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A CITY IN TRANSITION;

DIVERSIFICATION IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF DUNEDIN

1860-1864

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Long essay presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History
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ABBREVIATIONS

D. Teleg .. .. .. Daily Telegraph
Dn. Leader .. .. Dunedin Leader
O.D.T. .. .. .. Otago Daily Times
O.W. .. .. .. Otago Witness
Ot. Ord. .. .. .. Ordinances of the Province of Otago
Sat. Rev. .. .. .. Saturday Review
V. and P. .. .. .. Votes and Proceedings of the Otago Provincial Council
INTRODUCTION

The discovery of payable gold by Thomas Gabriel Read on 23 May, 1861, at Tuapeka, Central Otago, was of profound significance not only for Otago but for the entire colony of New Zealand. For Dunedin, the main township of the Otago Wakefield class settlement, the effect was none-the-less startling. Practically overnight dramatic changes took place not only in the size and shape of the town itself, but also in its social complexity.

The influx of a large, mobile mining population, with its accompanying service groups, was to threaten the entrenched stability of the sober Dunedin populace. The last remaining pillars of the principles of the Wakefield class settlement were toppled as both the old and new inhabitants adapted to changed circumstances and settled down to a rather different way of life.

The 'John Wickliffe' entered Otago Heads on 23 March, 1848, and its sister ship 'Philip Laing' on 13 April, 1848. Thereby the first settlers of the Otago scheme arrived in their new southern home. By June, all the settlers had been moved up from Port Chalmers to the head of the harbour which was to see the establishment of the township of Dunedin. In the most trying of Dunedin's winters, under bleak

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1 A large number of merchants and traders, as well as entertainers, criminals and prostitutes came to Otago and Dunedin with the miners. See Chapter Three.

and uncomfortable conditions the settlers toiled amongst the scrub and mud, clearing tracts and preparing ground for the erection of their church and homes.³

These settlers had come to Otago under the aegis of a colonial scheme which was quite distinctive. It was planned as a 'class settlement' wherein the Free Church of Scotland was to have predominant interests. The fathers of the Otago scheme were desirous of forming a colony in accordance with the principles of the New England Puritan colonies.⁴ Their Scottish settlement in the South Seas was to be a Wakefield class settlement with the characteristic balance between the elements of Land, Labour and Capital. But it was to be a Wakefield settlement of the new order. E.G. Wakefield had recently adopted his colonising schemes to include a religious element, which he saw as providing much needed cohesion and unity to colonial life.⁵

Religion was intended to be a basic and distinctive element of the Otago scheme. Rev. Thomas Burns and Captain William Cargill both endeavoured to propel the scheme into the narrow channel of Free Church thought and principle.⁶ They wanted to establish a Free Church theocracy, through the selection of immigrants,⁷ and with provision

³ Ground survey plans for the settlement had been made by Tuckett, and pegs had been laid down amongst the scrub and flax to mark street lines etc. Originally under Rennie's plan for the Otago settlement, the site of Dunedin was to have been cleared and major buildings erected before the arrival of the first settlers.

⁴ Initially the Scottish plan for colonization was known by the title 'The New Edinburgh Scheme'. J.L.C. Richardson, Sketch of Otago, New Zealand, as a field of British emigration. Edinburgh, 1862, p.5.


⁶ Though neither Cargill nor Burns was the author of the scheme, their connection with it was of the earliest and closest.

⁷ The selection of emigrants was designed to ensure that only those of a sturdy moral fibre and of Free Church of Scotland religion, would make up the new settlement.
made in the scheme for religious and educational institutions which would buttress and perpetuate the religious and moral fervour of their Free Church principles.  

Their settlement was to be a mirror image of the mother society in Scotland. It would see the transplanting to a new land of a body of settlers having a common religious and social background and such a substantial unity of religious faith and outlook that would ensure harmonious relations and growth in the community.  

As J. McGlashan was to emphasize at a public meeting at Aberdeen, advertising the Otago Scheme:

To colonize beneficially it is necessary that the higher and the richer as well as the lower and the poorer classes... that the employers as well as the employees... that all classes of society should together form a community.

It was all too soon apparent, however, that the scheme had basically failed in its ideals, before it was even established in the new land. Before embarkation of the first settlers Rev. Thomas Burns had realized that to all intents and purposes the Otago Scheme had become largely secular in character, despite all his attempts to the contrary.  

The Free Church of Scotland was not prepared to adopt the colonising scheme as its own and many of the emigrants that were coming forward for appraisal did not even remotely form a colony in

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8 S. Wekey, Otago as it is. Melbourne, 1862, p.4.
11 A. McLintock, op.cit. p.237.
Wakefield's conception of the term. The group assembling at the docks did not represent a cross-section of Scottish society, as almost entirely they were drawn from the poorer classes of the community "whose qualifications for the task of founding a colony were tragically inadequate."\(^\text{12}\)

These first Otago settlers have won lavish praise from the pens of early provincial historians as being a group, although largely of humble birth, who represented the very pick of Scottish life;\(^\text{13}\) "a microcosm of the very best of Scottish life in its most thrifty, industrious, civilized and pious manifestations."\(^\text{14}\) But despite such protestations there was practically no selection of immigrants amongst the first ship loads to go to Otago. It was a very disappointing response from the Protestant flock; it was difficult to assemble enough settlers even accepting all that came forward. The group was a rather motley company; many of those on the 'John Wickliffe' were neither Presbyterians nor Scottish and probably few apart from the leaders, "would have placed piety above prosperity in their scale of values".\(^\text{15}\) They were a fairly typical group of immigrants, and not the atypical body which the Lay Association of the Otago scheme had desired to attract.

From a financial point of view the scheme came upon hard times soon on the arrival of the first settlers in Otago. In 1853 the Lay Association of the Free Church of Scotland terminated its charter and thereby with the collapse of the concept of a class settlement,

\(^{12}\) Ibid. p.234.

\(^{13}\) For example, see J. Barr. The Old Identity.

\(^{14}\) D. Herron, 'Alsatia or Utopia' - New Zealand society and politics in the 1850's. Landfall, 13, 1959, p.329.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
henceforth the shaping of Otago's destiny rested in the hands of its own settlers who adapted a more liberal and enlightened policy than that framed by their first leaders. The colony was thereafter thrown open to all who were desirous of investing and settling in it.

And so came to Otago, and to Dunedin, a number of immigrants who were neither Scottish nor Presbyterian. In 1854 the entry of squatters from Canterbury and Otago, seeking sheep runs, marked the virtual end of Wakefield's scheme of colonisation as it applied to Otago. Outwardly the original character of the settlement was preserved for another few years, but this was increasingly eroded with the amendments to waste land regulations and the succeeding proliferation of grazing runs.

The principles of the founding fathers were, however, perpetuated in a more irresolute form in the personages of Burns and Cargill. These two men became the leaders of the Dunedin community and of Otago,

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17 O.W. 22 March 1860, p.6.
18 The Otago Scheme was founded on the principle that capital and labour were to be introduced in due proportion and that there would be a concentration rather than a dispersal of settlers, to ensure labour co-operation. The doctrine of sufficient price resulted from the combination of these two ideals. It rested on the premise that concentration would be impossible if waste land were cheap or readily obtainable. Cheap land, it was thought, would lead to speculation and the purchasing of large blocks of land which in turn reduces the effectiveness of labour co-operation and alters the balance between land, labour and capital.
and sought through the first harsh decades of settlement to ensure that a religious and moral tone was perpetuated in the settlers' lifestyles. If, from a spiritual and financial point of view, the scheme failed to achieve the goal of its forefathers, morally and socially it left a powerful beneficial imprint which with the passing of the years remained largely an imperishable heritage.

In the first few years of settlement Dunedin, the pivot of the agricultural hinterland, was not much more than a muddy little village. In 1857 the town was but a cluster of primitive unpainted buildings straggled out in the large gully between Dowling and Stafford Street and on the ridges immediately above. Following the 1888 governmental immigration scheme, the town received a sizable boost, not merely in population but also in commercial and building activity. However, paucity of finance and of labour hindered the progress of public works and development. By the end of 1860, of the whole town area bounded by the Town Belt, less than one fifth was built upon.

The inhabitants of Dunedin in these early years "pursued a live and outward decorum and sobriety", stolidly indifferent to anything that lay outside the narrow circle of their immediate wants. They were a somewhat complacent and smug community, rather unimaginative.

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20 From the time of the arrival of the first settlers in Otago, denominations other than Presbyterianism were present amongst the populace.


and slow to accept change however radical. The *Otago Witness* curtly described Dunedin society at the beginning of 1860, as "the dullest of dull places in the world."26

It was a hard-working, pioneer community, doggedly determined to etch a livelihood out of the soil. Though there had been a reckless and carefree minority, who professed their dislike of the class system and its constraints on the community, in the early years of the 1850's these elements quickly lost impetus in the 'struggle for survival'.27 Hard work was praised as a pre-eminent virtue; frivolity and recreation frequently being criticised by Burns and his loyal supporters. As the *Otago Witness* commented:

>a day spent in innocent recreation was in the estimation of our fellow townsman almost a crime.28

On general appearances it seems that Dunedin's population was generally satisfied both with the plodding progress of their town and their leaders Burns and Cargill.29

In January of 1860 the new year was welcomed in as promising to be a happy and prosperous year. The inhabitants of this small township were quite unaware of the events which would shatter their complacency and threaten to upset their quiet mode of existence, in less than 18 months. Dunedin was on the eve of a new era.

26 *O.W.*, 14 July 1860, p.4.
28 *O.W.*, 25 December 1858, p.5.
This study recounts the diversification which occurred in the social life of Dunedin between January of 1860 and December of 1864. It has been suggested that the gold rushes in Central Otago brought to the floor the few remaining pillars of the Wakefield class settlement. To apply this formula to Dunedin and to ascertain whether the gold rushes dramatically altered the social life of the town, is the purpose of this paper. Though essentially all evidence of the founding fathers' principles for colonisation had disappeared, there still remained a legacy in the moral and religious tone of the town.

Dunedin was the point of arrival and departure for many of the migrant miners. So too was it the entrepôt of the commercial and political activity of the province, and an alternative arena of employment when the miners experienced one of the periodic slumps or dull periods. Increasingly it also became the social centre, as theatres and bars proliferated at an amazing rate and the miner was enticed to whittle away his spare time and hard earned tailings therein.

Chapter One discusses the reaction of Dunedin to the gold rushes in Central Otago, and the division of interests and antipathy which allegedly existed between the 'Old Identity' and 'New Iniquity'. Chapter Two is concerned with the diversification of the religious framework of the town, and the threat not only to Presbyterianism but also to Christianity in the new order of society. Chapter Three concerns the emergence of a number of moral and social problems and of the increasing crime rate. Chapter Four is concerned with the
multiplication of employment and labour disputes. In the 1860-1864 era the labouring groups in Dunedin were caught up in the spiral of rising prices and unemployment. Poverty and destitution emerged as a factor to be contended with, a feature of the home society and environment from which the colonizers were escaping.

Sources for this topic are many and varied. There is a large number of daily and weekly papers which provide a most valuable source of social comment. Pamphlets, diaries, and Reminiscences are also available for the researcher. Secondary resources proliferate, though these are generally limited in their value as they provide little social comment and trace only very generally the upheaval which occurred in Dunedin. A most valuable reference to provide continuity and background, to all of Otago's history is A. H. McLintock's History of Otago.
In 1860 it was widely recognised that gold existed in Otago. Initially the Otago fathers had discouraged the interest which was growing in this valuable ore, as they feared it would both upset the Presbyterian purity of the province, and lead to the immigration of undesirable elements. But in May 1857 W.H. Cutten "conveniently forgot his earlier admonitions", in order to urge that an adequate reward be paid to the discoverer of an Otago goldfield. He was convinced that unless the discoveries were 'dazzling' they would not unsettle the sober Dunedin populace.

In June, 1860, a claim was made for the reward on the discovery of a goldfield at Motuara, near Invercargill. The Otago Witness reacted to this with a note of scepticism:

We have had so many unfounded claims for this reward, and so many reports of available goldfields that we are rather sceptical on the point.

It appears that their foreboding note was accurate, for the outcome of this find was similar to previous ones; with the onset of winter, the reports ended ignominiously.

1 Maori tradition stated that there existed in Otago, traces of gold. Reports of the discovery of this ore were numerous, since the arrival of the Scottish settlers. They included the finds of: Phanzayn and Nairn in 1851, Archibald and company in 1852, an associate of John Hyde Harris in 1856, surveyor general's Charles Ligar in 1856, Alexander Garvie and party in 1857, Edward Peters on a number of occasions since 1857, J.T. Thomson in 1858.
2 A.H. McLintock, op.cit., p.442.
3 O.W., 30 June 1860, p.4.
4 A.H. McLintock, op.cit., p.444.
Nevertheless the search for the elusive ore was continued by those who maintained hope and faith in its discovery. At the end of March, 1861, news drifted into Dunedin of the discovery of gold in the Upper Lindis Gorge, by Samuel McIntyre. Although a few eager souls set out immediately, following the lead of Oamaru citizens, they received scant encouragement from the local press which again counselled caution. The Otago Witness discouraged those in good employment from leaving their positions, advising them to await further confirmation of the reports. So too did they question the benefits which allegedly resulted from a major gold discovery.

We are not of the number of those in our community who look upon the discovery of gold as the greatest blessing, or as being likely to make the future of every one in our Province. If the diggings turn out really valuable, we shall not regret their discovery, but at the same time, it will not be an unmixed blessing. The disturbances which it will create, in the occupation of the community, although they will remedy themselves, will yet be productive of a great inconvenience and loss to many.

Again the Witness was accurate in its prophecy. In spite of protestations regarding the success of the field, with the onrush of winter the numbers on the field dwindled and long before midwinter it was pronounced a failure.

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5 O.W., 30 March 1861, p.5., 6 April 1861, p.5.
6 O.W., 6 April 1861, p.5.
7 O.W., 13 April 1861, p.5.
8 Ibid.
9 O.W., 20 April 1861, p.5; 27 April 1861, p.5; 25 May 1861, p.5.
With the discovery of gold by Thomas Gabriel Read on 23 May, 1861, the Province was again awakened to the news of a prospective goldfield. Read’s letter to the Superintendent, published in the *Otago Witness*, 8 June 1861, aroused surprisingly little commotion in Dunedin.\(^\text{10}\) Little faith was put in this report, its fate presuming to be similar to that of earlier discoveries. The incredulous public awaited anxiously, confirmation of the report.\(^\text{11}\) On 28 June, 1861, this was given and immediately Dunedin's wall of scepticism was broken and there followed a rush of magnificent proportions.\(^\text{12}\) Burns' and Cargill's earnest wish and faithful effort to preserve intact the Free Church character of the settlement had long been scattered to the wind, and now it seemed that the very remnant of Scottish nationality and Presbyterianism would be dissipated as well.\(^\text{13}\)

The sedate church township became a hive of activity. Excitement spread rapidly and daily increased in intensity. It animated all circles and disturbed "all men's ordinary avocations."\(^\text{14}\) The numbers leaving town each morning were 'quite surprising', and it was feared that if the fever continued, "there would scarcely be a man left in town."\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{12}\) On that day Superintendent Richardson requested that he be invested with unusual powers to meet with whatever emergency might arise.

\(^{13}\) T.M. Hocken, *Contributions to the Early History of New Zealand (settlement of Otago).* London, 1898, p.220.


\(^{15}\) O.W., 6 July 1861, p.4.
A nearly constant stream of eager prospectors could be seen leaving the town, "some mounted, some walking, all laden with picks and shovels and tin basins".\textsuperscript{16} The town assumed "quite a deserted appearance", building sites were "silent and deserted" and there appeared to be "little business going on in the shops".\textsuperscript{17}

In the manner of previous proclamations, the local papers encouraged caution, asserting that it would be "extremely foolish as a rule" for clerks and shopkeepers and "similar persons totally unaccustomed to a life of manual labour to give up their ordinary occupations to turn diggers."\textsuperscript{18} But the mass exodus saw all manner of persons departing from the town; policemen, labourers, clerks and "gentlemen who had never done a day's work" down to the "lowliest types of human character".\textsuperscript{19} The fever grasped all in its clutches, regardless of occupation.

By the middle of July, 1,200 men had reached Gabriel's Gully, many of those going from Dunedin.\textsuperscript{20} Gold alone was not the incentive for this mass movement. Unemployment existed in Otago and Dunedin, and this exacerbated by seasonal fluctuations in the demand for agricultural labour,\textsuperscript{21} meant that there was many an able body labourer already in need of employment.

After the mass exodus of the first month following Read's discovery, the migration decreased to a slow dribble. However, the presence of hundreds of goldseekers increased the expectation of further discoveries. Several

\textsuperscript{16} O.W., 13 July 1861, p.4.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} O.W., 6 July 1861, p.4.
\textsuperscript{19} M.C. Orbell, Reminiscences, p.80.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p.16.
adjacent discoveries were readily found as prospectors spread out over Central Otago. With each new discovery, the migration out of Dunedin increased. So too, was the pace quickened in the Spring of each year and on the arrival of immigrant ships into port.

The news of the amount of gold realised at Tuapeka attracted many thousands of immigrants, mainly from Australia and other areas of New Zealand. The rate of immigration was indeed awe-inspiring. In September 1861, over 1,000 persons arrived in the town within two days. The greatest number of immigrants to arrive in Dunedin for one month, was 14,163 in March 1863. The immigration figures trailed off, in 1864, to become a nett emigration.

Day after day, as ships sailed into Otago harbour, Dunedin's streets were thronged for a day or two, but "somehow the people disappeared, most going to the diggings". The earliest immigrants seem to have made quick their preparations before departing for the diggings but when their numbers increased and social amenities were built in the town, the miners tended to stay for a few days. Some were to have a sojourn of some weeks in Dunedin, earning enough to keep the family they were leaving in the town with an adequate livelihood.

With the influx of so many migrants, though their stay was often of limited duration, great over-crowding was experienced in Dunedin. Quickly small crude wooden shanties, cottages, boarding house and hotels were

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22 Ibid.
23 The dominant nationalities that came to the Otago goldfields were the English and Irish. See Appendix One for Immigration and Emigration statistics.
24 D.M.J. Richmond, Theses, p.29.
25 Ibid, p.32.
26 O.W., 21 October 1861, p.4.
27 D.M.J. Richmond, Theses, p.30.
erected, each jostling for land and crowding into all available space. Haste far surpassed aesthetic qualities, and sometimes safety, in building prerequisites. Squatting was frequently adopted as a mode of accommodation and tent towns were evident on any spare ground in the township. By 1863, the great demand for accommodation was largely met, though occasionally shortages were experienced.

Those who came to Otago were not solely prospective miners. Many merchants came over from Melbourne to establish business and hopefully to profit from the wealth in Otago. So too, did there migrate a number of those from the 'lower levels of society'. Criminals and 'fallen women' were a noticeable faction amongst those who came into Otago in these years. Those who came did so not solely because of the attraction of capital and employment. One family reported that it had come "because of the superior advantages offering to the benefit of our children". It is presumed that they were referring to the opportunities for finding employment at the goldfields on the attainment of maturity, as well as the benefits concurring from the moral and religious tenor of the educational institutions of the town.

Dunedin's newest residents expressed mixed feelings about their new home. Alexander Kerr in 1862, thought "it was the most desolate, bare, muddy place it was possible to see", a viewpoint in line with that of the Parry family who arrived February 1863. While one

29 Squatting was forbidden by law, but it seems that this regulation was largely ignored.
30 Otago Its Goldfields and Resources, Melbourne, 1862, p.9.
31 See Chapter Three.
34 Parry Family Letters, p.29.
gentleman was amazed at the size of the township and the activity surrounding Bell hill and the reclamation of the harbour, another likened Dunedin to the small fishing villages in Scotland. Dunedin was delineated as being inhabited by a populace consisting chiefly of "the very needy, whisky loving, unprincipled Scotsmen", mixed with a "few of the worst specimens from England and the neighbouring colonies", as well as a "sprinkling of the convict element from New South Wales".  

In the years 1861-1864, Dunedin was enriched by an enormous addition to its population, obtained without its expense. Previously, the town fathers and provincial administrators had been glad to purchase such people at a large pecuniary outlay. The benefits which could concur from this mass migration were amply realised. To reap the full benefit of the increased population and the prosperity brought about by the goldrush, it was recognized that measures should be taken to retain the people in Dunedin and thereby maximise the profits arising from their immigration.  

Disorganisation of the old order of things followed from the sudden onrush of a new population and the departure to the goldfields of numbers of the original settlers. The inhabitants of Dunedin were subjected to a pace of life much quicker than that of their sedate past.

37 O.W., 4 January 1862, p.5. See Appendix Two, British Population statistics.
38 Ibid.
39 *Making of New Zealand*, vol. 1 No. 8, p.28.
But there was no point in lamenting the passage of a past age. As it was asserted in October 1861:

There is no use fighting against fate; we cannot resume our Arcadian simplicity; greatness is forced upon us and we must adapt ourselves to the times.40

Though life in Dunedin, and Otago, did not run quite so easily as formerly, it was only, so it was asserted, because “the pace had been accentuated and not that the road was any more tricky”. It was to be expected that where progress was rapid “some jolting was to be expected”.41

The reaction of the old settlers to the alteration in the pace of life of their town, is a topic of much debate. It was suggested, by one newspaper, that “the present times must be terribly trying to the staid inhabitants of older Otago”.42 Though there was some regret and some demur at the great change, the old settlers were relieved somewhat by the comforting reflection that substantial advantages could be reaped from the newcomers.43 And they did obtain benefits, albeit with them their fair share of disadvantages. Many of the older settlers held titles to town sites, which they sold on the inflated market of the gold-rush days. Those in business prospered with the increase in the amount of money in circulation, especially at the height of the fields' prosperity. Though some individuals may have shown some antagonism to the new townspeople, the majority "were not so narrow minded as to look with jealous eyes upon the prosperity of their new, fellow colonists."44

40 O.W., 26 October 1861, p.5.
41 O.W., 1 March 1862, p.5.
42 O.W., 26 October 1861, p.5.
43 T.M. Hocken, op.cit. p.220.
44 O.W., 12 April 1862, p.5.
There was, however, a tendency for the new settlers in the town to disparage the old settlers, to look upon them as 'slowcoaches' and to apply to them, in a semi-contemptuous manner, the term 'Old Identity'. The vehemence with which this term was used is difficult to determine.

The Otago Witness stated:

Although the phrase itself is a matter of but little importance, the feeling that dictates its adoption is not a thing to be overlooked ... it is useless to deny that such a feeling exists. 45

By way of rejoinder, the 'Old Identity' called the newcomers the 'New Iniquity'. To some extent, this latter group were associated with such developments as the increase in crime, the 'moral downfall' of the population, and the downturn in civic pride.

The terminology 'Old Identity' and 'New Iniquity' has been sustained through the years by chroniclers and historians. It is suggested that in many cases however, these authors have tended to emphasize disproportionately the division which existed between these two groups. While reading the papers of the era defamatory remarks of one group vis a vis the other are conspicuous for their absence. Though the old settlers did fear and regret the downfall of the pre 1861 status quo it is unrealistic to state dogmatically that the early settlers "were extremely jealous of their entrenched advantages and were adamant lest not their lustre fade". 46 Admittedly they were slow to accept change, but were not so entrenched in their Presbyterian viewpoint as not to adapt

45 Ibid.
46 S. Wekey, op.cit, p.53.
to an unalterable development. The old and the new elements of the population did look askance at each other at first, but as they came to understand each other that soon gave way "to mutual kindly feeling, tinctured with some humour". 47

This is not to discount that there were differences in the lifestyles of both groups. Understandably so, as they were drawn from different life experiences. It is to be emphasized that the importance of the caricatures, 'Old Identity' and 'New Iniquity' pre-eminently lay in the perception each had of the other, rather than as a major division of interests. 48 As a recent historical thesis points out:

the Old Identity was most significant as a state of mind amongst those wishing to distinguish themselves, rather than as a generic term for an easily identifiable group.

In Dunedin the 'Old Identity' seem to have in some ways appreciated the term allotted to them, as it was seen to have assumed some prestige for those who chose to identify with it. 49

Parallel with the extension in trade and commerce, improvements in the numbers of and style of buildings, increased activity in the streets and the multiplication of ships and steamers in the harbour, were a number of changes purported to have taken place in the social environment of the town.

In October, 1861, an editor of the Otago Witness denounced the "insatiable desire evident in the town, to be rich in a hurry". 50

The gold fever, as it has been pointed out, seems to have trapped a large

49 Ibid.
50 O.W. 19 October, 1861, p.4.
proportion of the population in its grasp. As one businessman is quoted as saying:

> I could not settle down to my usual business occupations till I had handled the precious metal on the spot it was discovered.\(^{51}\)

Concern was also expressed at this time, that the desire to get rich was a sentiment that if generally entertained and acted upon, "will be utterly destructive of the best interests of the whole."\(^{52}\)

The growth of what was called "go-aheadism" and speculation was another feature of recent development in the town, which was received with disfavour by many.\(^{53}\) Perhaps the most serious aspects of change, as the *Otago Witness* envisaged it, was the growth of "unmitigated selfishness" amongst the townspeople. Persons who had at one time taken an active participation in public affairs were now refraining from taking a similar interest in the affairs of the town.\(^{54}\)

To assess the validity of these conclusions is largely beyond the scope of the available source material. There is no doubt, however, that such characteristics were perpetuated in the social order of post gold rush Dunedin. The extent of their acceptance is the factor as yet to be determined.

The desire to obtain a share in the newfound prosperity, appears to have been a natural development, in the circumstances, of the time. Whether selfishness was all pervasive is difficult to determine.

\(^{51}\) *O.W.*, 20 July 1861, Original Correspondence.
\(^{52}\) *O.W.*, 16 October 1861, p.2.
\(^{53}\) Ibid.
\(^{54}\) Ibid.
Certainly, the prevalence of apathy is a point frequently mentioned in the newspapers. The apathy which pervaded the general public's participation in local and provincial politics in the early years, seems to have been continued to the new era, and extended to all areas of social life.  

Changes in lifestyle and in social conditions in the town had been occurring in the three years preceding the discovery of a sizeable goldfield in 1861. In the succeeding four years, the transformation in lifestyles was to occur at an accelerated rate. Whether or not "gold annihilated with a blow all that remained of the primitive habits of the past" and ushered in a new society, is a moot point.

55 The gold rush gave provincial politics a great impetus and imbued it with vitality.

56 O.W., 19 October 1861, p.4.
CHAPTER TWO

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

As envisaged by the founding fathers, religion was to be a basic and most important element in the Otago scheme. As has been seen, though it was promoted as being a Free Church of Scotland settlement, from the beginning adherents of other religious denominations came to settle in Dunedin and the hinterland.1

In the first few years of settlement there was purported to have been much earnestness in worship, and much devotion and strict moral training in the homes in Dunedin. So too, was there an active and dedicated lay effort promoting Christian work in the community.2

By 1860 opposition existed in the town, to the claims of the leaders of the Presbyterian Church to maintain uncompromisingly, a system of life based on the principles of their faith. But Presbyterianism was the dominant denomination in Otago and Dunedin, and this church was therefore able to exert a pervasive influence over the community. In 1858, 65.74 percent of the Otago populace belonged to one of the Presbyterian churches.3 Though there exists no similar breakdown for Dunedin, it is presumed that the figure would be generally similar. The second major denomination in 1858 was the Anglican Church, with but 25.50 percent of the population belonging to their faith.4

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1 See Introduction.
2 J. Collie, op.cit, p.18.
3 See Table One.
4 Ibid.
Table One  The Percentage of the Otago Population (of European descent) belonging to each Religious Denomination, as taken in December 1858, 1861 and 1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>25.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Scotland;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Church of Scotland;</td>
<td>65.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Presbyterians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Methodists</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational Independents</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Methodists</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Church</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of Friends</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants; no particular</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denomination specified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otherwise described or</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not described</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics of New Zealand.
Even to the end of 1860 though Burns may have had reason to lament the presence of other faiths in Dunedin, he could still cherish the hope of a class system based on a strong religious element.\(^5\)

With the onset of the gold rushes in Central Otago in June 1861, the Presbyterian churches' dominant influence in Otago was brought under an accelerated process of modification. In December 1861, the Presbyterian church had only 39.01 percent of the Otago population belonging to it. In 1864 the figure increased slightly to 41.74 percent.\(^6\)

Though we lack a breakdown of the religious affiliations of the Otago population in the non-census years, it is proposed that this major proportional decrease in the roll of the Presbyterian Church in December 1861, took place after July of that year when there came into Otago many hundreds of new immigrants.

To balance the proportional decrease in the Presbyterian roll, the Anglican Church increased its share to 26.21 in 1861, and 29.13 in 1864. The Roman Catholic Church jumped from 2.01 in 1858, to 10.11 in 1861 and 13.37 in 1864. The smaller churches in some cases experienced slight increases and in others, small decreases in the 1861 and 1864 proportional figures.\(^7\) But by and large the relatively insignificant change experienced in these denominations had negligible effect on the total proportional breakdown.

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5 J. Collie, *op.cit.*, p.47.

6 See Table One.

It is suggested that from these Provincial figures broad trends may be applied to the Dunedin situation. Though the increase in the population of Otago, outside of Dunedin, was greater than that which occurred within the town, the increase in the town's population was great enough to allow for a similar modification in its religious makeup. After May 1861, it is thus propounded that the proportion of the Dunedin population which belonged in the Presbyterian Church in 1861 and 1864 was less than that of 1858. It is probable that the figures somewhat approximated the Otago situation, namely, 65.74 in 1858, 39.01 in 1861 and 41.74 in 1864. So too, is it probable that as the Presbyterian proportional roll decreased, an increase was experienced in those of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

It is equally difficult to determine whether there was any change in the pattern of religious observance in Dunedin in the years 1860-1864. The Otago Witness reported in 1862 both that "respect for religion was still observed" and that the seats in the town's churches were still occupied. It is now widely recognised that the miners were not the irreligious body which once they were depicted as being. Religion was respected on the fields and it is presumed that a similar respect was present amongst the miners who swelled the Dunedin population. The vigour with which the New Iniquity in Dunedin subscribed to religious beliefs may not, however, have equalled that of the Presbyterian old settlers.

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8 Ibid.
9 O.W., 1 March 1862, p.5.
Church attendance on the Sabbath did become a problem of greater proportions in the post gold rush era. It was not a new one, however. In December 1860 a petition was presented to the Provincial Council by the Presbytery of Otago, requesting that they introduce measures to rectify the disregard which existed in the Province to the Sabbath.11

Concern was expressed on the arrival of the 'New Iniquity' to the town, that the element of sabbath desecration was becoming emphasized. It was a matter which aroused much concern amongst those who most tenaciously clung to the old way of life.12

The Sunday Observance Ordinance passed by the Provincial Assembly in 1863, was designed to secure "the better observance of the Lord's day".13 One doubts whether such an Ordinance would have been promulgated in any other town in the nation. This Ordinance not only contained penalties for trading on the Sabbath but also for "any person found shooting for pleasure or profit or any kind of sporting with a dog or gun or playing at any game or pastime in any place on Sunday."14 This follows the trend established in the first years of settlement, whereby gaiety and amusements were discouraged. It is not known the extent to which this Ordinance was enforced.15

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11 V. and P., Session XI, Appendix XXIX.
13 Ot. Ord., Session XVI, No. 87, p.401.
14 Ibid.
15 See Introduction.
With the rapid increase in the town's population, the established churches experienced a strain on available manpower and resources. Both the number of Anglican and Presbyterian ministers increased in these years and accordingly there was a growth in the number of churches.\(^\text{16}\) A.D. Glasgow was specifically appointed by the Presbyterian church to work amongst the miners in the Stafford and Walker Street districts. This latter was to become Saint Andrews Parish.\(^\text{17}\)

So too, was there evident in these years a further development in the governmental structure of the Presbytery of Otago. In June 1864, a committee was appointed to consider and report on the division of the Presbytery and the constitution of a Synod. In the following year the Otago Presbytery was divided into seven Presbyteries, and in January 1866 the Synod was formally constituted.\(^\text{18}\)

Many of the developments which occurred in Dunedin between 1861 and 1864 were seen by a number of the townspeople as threatening the moral and religious tone of the town. The increasing crime rate and the emergence of 'fallen women' are two such features. The question of the morality of theatres aroused great debate and consternation. It was asked whether these institutions produce godliness, "do they strengthen the body and mind? ... is there anything in the Bible to countenance theatres?"\(^\text{19}\) The moral and religious ideals of many of the Old Identity received many a rebuff with the diversification which occurred in the social life of the town.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{17}\) A.M. Finlayson, op.cit, p.34.
\(^\text{18}\) J. Chisholm, Fifty Years Syne. Dunedin, 1868, p.183.
\(^\text{19}\) O.W., 16 August 1862, p.5.
\(^\text{20}\) See Chapter Three.
Though one might have presumed that the Presbyterians were openly antagonistic to the increasing strength of other churches, sectarian division is reported to have been little in evidence in Dunedin, as elsewhere in Otago, in the years 1860-1864.\textsuperscript{21} At a public meeting to welcome the Baptists to Dunedin, Mr Justice Richmond stated:

\begin{quote}
he was happy to think that in the city there was no jealousy on the occasion of one other christian body to the church, for here, if he might use the phrase, there was free trade in religion.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

Christian co-operation was reflected in the shared use of existing churches. Dr Burns offered the Baptists use of First Church for evening worship, until a church of their own was erected.

A note of disharmony was added to this picture of harmony, when J.G.S. Grant, in his paper the Saturday Review, revealed that division along religious lines was apparent in the town cemeteries. The cemeteries were "perpetuating the worst passions of human nature."\textsuperscript{23}

By December 1864, though Dunedin was no longer a predominantly Presbyterian town, christianity was still a dominant theme. The populace in general seems to have regarded religion and morality as being of importance, though not the all-important features of life which they once were.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21} J.G. Bremner, Memoirs of the Early Diggings.
\textsuperscript{22} O.W., 22 August 1864, p.6.
\textsuperscript{23} Sat. Rev., 4 June 1864, p.103.
\end{flushright}
CHAPTER THREE

A DISCUSSION OF SELECTED "MORAL EVILS"

Dunedin in 1860 was a dull and cheerless town "chilling in its aloof unworldliness." Gaiety and frivolity was the exception to the general rule. Though there existed a number of clubs and societies, such as the Horticultural Society, Cricket and Hockey Clubs, Building Societies and Masonic Lodges; social activity seems to have been constrained by the desire to maintain a righteous moral and religious tone. Theatres and billiard parlours were notable for their absence, and in comparison to other areas in New Zealand there were very few licenced houses in either Dunedin or Otago. The consumption of spiritous liquor in the 1850's was nevertheless large, and it did not appear that the lack of public houses in the least degree checked consumption. It is cynically remarked, that in these years the correlation between piety and sobriety, in Dunedin, was not very high.

With the arrival of many thousands of miners, tradesmen, speculators and their families in 1861, 1862 and 1863, Dunedin became a town of gay amusement, vitality and carefree abandon. A galaxy of theatres, cafes, singing and dancing saloons sprang up "if by magic to meet the needs of a floating population to whom money was merely the passport to pleasure."  

1 A.H. McLintock, op.cit. p.475.
2 O.W., 7 April 1860, p.4.
3 Ibid.
4 D. Herron, op.cit, p.332.
5 A.H. McLintock, op.cit, p.475.
The older Dunedin residents expressed concern on a number of occasions in the months following Read's discoveries, as to the changes in moral standards and behaviour that were beginning to manifest themselves in the town. As the months progressed into years, this concern became very real as the tone of the town took on new dimensions.

Initially, in 1861, the immigrants noticed and had cause to regret that there was a lack of suitable amusements in Dunedin. These were however, quickly established. By the end of 1862, Dunedin was the proud possessor of the Theatre Royal and the Princess Theatre—where regular entertainment was presented for the townspeople. A number of travelling shows from Australia included Dunedin in their circuit, and a varied repertoire, including the legendary Thatcher, entertained the packed theatres. Thatcher's visit to Dunedin in March, 1862, was regarded as a high point in the entertainment calendar. His many 'doggerels' appealed especially to the 'New Iniquity' because of their sharp witty attacks on the characteristics of the old settlers.

The establishment of theatres and associated forms of entertainment, was not applauded by the entire Dunedin populace. Indeed, the more righteous elements in society regretted the birth of such 'moral evils'. They were an important development, for they served to bring to the public's attention the most elaborate question of public morality.

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7 A.H. McLintock, op.cit, p.475.
A vigorous debate appears in the newspapers of the day concerning the acceptability of theatres. At a 'soiree' at Knox Church, it was reported that the pit of the theatre was "likened with the bottomless pit." The *Otago Witness* in a perceptive editorial came to grips with the issue under debate, when it pointed out that the controversy did not surround the theatres per se, but rather on the theatre serving as a catalyst for:

an attack against recreation and enjoyment of every kind ... indeed ... to almost every occupation of modern life with the exception of course of husbandry, pastoral pursuits and some indispensable avocations.9

The **Licenced Theatres Ordinance 1862**, an ordinance for regulating places of public exhibition and entertainment, can be seen as a means of preserving the standards of public morality. The Superintendent was thereby given powers to prohibit offensive stage entertainment, which went against standards of good manners, decorum and the public peace. The Ordinance also had provisions providing for penalties for "disorderly conduct" and for the assembling in theatres of "persons of bad character."10

With the proliferation of theatres, public houses, billiard parlours, cafes, singing and dancing saloons, a body of opinion became active calling for the improvement of society. To counteract the influence of this 'sad influence', to improve the order of society, it was suggested that lectures should be delivered on suitable topics,11 and a public Library should be built.12 The responsibility of providing the funds these was placed in the lap of town and provincial administrators.

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8 *O.W.*, 10 August 1862, p.5.
10 *Ot. Ord.*, Session XVI, No. 188, pp. 512-513.
11 *D. Teleg*, 22 May 1863, Original Correspondence.
12 *D. Teleg*, 7 January, 1864, p.2.
There are a number of expressions in the newspapers of the era, concerning the lack of 'intellectual pursuits' in Dunedin. One gentleman lamented that there was nothing to do on a winter Saturday afternoon with the absence, at that time of year, of cricket and volunteer rifle shooting.

The so-called genteel amusement of calling is out of the question. Dunedin society ignores pasteboards and walking out presents the same faces and scenes. You would like to do something intellectual and beautiful, and you are forced into bitter beer and billiards.\textsuperscript{13}

Institutions of public instruction did develop to meet the demand which existed amongst one element of the town's population. These were slow, however, to get off the ground. Apathy and a reluctance to get involved prevailed here, as in political matters.\textsuperscript{14}

A debating club was formed in 1861 and an historic club was established in 1863, which rivaled the Garrick club. Those institutions and clubs already in existence in 1860 slowly gathered impetus in the following five years. The Musical Society was revived and the Athenaeum, or Mechanic's Institute, acquired much needed support. A Choral Society, Caledonian Society, Political associations, Corps of amateur soldiering and Bible Classes were also active in these years.

The demand was also meet for a series of lectures. In 1864 Miss Rye gave a long-awaited series of public lectures, the purpose of which was to raise the standards of public taste. At these the audience was given a discourse on the necessity of finding intellectual amusement,

\textsuperscript{13} D. Teleg, 11 May 1863, Original Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter One.
and the necessity for immigrants to acquire adult education. The value of books, and reading from standard authors was also emphasized. It was significant that at these, Miss Rye was pre-eminently lecturing to an audience which already recognized these needs.

As a number of the 'Old Identity' looked on with dismay at the proliferation of immoral forms of entertainment, so too, did they denounce the increase in insobriety. By 1864 there were 89 licensed hotels in Dunedin.

Not only the consumption of alcohol but also the evil company which frequented the areas wherein alcohol was consumed and sold, were seen as signs of the moral degeneration of Dunedin society. It was thought that insobriety "threatened to make Dunedin a society of drivelling imbeciles". Drunkenness was filling the gaols with criminals and hospitals with "shattered constitutions". The drain on public expenditure to maintain these institutions was high and widely seen as consisting of an unnecessary outlay of scarce funds.

Temperance was a cause which was avidly sustained by the Dunedin Abstainers' Union. The first meeting of this body was held in February 1864; a large gathering of 'respectable citizens' under the chairmanship of A. Rennie. The principle motion passed therein vividly reflects the attitude of the majority of those present:

Social debasement characterizes every community amongst whom intemperance prevails ... This meeting views with considerable alarm the very general observance of drinking customs in society here, and the widespread and increasing growth in the traffic of strong drink and believes it to constitute an evil loudly calling for active remedial measures.

17 Dun. Leader, 13 February 1864, p. 16.
It was agreed at the meeting to call for the "total abolition of social drinking customs" as well as the entire abolition of the traffic of intoxicating beverages. But the idea of total abstinence was not unanimously received by the Dunedin populace. Even the old settlers, though desirous of maintaining a correct moral tone in the town, were quite partial to their wee dram. For some the consumption of alcohol was a vital accompaniment to assist the daily routine of toil.

No labour obliged to use a pick, or shovel or an axe could labour as hard as he is obliged to do, did he abstain from his usual quantum of beer.

Such was the opinion of one man.

J.G.S. Grant was active in discussing this social problem, as he was with many others. On this occasion he came out in favour of total abstinence but was against the "pernicious practice of licencing". Rather, he advocated the abolition of the spirit monopoly, a measure which would bring "a deadly blow to drunkenness".

Though the church was chastised for the inactive part they were playing in the Temperance movement, the Presbyterian church had on a number of occasions both before May 1861, and afterwards, submitted to the House resolutions on the licensing laws before them. They favoured the separation of the provisions trade and spirit trade, the

18 Ibid
20 Grant is quoted as having said: "When it shall be as common as ginger beer, or lemonade or sansparilla, men will not think of treating each other to the deleterious nibbler."
disqualification of a licensee for disorderliness on the second conviction, as well as the practice of obtaining the consent of the Justice of the Peace and of a majority of the inhabitants of the area before a licence was issued to a publican.\textsuperscript{21} On the issue of selling liquor on the Sabbath they were most adamant:

Whatever differences of opinion might be entertained on the question of the sale of intoxicating liquors ordinarily, there could be no question as to its immoral and degrading tendency, if they were allowed to be open on Sunday.\textsuperscript{22}

The correlation between crime and drunkenness was fairly high during the era 1860-1864. This will be discussed later on in the chapter.

Prostitution seemed to be further evidence of the morally diseased state of the Dunedin society. Not only were prostitutes seen parading conspicuously through the streets,\textsuperscript{23} but they had had the audacity to appear at the venerable cricket grounds, where "their conduct was scandalous and their language grossly indecent."\textsuperscript{24} They were also reported to have frequented the Vauxhall Gardens, the celebrated pride of the town, which were described on one occasion as being the haunt of prostitution and debauchery. This accusation was strongly refuted by those who controlled the gardens.\textsuperscript{25}

It was widely believed that the majority of 'fallen women' had come to Dunedin under the aegis of the Assisted Female Immigration scheme. This was formulated by the Provincial Government to alleviate the

\textsuperscript{21} A.M. Finlayson, ed., \textit{op.cit}, p.28.
\textsuperscript{22} Cited in \textit{O.W.}, 15 October 1864, p.16.
\textsuperscript{23} D. Teleg., 15 December 1863, p.4.
\textsuperscript{24} D. Teleg., 29 December 1863, Original Correspondence
\textsuperscript{25} D. Teleg., 11 November 1863, Original Correspondence
numerical disproportion between the sexes and to provide the province with more domestic servants.26

The number of immigrants that came out under this scheme quickly exceeded the demand. Neither Dunedin nor the rest of the province could produce the employment or the husbands at the rate the government had expected.27 Consequently a restriction was placed on the scheme at the end of 1863.28

The morals of the females and the management of their barracks was brought to the public's attention, by John Hyde Harris, when he canvassed for the position of Superintendent. The authorities were accused of providing inadequate protection for the women and failing to provide remunerative employment.29 The conditions of the barracks were reported to have been so uncomfortable, that many were willing "to exchange purity and inconvenience, for a state of disreputable comfort and ease".30 So too, was it purported that the ranks of prostitution in the city were weekly recruited from the immigration barracks.31

All of these accusations were forcefully denounced by the Provincial government in the report which was commissioned to investigate the conditions of the female immigrants.

27 O.D.T., 21 January 1863, p.3.
29 V. and P., Select Committee on Female Immigration, XI, Session XVII, pp. 31-34. Appendix to Report of Select Committee on Female Immigration, Session XVII, pp. 11-24.
30 D. Teleg., 25 March 1863, p.3.
31 V. and P., Refer Select Committee on Female Immigration. Session XVII, pp. 31-34.
A number of suggestions were put forward as a means of preventing the further growth of prostitution in the town. As on similar occasions, the philanthropic and religious agencies were called upon to lead the attack: their lack of action was also seen as further evidence of the general apathetic condition of the town.

Remedial measures such as preaching and lecturing to the populace, were seen as largely inadequate. The Daily Telegraph called for the creation of legislative machinery whereby it would be "impossible for vice of this description to show itself in public streets." 33

Some, however, thought that in a community of roving miners and speculators, prostitution was a very necessary evil, and that the best course to take to control it would be to introduce a licencing system. J.G.S. Grant sternly dismissed this suggestion, declaring that "nature teachers us to exercise preventative laws and remedies". 34

Within the years 1862-1864, though prostitution emerges as a Problem to be contended with, no effective and concerted measures were implemented to constrain it.

The conditions of life in 1860-64 were also shaped by the crime factor. With the increase in the population it was noticed that the crime rate was increasing. This trend had been detected in the years previous to 1860, but it was thought that the crime rate was still below other areas in the country. 35

32 Ibid.
33 D. Teleg., 4 January 1864, p. 4
34 Sat. Review, 14 March 1864, p. 80.
35 O.W., 21 January 1861, p. 5.
The validity of this belief is brought into question when one analyses the crime figures for New Zealand and Dunedin. It becomes apparent that Dunedin, though professedly a religious and morally righteous community even before the onrush of miners into its environment, had a crime rate well in excess of the New Zealand average. Though it is true, that the crime in general consisted of petty larceny and the milder species of misdemeanour. In the first few years of settlement Dunedin was conspicuously free from serious crime but on the other hand drunkenness and assault were rampant.

With the sudden swelling of the town's population in 1862, 1862 and 1863, the element of crime became aggravated.

Dunedin's Magistrate's Court conviction figures provide us with a framework with which to study crime. Both criminal and civil convictions per 1,000 of the town's population were down in 1861 on the 1858 figures. There was an increase in the number of convictions but the rate of increase in between 1858 and 1861 did not equal the rate of population increase.

This downward proportional trend is largely an enigma. It is important to state, however, that this trend was a country-wide development. A couple of tentative suggestions may be put forward to explain the Dunedin case. It is likely that in the turmoil experienced in May

36 See Tables Three and Five.
37 D. Herron, op.cit., p.331.
38 See Table Four.
39 See Table Five.
Table Two: Criminal Convictions and Civil Judgements, in which Europeans were defendants, in the Dunedin Magistrates' Court, December 1860 to December 1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Criminal</th>
<th>Civil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>Drunkenness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
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<td>1863</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1,159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics of New Zealand

Table Three: Criminal Convictions and Civil Judgements, in which Europeans were defendants, in the Dunedin Magistrates' Court, per 1,000 of the European Population in Dunedin, 1858, 1861, 1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Criminal</th>
<th>Civil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>Drunkenness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>16.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>63.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>73.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics of New Zealand
### Table Four: The Percentage Change in the Criminal Convictions and Civil Judgements in which Europeans were defendants, in the Dunedin Magistrates' Court, per 1,000 of the European Population in Dunedin, in the undermentioned years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Criminal</th>
<th>Civil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858-1861</td>
<td>-9.34</td>
<td>-27.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-1864</td>
<td>35.07</td>
<td>319.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics of New Zealand.*

### Table Five: Total Criminal Convictions and Civil Judgements in the Magistrates' Court of New Zealand, per 1,000 of the New Zealand population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Criminal</th>
<th>Civil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>42.28</td>
<td>68.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>32.82</td>
<td>45.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>61.67</td>
<td>99.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics of New Zealand.*
to December 1861 in Dunedin, the 'due process of the law' was disrupted as was other spheres of town life. So too, is it significant that though the population dramatically increased, the law enforcing agents did not experience a corresponding increase in strength till 1862. It is therefore probable that the vigilence with which the law enforcing agents had surveyed the populace pre-May 1861, was lessened after May. Hence a number of crimes may have gone unnoticed.

In the 1861-1864 period, criminal conviction per 1,000 of the town's population increased 35.07 percent, while civil convictions underwent a remarkable 319.22 percent increase.40 The civil figures suggest that with the great commercial boom which Dunedin experienced in 1862 and 1863, litigations and bankruptcies were associated with this growth and occurred at a rate well in excess of that in the pre-gold rush era.

The correlation between crime and drunkenness was reported to have been high throughout the years under consideration. Mr Justice Richmond brought this to the public's notice in the 1861-1862 sitting of the Supreme Court. His Honour was of the opinion that in nearly all the cases which had come before him "the crime had been traceable to drunkenness.41 Certainly insobriety had become a more serious problem with the gold rushes in Central Otago. The convictions for drunkenness in the Magistrates' Court also increased in the 1861-1864 era, though to a small degree proportional to the population.42

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40 See Table Three.
41 D. Teleg., 22 January 1862, p.2.
42 See Table Three.
The safety of life and property became a feature of concern in Dunedin following May 1861. It was reported by one citizen that swindling was rampant and assault of almost daily occurrence.\(^43\) Figures for assault in the 1861-1864 period reflected a slight increase proportional to the population.\(^44\) As a number of warnings were issued to the townspeople to be careful when venturing out of doors without company at night, it seems that though numerically the increase in assaults may not have been excessive, it was significant enough to greatly alarm the populace.

In 1862 stealing of swags emerged in Dunedin as "a new branch of the thieving industry.\(^45\)" The first 'stick-up' in the province had occurred the previous October. It was claimed that robbery was becoming more frequent, and though the police were as vigilant as they could possibly be, they could not be in all places at the same time. It was also noticed that 'Juvenile delinquency' was on the increase. Young ruffians were reported to be frequenting the principal streets of the town "levying blackmail on boys superior in dress and appearance.\(^46\)" It became an intolerable public nuisance. It is important to point out that as in the early years of settlement, major crime was largely absent in Dunedin. The *Saturday Review* proudly stated in a report to their European readers that "there have been no murders here.\(^47\)"

\(^{43}\) Henderson, *op.cit*, p.12.

\(^{44}\) See Table Three

\(^{45}\) O.W., 25 January 1862, p.5.


\(^{47}\) *Sat. Review*, 14 May 1864, p.80.
While the Dunedin Magistrates' Court figures reflect a rate above that of the national average in 1858; in 1861 and 1864, the difference is even greater. Presumably the planners of the Otago scheme would have been greatly perturbed if they knew that their settlement, created specifically to eradicate the ills prevalent in other colonial schemes, came to reflect a crime figure in excess of other colonizing areas in New Zealand.

When it became apparent that the two plainclothes policemen in the town could not cope with the increase in crime, a very efficient police force was quickly organised. Simultaneously a detachment of imperial troops from Auckland was requisitioned. As no troubles arose serious enough to require their intervention, they were sent home soon after their arrival. It was a precautionary measure, however, to have them in the town.

Though generally the immigrants and miners were regarded as highly respectable characters, it was recognised that an undesirable element was also coming into Dunedin. To meet this contingency, Mayor Richardson announced on 23 October 1862, that a number of Bills had been prepared to arm the administrators of the law with the power to equal the occasion. One such Bill was the Criminal Ordinance Amendment Act, which was an amendment of the 1860 Act, it rendered it a penal offence for any person to come into the Province who "at any time" had been found guilty of any "capital or transportable felony"

48 See Tables Three and Four
50 O.W., 29 November 1862, p.5.
by a court of "competent jurisdiction in the U.K. or in any British possession." Though it was swiftly passed by the Provincial Council, assented to by the Superintendent, it was rejected by the Governor as being beyond the powers of the Provincial Legislature.

While the gold rush brought inmates for the gaol, it also brought wealth and prosperity to Dunedin. Soon a much needed up-to-date prison was built to house the town's criminals.

51 Ot.Ord., Session XII, No. 60.
CHAPTER FOUR

UNEMPLOYMENT, LABOUR AGITATION AND THE POOR

The transformation of Dunedin in the early 1860's was not merely reflected in the variety of persons and religions, standards of behaviour and forms of amusements. The gold rushes in Central Otago allowed for the first major commercial flush of any significance to occur in Dunedin. The presence of a large floating population gave Dunedin a superficial air of prosperity,\(^1\) and this served to cover up many commercial and labour problems which existed.

Not all the newcomers to Dunedin and Otago were miners. Many were shrewd and capable businessmen from Victoria who sought to turn events to their own ends. The crowds that moved through Dunedin also had a decided influence in increasing the business in the town. They served to promote confidence and stimulate the formation of new business concerns.\(^2\)

A rapid expansion of small businesses occurred in Dunedin after May, 1861. These were generally owner operated, the proprietor attempting to make a living amidst tough competition.\(^3\) Frequently the competition and the variability of the Dunedin market were so difficult to contend with, that many of these small firms went bankrupt, falling fairly fast in 1864.\(^4\)

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2. O.W., 11 January 1862, p.5.
Associated with the growth of small businesses was the formation of a number of companies which have survived the difficult times and are now major New Zealand companies. 5

Inflation followed the discovery of gold in 1861. Prices of produce, cartage, land, accommodation and property rose as did the workman's wage. 6 As labour was scarce immediately after the discoveries at Tuapeka and Dunstan, wage increases had to be made to encourage labourers to stay in the town. In July 1861, the reluctant Dunedin Town Board raised the wages of day labourers "as a temporary measure in the present excitement". 7 As food and accommodation rates were rising, these increases in wages were frequently necessary to meet the increasing prices.

In spite of newspaper reports that business was dull in the first few months of the gold rushes, 8 this was merely a temporary state of affairs. The increased demand for commodities of all sorts made it inevitable that the merchants should profit by the flood of immigrants coming into Dunedin. Into the merchants' tills "flowed the money realized by the miners". 9

Business prosperity did fluctuate in the succeeding years. The winter months generally saw a fall in prosperity. When snow covered much of Central Otago many miners moved off the fields, some going to Dunedin and some home to Australia. The introduction of money into

5 For example, Wright Stevenson and Company, W. Gregg and Company, A. & T. Burt, Lanes Ltd.
6 A.H. Reed, Annals of Early Dunedin, p.29.
8 "Business may be reported to be rather dull, although some articles are in considerable demand." O.W. 15 February 1862, p.5.
9 M. Rennie, Thesis, pp. 81-82.
circulation was thereby temporarily halted and with unemployment in the town, the merchants experienced diminished trading. On the news of a new find, and in the summer and spring seasons, trade was generally improved.

Overtrading became a serious problem in 1864. As many of the 'cautious Old Identities' quietly withdrew from business, eager Victorians took over. Though they initially made a great deal of money, by 1864 there were too many in the trade. It appeared that in 1864 everyone in Dunedin was a storekeeper or owned a gin palace. Overstocking had taken place in many businesses and the problem was exacerbated by the presence of speculators and illegitimate traders. There was a glut of goods on the market and as unemployment increased, and the purchasing power of the community diminished, many merchants were forced into bankruptcy. Though generally the January-February season was the best of the year, in 1864 things were verging into a general financial crisis. By July there were upwards of 100 shops to let in Dunedin. Even in the Octagon several of the shops were closed and others were on the verge of closing.

The economic variables; Labour and employment opportunity, seem to have been at odds throughout most of the 1860-1864 period. Before the discovery of gold, Dunedin was plagued by periodic labour shortages.

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11 Rev. T. Burns, op.cit, Chapter 1.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Sat. Review, 16 July 1864, p.149.
which held up public works and the erection of buildings. With Read's discoveries in May 1861, this became more pervasive. Thereafter, "labour there were plenty but employment there was very little."17

Unemployment became a serious social problem in the town. When a new goldfield was found though there was an initial mass exodus of labourers from the town, temporarily relieving the employment shortage, it was not long till unsuccessful miners drifted back and sought other ways of making a living. The employment situation was vitally tied up with the viability of the goldmines. When they were producing well the employment problems were but slight, whereas when returns began to diminish as in 1864, the problems in Dunedin assumed critical proportions. Many miners coming to Dunedin wanted to save up before moving on to the fields and hence there was always a number of miners in the town looking for employment.

The plight of the unemployment came to the public's notice on 28 June, 1861, when a petition with 22 signatures was presented to the Provincial Government. The signatories stated that they had been induced to emigrate from the mother country at the instigation of Provincial representatives, on faith of statements as to the demand for labour in the province and of assurances as to the certainty of procuring permanent employment at fair wages, and being able to purchase land in quantities of 10 acres and upwards at the rate of 10 shillings an acre. Neither of these promises had been upheld and the petitioners

"able and willing to work", called on the government to expend more in public works and to provide more land for purchasing.18

In October of the same year, another petition, this time with 1,010 signatures, was forwarded to the Provincial Council on the behalf of the unemployed workmen of Dunedin. It pleaded for the initiation of a public works scheme to help alleviate the conditions of the jobless digger.19 They urged the Otago representatives to bestir themselves to seize the golden opportunity now afforded for the development of the natural resources of Otago, by vigorously setting afloat public works, and by employing all hands able and willing to work.20

In 1862 and 1863 as unsuccessful miners and many of the 'Old Identity' who had by this time tried their hands at the mines, returned to the town, unemployment continued to be a problem. In the winter of 1863, the miners, unlike the previous winter, did not flock back to Australia, but instead chose to remain.21

At the end of 1862 temporary employment was offered to the unemployed at the Bell Hill cutting. The Provincial Government gave men employed there five shillings per eight-hour day, with 15 minutes' smoko. They worked six days a week, and though their wage was hardly enough for food and accommodation, there were many willing to take it on. The use of

19 Petition for Unemployed Workmen. V. and P., Session XIII, Appendix, i, p. i
20 Ibid.
these men did help reduce a serious social problem, but as it proved to be uneconomic for the contractors, and unreliable and difficult to organise, the unemployed soon were replaced by contract labourers.

By 1864 the unemployment problem had reached alarming proportions. Many were returning to Dunedin who had found little reward at the goldfields. The streets in Dunedin were frequently just as harsh, causing some to lead a lonely, poverty-stricken existence "crouching under verandas for shelter from the rain". By the middle of the year, as has been seen, trade was greatly depressed. Though some Victorians returned home, many had not the resources to get them there. Wages were low, rents and provisions dear and the Saturday Review issued a warning to its European readers that "labourers, artisans and mechanics would not improve their circumstances by emigrating to Otago." 

In 1864 J.G.S. Grant emerged as the charismatic leader of the unemployed, presiding over many of the unemployment meetings and ensuring that the resolutions passed therein were widely publicised and presented to the authorities.

A number of meetings of the unemployed were convened in Dunedin mid-1864. On May 30th, a meeting of 2,000 called for the dismissal of two-thirds of the present official staff in the province, a reduction in the salaries of the remaining third, and the opening of public works to employ the idle and starving men in Otago. The dismissal of the secretary

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22 When news of a gold discovery reached Dunedin the unemployed workers on the hill up and left, leaving the site without labour and causing great inconvenience.

23 O.D.T., 5 January 1864, p.5.

24 Upwards of 500 miners sent a petition to the Victorian government "praying for them to send for them as they had no means to pay their own passage."

25 Sat. Review, 14 March 1864, p.78.
of the goldfields and his "incompetent nominee wardens" was also sought. On this occasion the Superintendent replied that nothing could be done at the present time.

A meeting of a similar size was held on June 6th at the Octagon. Those assembled petitioned the government to discharge the whole staff of its officials, "a staff confessedly the most cumbrous and inefficient and expensive in the colonies." The money saved from staff reductions, it was advised, should be turned over at once towards the opening up of public works to employ the many thousands of idle and starving men in the province. The meeting then convened to the Provincial Chambers, where after some delay, the Superintendent decided to meet the group. He proposed to put £10,000 on the estimate for public works at once, and to put forward the rest of the resolutions to the House. The Provincial Council the following evening rejected the demands put to them, and they sent them back stating that they were not formulated by the working men of the area.

Incensed by the Council's rejection of their resolutions, another monster meeting was assembled. The purpose of this was:

to bring this business, this agitation - this social fermentation to a decisive crisis and to ratify the resolutions of the sixth.

26 Sat. Review, 18 June 1864, p.117.
28 Sat. Review, 18 June 1864, p.117.
29 Ibid.
30 Sat. Review, 11 June 1864, p.110. The meeting declared that the Council was guilty of gross disrespect to the working men, in solemnity declaring that the vast assembly that forwarded the resolutions of the 6th instance, was not an assembly of working men.
The meeting then moved to the Council Chamber where Grant handed over a memorial. He was thereafter forcibly removed from the Chambers and put into custody, but was dismissed soon afterwards on giving an apology.

The press was unsympathetic to Grant and the unemployed. Indeed, Grant stated "the press glorified our downfall." The Otago Witness published a biting attack against Grant, whom they saw as a frothy demagogue who "under the guise of advocating them [unemployed] interests seeks only to advance his own." They criticised his methods of representation stating that though it is a "perfectly constitutional and proper proceeding to memorialize the government or legislature" to dictate to and endeavour to intimidate the Council was quite different and unaccept-able. The Otago Witness thought it ludicrous that public officials should be laid off, though it professedly was sympathetic to the conditions of the labouring classes.

August was another highpoint in the history of simmering discontent which characterized the years 1863 and 1864. Almost all the labourers employed throughout Otago in the formation of roads and the construction of culverts, fences, bridges and public works had been discharged.

It was recognized by this time, that if the government was going to stem the emigration of labourers from the province, and to provide employment, the creation of public works was the sole solution. But

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31 Sat. Review, 18 June 1864, p.117.
32 O.W., 11 June 1864, p.13.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
instead of employing more labourers, the government was laying them off. In June there was purported to have been 2,000 unemployed, \(^{36}\) and in August, 1,000. \(^{37}\)

At the Royal George Hotel on the eight and ninth of August, meetings were held, at which those present declared unanimously that there was no work to be had in Otago. \(^{38}\) A committee was formed to make preparations for a monster meeting, the aim of which was to devise measures for the welfare "present and future of the working class". \(^{39}\)

On the fifteenth, the Working Men's committee organized a meeting in the Octagon at which some 1,972 persons were present. Grant addressed the meeting reiterating that there were 1,000 unemployed in the town, "men who were not loafers but were willing to work" and who would not "pick up the crumbs off the rich man's table." \(^{40}\) A resolution was ratified by those assembled declaring that the suffering of the working class was very great and were "daily becoming greater and unsupported." \(^{41}\)

The Provincial Council endeavoured to meet the demands put to them. They provided work for 30 men on Bell Hill and for 150 on the roads at Saddle Hill, Waikouati and Port Chalmers. \(^{42}\) Though work was thereby only provided for one fifth of the unemployed, it was a start in the right direction. So too, did it prove that the public agitation undertaken by Grant and the unemployed, had not been completely in vain. The

\(^{36}\) Sat. Review, 15 June, 1864, p.117.


\(^{38}\) This was in rejoinder to newspaper statements stating that there was work to be had in the province.

\(^{39}\) Sat. Review, 13 August 1864, p.182.

\(^{40}\) Sat. Review, 20 August 1864, p.189.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

\(^{42}\) Ibid
authorities had accepted that a real problem existed and they had taken some measures to rectify it.

The pressure on the council to provide additional public work schemes was maintained by the Saturday Review. They made a number of suggestions as to where the money to finance this could come from. It suggested that the council could ask the general government for a loan, and that the local government could resume reclamation of the harbour.

By October the agitation seems to have quietened down. The paper seemed to be contented with the money which the council was prepared to spend on public works. Though it was not great, it was under the circumstances larger than we had any reasonable hope of realising.

Salaries were being reduced by council and departments were being amalgamated.

The issue of unemployment was not the only labour problem in evidence in Dunedin in these years. Strikes occurred in 1863 and 1864, seeking increased pay and the perpetuation of the eight-hours system of labour. The struggle between capital and labour was now underway.

In the advocacy in Scotland of the Otago scheme, Burns had professed a desire for an eight-hour day for labourers, but no clause had been inserted in the terms of purchase defining the hours of work.

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44 Sat. Review, 24 September 1864, p.231.  
47 A.H. McLintock, op.cit, p.250.
eight-hour movement had always been of interest to Burns. Ever mindful of the overtaxed and unemployed labourers in Scotland, he determined that men in the new land should not be a beast of burden. On arrival in New Zealand he adhered to this principle, as did W.H. Valpy, the largest private employer in the early days of settlement. However, the New Zealand Company worked their labourers for 10 hours a day, and this was looked on as a direct violation of the promises made to the settlers in Scotland. Samuel Shaw petitioned Fox on his visit to Dunedin January 1849, to reduce the hours of labour, so that labourers would be able to secure the necessary leisure for building their own homes. Fox was hostile to such "grumblings" and he urged the men to be more self-reliant. The labourers convened a meeting following Fox's visit and resolved that "the eight-hour system should constitute a day's labour." The company was soon afterwards compelled to abandon their 10-hour system and resort to eight hours.

The eight-hour system was thereafter adopted in the time of the gold rushes, with a temporary threat to its existence being checked in the 1850's. On the discovery of gold, several contractors under the plea of certain works being bound to be finished within a certain period, "lured some of the unwary to work an additional hour for the sake of an extra shilling." On 27 May 1863, the men employed in reducing the level of George Street turned out on strike, calling for a reduction in the hours of work, without a corresponding reduction in wages. The Masters were

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48 T.M. Hocken, op.cit, p.108.
49 A.H. McIntock, op.cit, p.250.
50 Sat. Review, 27 February 1864, p.6.
willing to reduce the hours of work but insisted that a reduction in their wages took place correspondingly. As more labourers were employed in lieu of those on strike, the strikers were not successful in forcing their demands on the contractors. 51

Dunedin bricklayers were the next to go on strike. In March 1864 they stopped work in demand for an increase in their rate of pay. Though they were offered 15 shillings per eight-hour day, the bricklayers said they would not work for under 17. 52 They held out for 17 on the premise that together they made up an important class of men, with skills which were vitally needed by the town. They also stated that the cost of living was dearer in Dunedin than in any other town in the colony. 53

Seamen struck out for increased wages in April 1864. 54

Strikes were regarded by the Dunedin papers, as being injurious not only to the labourers' interest but also to whom they were connected with. Both the Dunedin Leader and Daily Telegraph reacted unsympathetically. Strikes were a "vicious practice" in their eyes, whereby "united Labourers sought by combination to exact from the employers terms and concessions which as individuals they would not have dreamed of asking." 55 It was not so much that the newspapers were against the eight-hour movement and increased pay, rather they were against the means whereby the labourers sought to attain these ends.

52 This wage offered to the bricklayers was seen as being most generous by the O.D.T.
53 D. Teleg., 1 April 1864, p.1.
54 Dn. Leader, 9 April 1864, p.13.
55 D. Teleg., 30 May 1863, p.2.
The issue of the eight-hour system of labour was revived in April 1864, when a number of meetings were called to promote this movement. On the twelfth, a meeting passed a resolution; "that in the unanimous opinion of the Dunedin working men, the eight-hour system should be perpetuated as the law of the province." This was reiterated at a meeting on the sixteenth, at which it was revealed that some men in Dunedin were working 10 and 11 hours a day. The mass unemployment meeting of 15 August 1864, also ratified the eight-hour movement.

An early closing movement was also active in Dunedin. Meetings were held in April, 1864, under the direction of the Saturday Review, where all the city drapers agreed to close every day, except Saturday, at six p.m. However, as one establishment on the corner of Rattray Street refused to shut at six, slowly other firms gave way on their promises. The movement did gain some ground in June when grocers joined the early closing movement, and jewellers agreed to close at seven, except on Saturday. It was accepted that as the labourers were entitled to spend two-thirds of their day at leisure, so too was the shopworker not merely a beast of burden.

As the employment situation became more difficult in Dunedin, and prices continued to increase for food and accommodation, the circumstances of the poor and destitute were further aggravated.

56 Sat. Review, 16 April 1864, p.47.  
57 Sat. Review, 23 April 1864, p.55.  
58 Sat. Review, 20 August 1864, p.189.  
59 Sat. Review, 16 April 1864, p.47.  
60 Sat. Review, 23 April 1864, p.58.  
61 O.W. 11 June 1864, p.5.  
62 O.W. 18 June 1864, p.16.
The problem of the poor was many-sided. There were the miners who for one reason or another were seeking employment in Dunedin and who were frequently without capital to see them through lean times. There were the wives and families of the miners who had been left behind while the men went to seek the family fortunes. Sometimes the men did not return and their families were left destitute. And there was also the small trader and businessmen whose businesses had collapsed and were now without a means of sustenance. Females also found it difficult to procure employment, especially in 1862-1863, at the height of the Assisted Female Immigration scheme.

There seems to have been a certain reluctance on behalf of some Dunedin residents to believe that there was a poor and destitute element in their city. But their presence was a well-proven fact, and one which it was difficult to hide from. As Grant pointed out, Otago portrayed a most unusual mixture of wealth and destitution. Though the gold rushes had increased the wealth of the province so too had it brought poverty and debt not only to private people but also to the local government.

A number of measures were taken to ameliorate the conditions of the poor. The _Destitute Persons' Relief Ordinance_, passed through the Provincial Legislature in 1862, was a measure designed to support destitute families as well as illegitimate children.

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64 _Ot. Ord._, Session XVI, No. 104.
A benevolent society was formed in May 1862, for the purpose of relieving the distress of the poorer inhabitants of the town. The progress of getting their schemes off the ground was characteristically slow. An interim committee was formed in 1862, and £550 collected, and a site promised by the government. The project languished for a few months and was revived again in February 1863, when tenders were called for the erection of the Benevolent Asylum. Progress was held back, this time by lack of finance, and by the end of the period though plans were drawn up the Asylum was still in the planning stages. While awaiting the erection of the Asylum, to house the destitute and the poor, the society did care for a number of cases of destitution. Between October 1862 and February 1863, the society received on average thirty-five cases weekly. By February 1864, they were affording weekly relief to 40 cases, and the demands on their assistance was continually increasing.

A widows' and orphans' committee was active in helping those widows and orphans in the town who were in difficult conditions. The Y.M.C.A. provided aid for unemployed young men. Mrs O'Raffrey opened a school for those who could not afford to pay any school fees, however small. A considerable proportion of the children attending this school belonged to mining families whose fathers were away at the diggings.

There were suggestions made that a soup kitchen be organised in the building which was erected for the exhibition. This was also seen as a possible source of accommodation for those who otherwise were forced to shelter under a veranda or in doorways.

65 A.H. Reed, op.cit. p.42.
66 Ibid, p.60.
69 *Sat. Review*, 18 June 1864, p.118.
There was a poor box in the town, situated at the police court. The town's attention was drawn to this in January 1864, when it was urged that the populace should make more use of it.\(^{70}\)

While slowly the needs of the poor were being met by philanthropic organizations and by government aid, some of the poor were loathe to accept charity. One gentleman was extremely righteous and indignant lest his fellow men accept charity.

Charity tends to destroy the independent spirit of our poor the moment you ask them to accept charity.\(^{71}\)

In spite of such pronouncements it was unreal to adopt such a high moral tone when there existed many individuals who were anxious to receive what assistance they were offered. Though it may have offended some poor people's dignity, and injured the pride of the city fathers in admitting that there was a poor element in their city, the reality of the situation called for action and remedies.

\(^{70}\) D. Teleg., 11 January 1864, p.5.

\(^{71}\) D. Teleg., 2 June 1863, p.3.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

A portrait painted of Dunedin in December 1864, would have presented an image vastly dissimilar from that of the same town at the beginning of the decade. No matter what aspect of Otago life is studied the influence of gold is all pervading after May 1961. For Dunedin, the gold rushes in Central Otago, marked not only the coming in of new elements, but also the creation of a new outlook.

In December 1864, Dunedin was but months away from becoming a city, and was quickly assuming the role of commercial capital of the nation. Dunedin was now no longer the quiet, sober township of the pre-gold rush era. The nature of its way of life had changed, in a number of overt ways. Many of the pious Presbyterian characteristics, which characterized the early years of settlement, had been sublimated with the onrush of a dramatically increasing population, and as a result of a new vitality and sense of purpose which pervaded the town. The old settlers had been faced with a new order of life, and a threat to their status quo and the balance between labour and capital.

By 1864 Dunedin had assumed a social character in some ways diametrically opposed to the ideals of her founding fathers. It was now a town pulsating with the forces of commercialism, gaiety and freedom. No longer were the old settlers constrained by the influence of the Free Church hierarchy, and the new townspeople did not regard that church's influence with as much awe as had the old settlers.
It was a town of great complexity now. Poverty and destitution, from which the colonists had been escaping, existed side by side with wealth and prosperity. Though both these elements had been in evidence in the town before 1860 and the gold rushes, with the latter, the degree of differentiation had become more marked. It was a carefree town, particularly when the fields were at the height of their prosperity, and the miners came to town and spent their gold tailings freely in the theatres, public houses and gambling parlours. Conversely there was a sober and serious quality. The intensity with which the labourers had sought to promote the eight-hour movement and searched for employment was evidence of the pragmatic and basic concerns of the people. Though some made and lost their fortunes with remarkable speed and alacrity, so too were there those who never struck it rich and to whom these years were as difficult as any.

The gold discoverers were a threat not only to Presbyterianism but also to Christianity. Though in 1860 Presbyterianism was the dominant faith, by the end of 1864 the proportion of the population which belonged to that church was greatly decreased. It was still the major church but it no longer exercised control over the vast majority of the population. The social development of the gold rush era had challenged the moral basis of town life. Theatres, gambling, prostitutes, intemperance, crime: were all features of life which were seen to be alien to the moral and religious precepts of a section of the population. Though Presbyterianism waned in these years, there still appeared to be a strong concern amongst "respectable citizens" to maintain a moral and christian basis of life.
Dunedin was now a town made up of many elements. It was not the unified town, wherein a strong sense of concern for the town's well-being was a predominant ethic. Apathy in politics and social causes is purported to have been rampant. The "get rich" syndrome appears to have created a town in which the individual was more concerned for his or her own lot, than was apparent in earlier days. It was a town much bigger than in the pre-gold rush era and the emergence of individualism is, therefore, in some degrees quite characteristic of such a transition.

The developments which occurred in Dunedin in these years; commercial, geographic, political and social, were all the product of an accelerated process of erosion, in the last remaining tenets of the class settlement principles. It was inevitable that the town's character would progress further away from Free Church ideals and assume the images of other towns in the nation. Already by 1860 only a few characteristics remained of the legacy of the Free Church settlement, predominantly in the Presbyterians' dominance on religion which spread out to cover other aspects of life, and in the quiet unified nature of the town.

Mayor Richardson's ascendency to the position of Superintendent, at the end of 1860, marked the demise of the Free Church's control of politics. Maybe this was an omen of what was to follow. With the discovery of payable gold by Read May 1861, the few remaining qualities in the social life of the town reminiscent of the class settlement ideals, were challenged, altered and thereafter toppled. Dunedin was now a town quite different from that as was envisaged by her founding fathers. Though religion was still a vital concern, the influence of
the Presbyterian church was dramatically decreased. The unemployed and poor constituted a noticeable minority in the town. The vitality and gaiety now characteristic of the town compromised the ideals of the founding fathers. Immorality and crime was present to a degree which would have horrified those who planned the settlement.

However, all was not yet lost of the past. The legacy of the old era was perpetuated in the minds of those settlers who had lived in the pre-gold rush town. Not till the death of these, and possibly their children, would the associations with the class settlement principles become even more remote. Even then, the potent force of historical Legacy, and Myth, would serve to remind Dunedin citizens for time immemorial, of the distinctive and illustrious beginnings of their city.
Appendix One:

Total Immigration and Emigration to and from Dunedin 1860-1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Immigration</th>
<th>Emigration</th>
<th>Immigration over Emigration</th>
<th>Emigration over Immigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>3,787</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>3,068</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>22,434</td>
<td>6,422</td>
<td>16,011</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>30,061</td>
<td>15,176</td>
<td>14,875</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>33,098</td>
<td>12,053</td>
<td>21,045</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>11,897</td>
<td>16,972</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5,085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics of New Zealand 1860-1864
### Appendix Two:

**POPULATION STATISTICS**

Otago Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>3,874</td>
<td>3,070</td>
<td>6,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>5,185</td>
<td>3,825</td>
<td>9,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>7,449</td>
<td>5,242</td>
<td>12,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861*</td>
<td>24,161</td>
<td>6,002</td>
<td>30,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>35,419</td>
<td>10,169</td>
<td>45,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>51,423</td>
<td>15,997</td>
<td>67,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>32,692</td>
<td>16,327</td>
<td>49,019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dunedin Population **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>1,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861***</td>
<td>4,169</td>
<td>2,354</td>
<td>6,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>8,927</td>
<td>6,863</td>
<td>15,790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This includes 3,000 goldminers believed to have been in different gullies and on the roads when the census was taken.

** These are the figures for Dunedin township. Note that some of the tables in the statistics use Dunedin electoral district figures which differ from those stated above.

*** These include Dunedin port figures.

Source: Statistics of New Zealand 1858-1864.
Appendix Three:

Table Showing the Religious Denominations of the Otago Population (of European descent), as ascertained by census taken in December 1858, 1861, 1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1864</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>7,119</td>
<td>14,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Scotland/Free Church of Scotland</td>
<td>4,565</td>
<td>10,596</td>
<td>20,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Presbyterians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>6,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Methodists</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational Independents</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Methodists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Church</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of Friends</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants (no particular denomination specified)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>2,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otherwise described or not described</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3,251</td>
<td>1,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics of New Zealand 1858, 1861, 1864.
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