

HISTORY OF THE N.Z. FOUNDERS SOCIETY ANNUAL STUDY GRANT AWARD

LATER CALLED RESEARCH AWARD 1979 - 1992

by Hilary P M Olsen

Following a Waikato remit, passed at the National Council Meeting in August 1979 a sub-committee comprised of Mrs Hilary Olsen (Convenor), Mr R Ward, Mr Lindsay Buick-Constable, Mrs Anderson (Secretary), Mrs Joan Gordon and Mr Gerald Bridge (ex officio) was formed.

After several meetings the committee on 12th November 1979 brought down the following recommendations:

The short title of the Bursary Scholarship should be:

NZ Founders' Society Annual Study Grant

and its purpose

To enable research into the history and development of any aspect of New Zealand's past

The capital sum should be \$10,000 which should be held in Secured Debentures, enabling a Study Grant of \$1,000 annually with the surplus interest accounting for expenses incurred.

To raise this amount of money the committee recommended that each Branch should make its own decisions re money making activities, equal to a total of \$5 per member over a period of 3 years, the target being December 1982. The money raised to be put into a general fund of a special interest bearing account until the target was achieved and as the Branches contribute the accumulating total should be communicated to them. The money raising should be started immediately and Mr Gilberd promised \$1,000 to start off the project. This fund should be administered by the Executive Committee on behalf of the National Council. Further recommendations were that the Study Grant should be awarded by the end of October in any one year, and that although it would be called an Annual Grant, it may not always be possible (perhaps no suitable candidate).

Details of selection of candidate could be safely left until a later date as funding the Award was of the highest priority. Written comments from Branches were asked for.

All these proposals were presented and passed at the Executive meeting on 19th November 1979.

By 19th May 1980 letters from some Branches had been received with some very useful suggestions which were incorporated in the final documents, such as the Grant should not be used for family histories or just local interest. The bank account had been opened and the Inland Revenue Department had been approached re donations to the Grant being subject to Income Tax rebates. The question of a Trust deed had also been raised. The Grant could not be awarded until sufficient funds were available. In June 1980 the Society's solicitors were instructed to constitute a Trust deed for the following reasons that a Trust was legally binding and the tax benefit would be advantageous for donors and the Society itself. The Trustees to be the named positions of President and Vice President.

An approach was made to Professor Robb of Victoria University in June 1980 for his advice re selection of applicants, and he recommended contact with Dr Judith Johnston whose position with the Social Science Research Committee which asked for applications for research proposals, had a great influence on the Society's thinking and was extremely useful for the final draft of the application form.

The formation of the Study Grant was formally passed at the Annual General meeting on 18th August 1980, and already donations had been received, a donor record being kept. Publicity in the "Dominion" newspaper on 21st August 1980 created a great deal of interest. By 29th August 1980 the balance of donations had reached \$1,625, \$500 had been given from the National Council for expenses and Mr Gilberd had offered a further sum on the fund attaining \$10,000. A letter with a tear off slip from the President was to be sent to each member of the Society asking for donations, and individual letters sent to Past Presidents or if deceased to their widows, also a letter to Mrs Mitchell the owner of the land on which Wakefield House stood and NZ Historic Places Trust which had expressed an interest in the project.

About this time an enquiry had been made to the Human Rights Commission re the suggestion that only New Zealanders could apply for the Award but the Commission stated that it would be illegal under the Race Relations Act.

Written approval from the Inland Revenue Department had been received by 24th April 1981 qualifying the Trust for tax exemption.

The next few months were very active in fund raising. Charitable and Philanthropic Trusts, 6 Branches of the NZ Federation of University Women and Universities were all written to with information on the Study Grant and by 9th October 1981 the total amount of the fund had reached \$4,402.50.

The Society had by now hoped to reach a total of \$12,000 to \$15,000 and a special levy of \$3 per member for the Study Grant funds was suggested at this time, but it was not proceeded with.

The total of \$4,402.50 was reached by donations from the following:

Victoria University	250
NZ Historic Places Trust	250
NZ American Association	25
NZ Founders Society	500
Canterbury Branch	251
Whanganui Branch	50
Wellington Branch	1917.50
Auckland Branch	583
Hawkes Bay Branch	105
Hamilton Branch	166
New Plymouth Branch	10
Northland Branch	50
Wairarapa Branch	5
Manawatu Branch	200
Bay of Plenty Branch	40
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In April 1982 in reply to an application for funds from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Minister kindly offered assistance of \$4,000 from Lottery profits subject to the Society raising at least a further \$3,000 to bring the total to \$12,000 at least. This offer was gladly accepted and in June 1982 \$3,000 was transferred from the General fund to the Study Grant account. The Study Grant Award was off the ground financially and the funds invested in Secured Debentures with UDC at 15%.

By now with the Study Grant in a secure financial position it was thought fit to proceed with the first Award and two months was thought sufficient for applicants to prepare to apply with the closing date for 31st October 1982, with an initial payment of \$400, payment of \$300 on receipt of a letter stating progress of the research and \$300 on completion of the research. Paid advertising would be in one issue of the Listener and in the four main provincial newspapers with unpaid advertising in various

educational journals. Total cost of advertising the Study Grant would be \$472. The closing date for 1983 would be 31st August and some years later the Award would be advertised nearly 3 months before the closing date. The application form had been finalised and the form of the selection committee completed. All donors had been thanked either by personal letter or by Branches and with news of the progress of the Award.

In November 1982 a donation of \$700 from the John Illot Trust was gratefully received and the first recipient Miss Jenny Hammond of Auckland was given news of her winning entry on 20th December, her subject being Social History of NZ Children. Miss Hammond had very high credentials and faithfully kept the Society abreast of her excellent progress for almost a year, until she fell in love and departed for California where despite our efforts to urge her to complete her project and the embarrassment of her excellent referees, she completely ignored all communications. This was a sad disappointment perhaps one day we may yet get something back, however research is seldom lost.

As research for the Award is usually directed towards publication and a rule is that a book should have an acknowledgement to the NZ Founders Society we did not quite expect the difficulties and delays attended by publication of such research and we now find that unless privately printed, delays of some years can be expected. This we encountered with the next winner in 1983, Mr William Main of Wellington, a professional photography historian, whose research into the history of NZ Photographers and photography from 1847 on was a valuable piece of research, but his strenuous efforts defied finding a publisher at the time. However his research and interest in historical photography continues and it is quite likely that his book will be published at some time. The Society now accepts that a photocopy of the text and a presentation of the book when printed is acceptable.

The Society was delighted that Mr E B Gilberd most generously donated another \$1,000 for the fund in August 1983. Slight alterations to the application forms were made, and also to the composition of the Selection Committee, both of which were just a matter of fine tuning.

The Grant was running smoothly by 1984 and Rev. J C McKean of Dunedin was our 3rd winner for his research into Maori Education 1925 - 1945, a project when completed was greeted with pleasure by Educational circles and which we understand continues to be of use in this specialised field.

1985 was Mr Eric Warr's (of Palmerston North) turn for his research into the Dairy Industry, resulting in a book published by Butterworth called "Bush-Burn to Butter".

Mrs Sheila Natusch bought us joy as well as good communication in 1986, her privately printed book on W Swainson, the Anatomy of a 19th Century Naturalist, was very well received.

The Society in 1987 conceived that the finances of the Trust could well afford to increase the amount of the Award to \$1,500, \$500 on notice of winning the Award, \$500 on notice of satisfactory progress, and \$500 on completion of research. Mrs Ruth Fry of Sumner won this year for her research into Maud and Amber Reeves. This subject was considered very important by National Library personnel, which was born out this year (1992) by enthusiastic reviews on publication. A copy was presented to the Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard at a function to mark her patronage of the Society in July 1992 and she was clearly delighted with her presentation.

Mrs Stokes of Akaroa writing on Janetta Cooksley has still to complete her research, details of which have proved extraordinarily difficult to complete but we expect that our 1988 winner will complete her book shortly. Her final payment has been withheld.

Commander Denis Fairfax winner of 1989 on the history of the NZ Navy has not completed his research, the vastness of the subject proving to take much longer than anticipated. His final payment has also been withheld. This has caused the selection committee to view favourably those applicants whose research is well on the way to completion.

Mrs Heraud of Whitianga was the winner in 1990 and she had been runner up in 1989. Her research into the life and work of Maud Sherwood the artist has been completed and a photocopy of her book has been received. It is hoped she will find a publisher soon as this should prove an interesting and valuable piece of research with many illustrations.

Mrs Joan Gordon, whose work on the committee and selection committee has been most useful had discussions with Victoria University in November 1990 and recommended the more modern title of the "New Zealand Founders' Society's Annual Research Award" to the Executive Committee which approved the change.

1991 saw Miss Jean Garner of Christchurch win the Award her subject being Sir John Hall, Pioneer Pastoralist and Politician, her progress is continuing satisfactorily.

The Award continues well, though the capital sum which has now reached over \$27,000 due to judicious investments with high interest rates, now finds that with very much lower interest rates and advertising reaching nearly \$1000 a year, plus administration costs and since the Award is becoming well known, some advertising should be curtailed. A close watch is kept on expenditure and 1993 may find that only an advertisement in the Listener may be necessary, as most enquiries for 1992 were from word of mouth, The Listener and the Universities and not from the "Dominion Sunday Times" which was used as an economy measure instead of the previous four main Dailies.

The number of applicants is usually between 16 and 30 and although naturally varied in research titles applicants are usually of a very high standard. Most have academic degrees, some exceptionally so, and the Selection Committee of two or three have an interesting and difficult task. The format for some years is for the Committee to sort out the most suitable applications whereupon an independent and very experienced person makes the final selection. For some years Miss Marjorie Walton a retired member of the National Library has had this task and her expertise and knowledge of published and useful research has been very valuable to us. This system of selection is working well.

List of Award Winners

1982	Miss Jenny Hammond	"Social History of NZ Children"
1983	Mr William Main	"NZ Photography and Photographers 1847- "
1984	Rev. J C McKean	"Maori Education 1925 - 1945"
1985	Mr Eric Warr	"History of the Dairy Industry"
1986	Mrs Sheila Natusch	"Wm. Swainson 19th Century Naturalist"
1987	Mrs Ruth Fry	"Maud and Amber"
1988	Mrs Doris Stokes	"Life of Janetta Cooksley"
1989	Denis Fairfax	"History of the Royal New Zealand Navy"
1990	Mrs Julie Heraud	"Life and Work of Maud Sherwood"
1991	Miss Jean Garner	"Life of Sir John Hall"
1992	Eastwoodhill Trust Board	"The Story of Eastwoodhill"

When this Award was first mooted in 1979, few members of the Society had any experience in the running of an Award such as envisaged at the time. Members had won Awards, but the mechanics of such had not been in their spheres. Time and the collective intelligence of the Award Committee have created an on going and viable research award, which runs smoothly and with generally good and worthwhile results. Hiccoughs can occur, but some researchers do not find it always easy to stay on a straight course and they can deviate from direction to a new and desirable piece of time consuming research which will probably improve the finished project. Referees are very necessary, the application form has been very carefully devised to protect the Society and to give useful information to the Selection Committee. The Society is doing a useful service with the award to encourage research into any spect of New Zealand's history and development, and all it asks as a reward is an acknowledgement of the Society on the fly leaf of the published book.