

guidance of Mr Schmidt, father-in-law of a young engineer J. R. Lee, also shortly to be met with, she walked round Okiato. Then followed Hokianga and Rawene in rain. First impressions under a grey sky were tinged by an almost subliminal brightness—she thought it gloomy, over-powering, dingy, a backwater—‘but I was fascinated as I have been fascinated by no other place in New Zealand and I want to go back’—but just for a few weeks, equipped for all weathers—‘to live there would be hell’. Another ten years were to pass before the fulfilment of domicile.

Meanwhile she had married a brilliant young solicitor, Rex W. Burnard, who within a year was to die from Hodgkin’s disease. She was bruised, halted by this tragedy; the Branch itself turned sour. In the last year of the war, between VE and VJ days, plans for a comprehensive national war history programme with a body to service it came to fruition. When she transferred to it, ‘old boys’ such as E. H. McCormick now Chief War Archivist and J. D. Pascoe as Illustrations Editor were already there. At the year’s end she and Ian Ross, a returned serviceman and journalist, married.

During the following year, 1946, her last in Wellington, when she and Ian were living at Mahina Bay, her book *New Zealand’s First Capital* appeared. It was a spin-off from her historical atlas research, in form really an extended paper which Heenan and Beaglehole, fittingly, saw published. It shines with the confident frankness of discovery, races through the unravelling of a complex series of interlocking chains of fact relating to the purchase by Hobson of a Clendon building as a would-be Government House. As an outstanding example of historical reconstruction it demonstrated for the first time the possibilities of our own records and the importance of their preservation, to the extent of footnotes highly critical of their handling by her academic betters. Its curious dismissal by Eric Ramsden, the journalistic doyen of Maori affairs in Wellington, may have cut more deeply than she admitted. There were plans for a Maning biography or at least a volume of Maning letters, but for a long time no sequel. In any case Ian had completed the Auckland Teachers College rehab course and Auckland became their home with, for Ruth, a husband and children as the first priority.

Friends ensured that her skills would not rust or be overlooked and there followed a lengthy induction with School Publications which led, firstly, to the bulletin, ‘European Trade and Settlement in New Zealand before 1840’, followed two years later by *The Journal of George Simmonds*, a careful reconstruction in the form of a boy’s diary set in the Bay of Islands during the years 1838 to 1840; and from the same sources, *Early Traders*, a series of set pieces on Captain Kent, a Maning land purchase, and Messrs Brown and