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**[Wellington] Sketch of the Country Districts in the Vicinity of Port Nicholson, New Zealand. January 4th, 1843**

**Stock#:** 68316  
**Map Maker:** Davies  
**Date:** 1843  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 23 x 30 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***One of the First Maps of Wellington, New Zealand***

Fine example of one of the first printed maps of the area which would become Wellington, New Zealand, published in 1843. It was published for the New Zealand Company, one of the early, and controversial, entities dedicated to the settlement of New Zealand by British colonists.

The land is portioned into "country sections" of 100 acres each. These would be advertised and sold to prospective landlords in England, who were then supposed to immigrate to be New Zealand's new landed gentry. The Company would pay for laborers to immigrate to work the land. In practice, however, the landlords tended to stay in England, while the laborers came in great numbers, creating an uneven system.



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The country sections here are color coded: government reserves are pink, public reserves are green, and native reserves are yellow. The latter of these were supposed to be ten percent of the overall land plots. These were to be interspersed among the other types of sections; it was thought, paternalistically and imperialistically, that exposure to Western culture would “civilize” the Maori.

Above the title is the Company’s coat of arms, with a British man and a Maori man flanking the symbolic arms. The engraver is B. R. Davies, but the publisher is Smith, Elder, and Co. of Cornhill. They published all the books, maps, and pamphlets of the New Zealand Company, which were printed at a rapid rate in the early 1840s.

**The New Zealand Company in Te Whanganui-a-tara (Wellington Harbor)**

The map includes obstructions offshore and local geographic features. There are rivers and hills, but otherwise the map shows a deceptively simple, and suggestively ordered and empty, terrain. The native reserves imply that the local Maori were already confined to those spaces, and that the area was ready for settlement. In reality, settlement was confined to the small developed section at Lambton Harbour. Additionally, the entire claim of the New Zealand Company in the Port Nicholson/Wellington area was under dispute when this map was published.

The New Zealand Company arrived in the area in 1839, with a survey party and translators in the *Tory* to negotiate with local chiefs. They made many quick deals with Maori to “sell” land to the Company; soon, Company officials estimated that they held the title to 20,000,000 acres. By the end of 1840, they had also sent hundreds of settlers to Port Nicholson.

However, under the direction of Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson, all land claims made before early 1840 were to be reviewed. Officials were worried about dispossession of the Maori and rampant speculation. A New Zealand Land Commission began to review claims around the Bay of Islands in early 1841. For the New Zealand Company claims near the Cook Strait, a separate commission was created, headed by attorney William Spain.

Although initially confident that their claims would be upheld, this confidence proved to be misplaced after hearings began in mid-May 1842. In order to secure their title, the Company offered a compensation scheme. Negotiations over payment dragged into 1843, when this sketch was distributed.

After the Wairu Incident, when six Maori and 22 Europeans were killed, the situation became dire. Governor Robert Fitzroy, who forced the compensation to be paid, even though several Maori leaders still objected for various reasons. By April 1844, the town site and most of the Port Nicholson titles were



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settled, but this had not stopped the New Zealand Company from advertising the sections during the process, as this map shows.

**Rarity**

The map is quite rare. OCLC locates two examples: the Alexander Turnbull Library (National Library of New Zealand) has four copies and the General Library of the University of Auckland has a copy. The British Library also holds an example in their collections.

**Detailed Condition:**

Minor soiling. Expertly repaired tear at top center, entering the printed image.