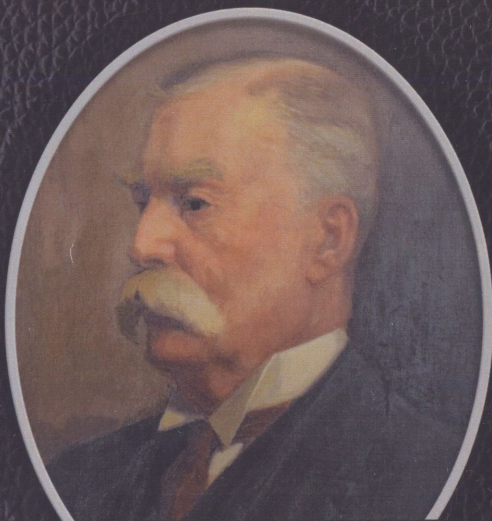


# LUST FOR LAND



## James Henry Coleman

His Life • His Fortune • His Descendants

A. J. Coleman

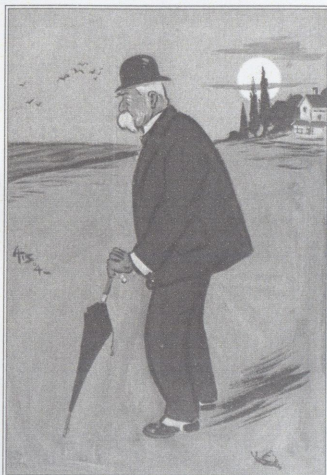
*“A book of great interest because it records and brings to the fore an ethos and a way of life which had great significance in the development of our country, both in Hawke’s Bay and elsewhere.”*

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# LUST FOR LAND

*Reviewed by Sir  
Rodney Gallen.*

“Lust for Land” is an account of the life of James Henry Coleman, his material success as an early colonist in Hawke’s Bay, and how his successors fared.



The book commences with the English origins of the Coleman family. This does more than establish a beginning: it places an emphasis on the Englishness of the values of J H Coleman and the significance of what he sought to achieve; and of this quality in the lives of his descendants. Even as late as the Second World War our horizon was England, not the United States, and we saw things in English terms. Without that understanding the motivations, decisions and actions of settlers such as Coleman cannot be understood.

As the title of the book suggests there is a considerable emphasis on the acquisition of land by Coleman and other settlers like him, and on the transactions by which it was purchased or obtained from the original Maori owners. The author does not gloss over the unpleasant aspects of such purchases, but does allow the reader to understand the perspective of the settlers and the motivations behind the negotiations which took place.

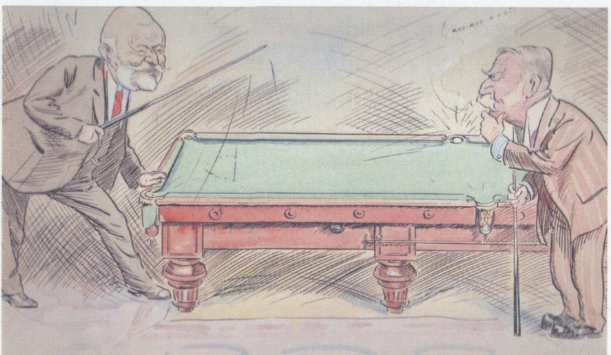
Coleman came to New Zealand with little in the way of assets, but his connections, deriving originally from his association with Archdeacon Samuel

Williams, enabled him to seek and take advantage of opportunities which laid the foundation of great wealth.

The settlers attempted with considerable success to import an English lifestyle to this country. The successful colonists, with their houses, staffs and gardens, as well as their clubs and general lifestyle, did their best to make this country the Britain of the South. The book is valuable in this respect, too, because it records a lifestyle that has now utterly gone.

Many of the descendants of those who figure in this book attended English universities to complete their education. The concept of Empire was still taken for granted, with both its opportunities and its responsibilities, and young men, and also young women, served without question in wars which from this distant perspective seem less and less relevant to this country. The tragic loss of lives from whom much could have been expected is emphasised in this book in the often moving account of later generations.

I found this book both readable and of great interest because it records and brings to the fore an ethos and a way of life which had great significance in the development of our country, both in Hawke's Bay and elsewhere.





The book is also of interest to the general reader as it sets out the changes and developments in New Zealand society over a period of one hundred years in a way which illustrates how we have come to where we are now. I like the fact that the book is explanatory rather than judgmental. Whether we agree with what was done or not, the accounts here help to show what led to our own very different way of life. We can draw our own conclusions from material with which we may not have been familiar.

## LUST FOR LAND

This is a fascinating look into the lives of a particular people who normally shun the limelight - the established rich. Hawke's Bay can be seen as something close to a wildlife park, once devoted to this fabled species ... . Adrian Coleman peoples his narrative with splendid specimens of the type ... .

There can be no better person to tell this story than Adrian Coleman, a writer who tells his own history of his own family with devoted interest, and in doing so tells the rest of us so much about our own history.

Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, M.N.Z.M.  
Director, Hawke's Bay Museum & Art Gallery

# LUST FOR LAND

The title *Lust for Land* conjures up images of rapacious colonists who would stop at nothing to achieve their own objectives. This was a period of history when demand for land far outstripped supply. Early colonists had staked their all to acquire a foothold in New Zealand. There was no going back and they often operated with the energy of despair.

The careers of government land commissioners like Donald McLean and George Sisson Cooper depended on their ability to secure lands from the Maori chiefs who had authority over their tribes and a responsibility to act in their best interests. After the major Waipukurau and Ahuriri purchases of 1851 the commissioners experienced an increasing resistance to land sales as chiefs compared sale prices with the revenue from leasehold arrangements.

This was the climate which confronted James Coleman when he arrived in Hawke's Bay in 1859 and went to work as manager on the Te Aute Estate of the Reverend Samuel Williams. He was an enterprising man and a capable one and this history charts his advancement to a position of wealth and influence.

Adrian Coleman, the author of this work, is a direct descendant of James Coleman. With his legal background he is well placed to interpret the political climate of the time with its endless succession of laws which often leave the reader wondering whether they were designed to protect the Maori or to dispossess him. The author is not judgemental, and his work provides a colonial counterbalance to the raft of research from a Maori perspective.

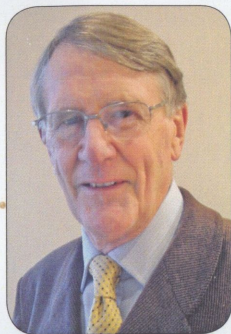
**Patrick Parsons,**

Poraiti, Napier

*Hawke's Bay's senior historian.*

## From the Author

To the measured assessment of Sir Rodney, a retired High Court Judge with a deep interest in Maoritanga, there should be added a word about the life within this book. It is not only a scholarly work: it brims with excitement, colour and vigour.



James's passage to New Zealand; the dramatic passage of the huge Pakowhai block from Maori to European ownership, and the subsequent Royal Commission; a future son-in-law's fighting off the cannibals of Rwanda; a daughter's being courted by impostors claiming to be titled Europeans; for those with an interest in the workings of the law, the Rule against Perpetuities; love and heartbreak; the tragedy of loss in two world wars; the glittering social functions which wealth made possible... *This is a GOOD READ.* As another reviewer has written, '... [A] ripping yarn, with elements of the *Boy's Own Paper* and shades of Evelyn Waugh'.

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