

Three sketches made on this occasion *In the Wairarapa Valley 1843* are in the Hocken Library, where also is the account of the expedition. They saw only one Maori and did not call at any occupied village.

In September 1843 after the death of Captain Arthur Wakefield at Wairau, Fox was appointed New Zealand Company Agent in Nelson where he was heavily involved for the next five years. In February 1848 he was appointed attorney-general for New Munster but remained in Nelson for a while longer. However in September after the death of Colonel William Wakefield he became Principal Agent for the Company.

In October immediately after his return to Wellington he was involved in the renewed attempts to purchase the Wairarapa and left with Lieutenant-Governor Eyre on a visit of inspection of the Wairarapa road on which the bush had been cleared to Mangaroa. His account of his impressions is as follows:

'The ride was of particular interest to me. In May 1843, accompanied by Messrs Clifford, Vavasour, & Whitehead I explored the Wairarapa and it then took us five days hard work, to force our way through the forest the same distance, as on this occasion, I rode on horse-back in 12 hours. On the first visit the only tenants of the Valley which we met, were a few Natives, and herds of wild pigs. On this, we were hospitably entertained by an English woman, engaged in the occupations of the dairy, and saw a fine herd of cattle at the door of her husband's hut. Of these, there are, I believe nearly 2,000 and of Sheep from 20 to 30 thousand now in the valley ...'¹¹

A strong implication of this report is that he was revisiting the district for the first time. To heighten the contrast he may have chosen to omit reference to any intervening journey the possibility of which is not however excluded by the actual wording used. The difficulty is not merely the Library painting dated *Wairarapa 1847* but another in the Hocken Library: *In the Wairarapa Valley, Wellington 1846. Mr Northwood's station*. The literal interpretation of these dates is that he visited the valley on two occasions in 1846 and 1847 or least he went there in one year or the other, painting the pictures in 1846 and 1847 respectively.

Northwood and Tiffen occupied their Ahiauru station in August 1845¹² and the scene depicted shows some extensive clearing and substantial huts – more than could perhaps have been done in a few months work. Otaraia, we recall, was being built in March 1846. In February 1846 Fox made the journey with Brunner and Heaphy to the Buller River and for the rest of the year was busy in Nelson. A sketching visit to the Wairarapa seems improbable to say the least. In 1847 he was likewise in Nelson except for one visit to Wellington. The movements of a person of Fox's position in the early years of the colony fortunately are likely to have been recorded. On 3 January Mr and Mrs Fox were report-