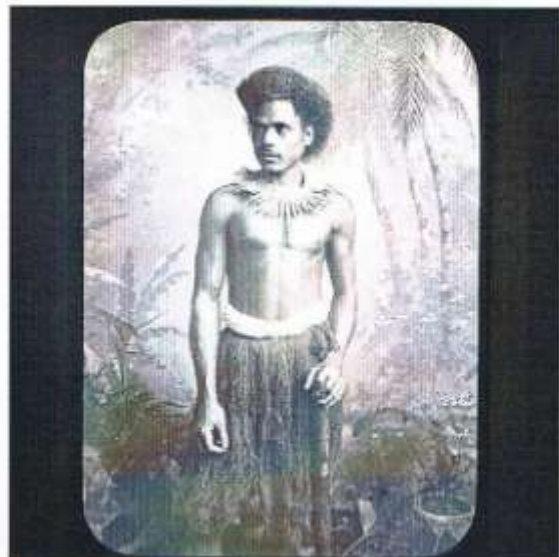
Martin's topographical postcards might seem rather conservative in comparison to others like Beattie or Winklemann who produced some very spectacular editions. Despite his rather conservative approach to producing scenic views, his ethnic studies show considerable respect and concern for the sitters. Collectors I approached for Martin postcards could only find a handful of cards that featured his domestic work. None the less, they do turn up from time to time in auction lists and dealers stocks. Martin's name and stature in the community would have helped his sales tremendously as he was highly regarded on a number of levels as a teacher, author and promoter of New Zealand's photographic arts.

His base of operations in Queen Street no doubt featured showcase displays which would have helped greatly to keep his name before the public. On top of these achievements his tourist publications would have stood him in great stead, especially a guide book he published called *The Terraces of Rotomahana, New Zealand*. Martin wrote and lectured extensively on this region both before and after the eruption of Mount Tarawera in 1886. For those who collect postcards of this catastrophe, I recommend they read the most authoritative account of this disaster called *Tarawera*, a 1988 publication written by R.F.Keam. Muir & Moodie reprints of Burton Bros. views

[continue on page 8]

The production of Magic Lantern slides for educational purposes and home entertainment was stock and trade for most accomplished photographers, be they amateur or professional. Josiah Martin advertised the fact that he carried a large selection of these which he was prepared to supply from his catalogue of views, that he'd compiled over the years. Another Auckland photographer who did a large business in slides was Wm. Beattie. When electricity came to our cities and towns, old projectors were converted from Kerosene. These Magic Lanterns and slides continued to be used in Schools, Church Halls and Picture Theatres where they were in use until fairly recent times during intervals.

During his reign as editor of *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer*, Josiah Martin took a very determined stand against an 'art movement in photography' which looked as if it would indoctrinate our photographers into becoming Pictorialists! This was a universal movement which gained temporary credence during the formative years of the 20th century. The Pictorialists wanted to doctor images coming from a camera until they gave an unsharp impressionistic appearance. Martin maintained that New Zealand photographers would do well to ignore this trend and stick to documenting the splendours of our Mountains, Lakes, Rivers and Bush. The two lantern slides at the top of this panel of four Magic Lantern slides demonstrate his feelings exactly on this issue. They are Whangarei Falls and Mitre Peak. Beneath them is a group of Maori at Maketu plus a Fijian in traditional costume.



of the Pink & White Terraces both before and after the eruption of Mount Tarawera have always been in demand and command respectful prices. Which begs the question, did Josiah Martin issue any of his "before and after" photographs in postcard format? We know he did produce a cabinet photo immediately after this event, but the question of postcards remains (see illustration below).

Possibly Martin's most striking achievement in connection with the production of postcards would be the series based on his photographs of Tonga, which resulted from trips he had made there in 1898 and again a few years later. In 1906 a set of 10 multicoloured lithographed pictorial postal stationery postcards (with imprinted 1d stamp) were issued by the Tongan government (see example on the front cover). Although these cards bore no attribution to Martin, the coloured scenes on them were based upon photographs taken by him. These lithographed cards were produced by a security printer in England, possibly the same company (De La Rue) which had printed the first pictorial stamps for Tonga in 1897. Presumably Martin was paid by the Tongan authorities for the use of the photographs. We know these scenes are based on Martin photographs because 8 of them also appear in a separate series of 10 (or possibly 12) real photo postcards bearing Martin's imprint within the collage design (see page 2). None of these RP cards have been seen postally used, so it is unclear at this stage whether they were published (by Martin himself?) before or after the Tongan postal authority postcards. The RP cards have undivided printed backs, which are an unusual feature of postcard design after about 1904, but this is by no means conclusive in dating them. It is also unclear whether they were produced primarily for sale in New Zealand or in Tonga (or both). Both sets of Tongan cards are rare today and seldom turn up for sale in auction lists.

When I began to assemble illustrations for this article I was confronted with the fact that I had more magic lantern slides at my disposal than postcards! The question of whether I should use these glass slides alongside his postcards was slightly disturbing. However, I venture the thought that as this story on Josiah Martin is published, I won't be surprised if someone comes

forward with postcards that match his lantern slides, some of which I've included in this article. These glass slides measure 85 X 85 mm, and are black and white images which are made up of two pieces of glass, one of which carries the image and the other is simply there to protect the photographic positive. The two pieces of glass are neatly bound together with a narrow black paper tape. Some of these have hand written titles on a white paper label. Perhaps these might even have been his own lecture slides! I hope to improve this imbalance if this article creates more interest in Martin's work? Martin signed all his images with the letters JM followed by a serial which I take it to be his negative retrieval system.

When I sensed that my list of Martin's postcards was going to be rather thin, I approached Simon Crawford and Alan Jackson. Simon produced example of an unknown series which I've tentatively called a New Zealand Industrial Series. This was a printed set of postcards which shows New Zealand Sheep Farming and the Kauri Gum Industry. While Simon and I cast doubt over Martin's ability to gain easy access for the sheep farming photos (there were no tell tale JM's initials in the corner) we were pretty sure that the gum digging cards were his, as two of them bore his distinctive markings. Altogether, Simon's collection added another dozen or so to my listings featuring the high numbering coloured series. One of these (fig. 3) is illustrated on page 9.

Alan Jackson also surprised me by turning up not only the set of Tongan postal stationery postcards but also the associated set of RP postcards referred to earlier. Details of these cards are on page 10.

Finally, there are the S. Hildesheimer & Co. Ltd. cards. So far I've only been able to positively identify one of these which I'm sure is by Martin. This is "Hongi, Maori Salutations", a card which turns up in many other guises. The others, which are of Auckland, a Maori woman and a Rotorua scene, remain in doubt. Series 5356 may have only had six cards so these might not prove hard to attribute in the fullness of time.



JOSIAH MARTIN ERUPTION OF TARAWERA, 10TH JUNE, 1886. AUCKLAND.
Josiah Martin's cabinet photo of the Tarawera eruption.

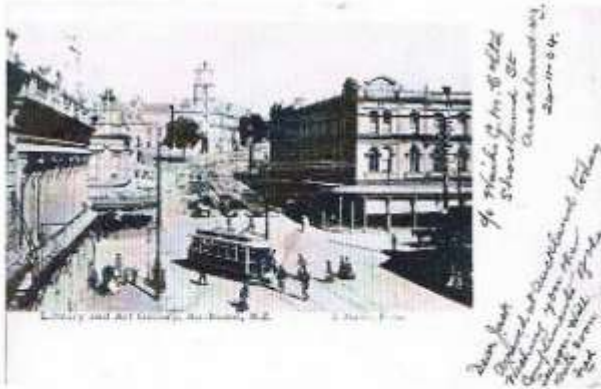


fig.1



fig.3



fig.2



fig.4

JOSIAH MARTIN'S POSTCARDS

J. Martin, Photo [series]

The first series of postcards bearing the inscription J. Martin, Photo., appeared in 1903. They were replicated in another edition the following year, the main distinguishing feature between them being the wording on the address side which was simply the word POST CARD which was centred for the first edition. Changes for the second printing saw the words **NEW ZEALAND CARTE POSTALE** used. Both issues were printed on stiff cardboard in olive green. The unnumbered titles are listed alphabetically. No initials or negative numbers are discernable in the corner of each image like some of Martin's other postcards for various firms.

Albert Park, Auckland J. Martin Photo
 Auckland from Wharf *J. Martin Photo
 Auckland Harbour from Symond Street, N.Z. J. Martin Photo
 Auckland Wharf and Harbour* J. Martin Photo
 Herald Buildings, Queen Street, Auckland, N.Z. J. Martin Photo
 Lake Takapuna, N.Z. J. Martin Photo
 Library & Art Gallery J. Martin Photo (see fig.1 this page)
 Lower Queen Street, Auckland. J. Martin Photo
 Mount Eden. J. Martin Photo
 Queen Street, Auckland, N.Z.
 Waiwera J. Martin Photo
 Waitakerei Waterfall J. Martin Photo
 * Unattributed cards seen using same scenes.

Anonymous. Undivided back with the uncentered words "CARTE POSTALE" followed by the words "POST CARD New Zealand. (Address to be written on this side.)" All cards have some basic colours thinly applied over the monochromatic image.

N° 4. Maggie Papakura JM 2020
 N° 9. Orakeioraki JM 157
 N°11. STEAM HOLES. JM 2006 (see fig.3 this page)

continued next column

N°12. Lake Rotorua and Mokoia Island. JM 129
 N° 20. A Kauri Forest. JM 544
 N° 22. Great Nihtapu Falls. JM 518
 N° 26. Auckland Harbour. JM 19
 N° 46. Otira Gorge JM 839?
 N° 47. Fern Arch, Buller Gorge.
 N° 52. Lake Wakatipu. JM 2063
 N° 53 Looking up Lake Ada. JM 1515
 A number of cards seen postmarked 1906.

S.M. & Co's Series (undivided backs)

Lake Kawau - Pahua, Waitakerei Beach, Auckland, N.Z.
 J. Martin Photo
 Lake Wakatipu, N.Z. J. Martin Photo
 Maggie Papakura, the famous Maori Guide, J. Martin Photo
 Maori Salutations "Rubbing Noses". J. Martin Photo
 Mangonui Wharf (North of Auckland). J. Martin Photo
 New Zealand Ferns (JM 525) J. Martin Photo. P.U. 20.8.08 (see fig.2 this page) One card seen postmarked 26 Dec. 1904.

H&B (divided backs) No attribution. Identical to other signed p/cs.

Auckland Harbour from Mt. Eden, Rangitoto in the distance.
 Calliope Dock, Auckland N.Z. 93
 Maggie Papakura, the famous Whakarewarewa Guide
 Queen Street, Auckland N.Z.
 Rewi Maniapoto the great Maori Fighting Chief
 Wellesley Street, Auckland N.Z. Public Library in the background.

S. HILDESHEIMER & CO. LTD. (Coloured with divided backs) 5356 series

"HONGI, MAORI SALUTATIONS" (see page 10 for illustration)

"THE KAURI GUM INDUSTRY" (N.Z.)

The Kauri Gum Industry - Buying & Weighing Gum JM 568
 The Kauri Gum Industry - Spearing and digging for Gum JM 546
 The Kauri Gum Industry - Scraping the Gum. (see fig.4 this page)