

were three Europeans in the right place, at the right time and one of them even 'took a sketch'! From Reed's information, it was impossible to tell which of the three had been the artist, but it began to look as though Heaphy might have to forgo the claim.

A check of the Library's biographical indexes under 'Drake', revealed a James Charles Drake, arriving in Nelson as a survey cadet for the New Zealand Company, a reference from a newly indexed work in the Manuscripts Collection, C. A. Lawn's *The Pioneer Land Surveyors of New Zealand*. This volume, completed in 1977, had no entry for Bishop, but was extremely helpful on the subject of both Drake and Watts, indicating that Drake 'was active in the search for a practicable route for a road from Nelson to the Wairau Valley across the intervening mountain ranges and . . . discovered the Maungatapu Saddle over which a road was subsequently built'.³ Charles Fowell Willetts Watts was an assistant surveyor to the New Zealand Company 'sent out from England in 1841 . . . to lay out the Nelson settlement . . . In 1844, in association with J. C. Drake and W. Bishop, he explored the Pelorus district in an endeavour to find a practicable route for a road from Nelson to the Wairau Plains.'⁴ Lawn adds that Drake had made an earlier foray into the area with a surveyor named Samuel Parkinson and some Maori guides, in November 1843.

With names and dates as a guide it was now possible to turn to the major published history of the Nelson area, *Nelson; a History of Early Settlement* by Ruth M. Allan.⁵ Although she gave but sparse details of the 1844 trip, the author listed the sequence of explorations of the area, revealed that W. Bishop was William Bishop of the Maitai Valley in Nelson, and, above all, provided a major shortcut by giving precise references to the *Nelson Examiner* articles from which she had gleaned her material.

The *Nelson Examiner* for 18 November 1843 supplied most of a column titled 'Notes of a Journey to the Head of the Pelorus by Messrs Parkinson and Drake'. This journey took three days there and back to Nelson, from 7 to 9 November 1843, and did not quite tally with our sketches, although it clearly covered much the same route. It was a disappointingly brief account. However, the *Examiner* for 27 January 1844 contained a very full account of Drake's second trip, this time signed 'James Charles Drake', and titled 'Expedition to the Wairau through the Pelorus Valley'.⁶ Drake must have kept a detailed journal, for he gave a lengthy description of the trip, making it clear that this was undeniably the journey recorded in the group of sketches, that it took place between 10 and 19 January 1844, and that he was the artist.

It was now possible to date each sketch to the very day it was taken. For example: 'January 11—Fine morning. After drying our