

## THE POSTCARDS OF THOMAS PRINGLE

*Pringle was born in Carlisle, England, in 1858. He came to New Zealand in 1882 and eventually settled in Wellington where he and his wife opened 'Pringles Ltd.' a fancy goods store on Lambton Quay. In 1895 he joined the Wellington Camera Club and played a major role in their activities for several years where he excelled by winning many photographic competitions. When the Government established the Department of Tourism and Health Resorts in 1901, it triggered off a lot of activity in souvenirs and trinkets for tourists. Pringle's response to this challenge was to initiate a series of photographic publications and postcards.*

*His postcards, which were issued in four distinct series, were printed in Germany between 1906 - 1908 using the chromolithographic process. The first of these featured a mix of scenic and Maori studies. They are inscribed on the left hand address side of the card 'Copyright T. Pringle Wellington NZ' and are numbered 101 to 136. Their factory batch number sequence is 96042 - 96076.*

*A second set of postcards featuring Maori studies bear the same wording as the first with 'G&G Series' added, are numbered 201 to 236. Their sequence numbering is 121621 - 121656. The third set features scenic views and adopts the same configuration of credit with 'Thos.' subtitled for 'T' with sporadic and non-sequential numbering. The factory batch numbering runs from 132701 - 132737.*

*Finally the last set simply bears the wording 'Dominion Series Art Postcards'. These differ from the others in that there are two images on each card with a decorative panel bearing the inscription 'Maoriland'. Pringle's name is not mentioned but it is easy to attribute them as all were featured in previous sets. The sequential factory batch numbering begins at 137650 and ends on 137686. This final edition was no doubt named to commemorate New Zealand gaining Dominion status within the British Empire in September 1908.*

*His Maori studies form the basis of an excellent series approximating how Maori would have appeared in their natural environment. The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the Maori population declining at a rapid rate. Artists and photographers took it upon themselves to make a study of Maori a subject of considerable importance. They thought they were witnessing 'a dying race', hence it was their duty to record their culture and customs before extinction.*

*Stone's Business Directory continued to list Pringle's Fancy Goods, Lambton Quay, until 1920, when it is assumed the business closed down. Pringle died in Wellington in 1931.*