

MEDIA RELEASE

Southland 150

1st July 2011 - ongoing

Ross Photographer - Dee Street, Looking North 1860's



The year 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of Southland as a separate province. To celebrate this milestone the Southland Museum & Art Gallery have created Southland 150, an exhibition of some of the earliest photographs of the region in existence.

In 1861 when Southland first separated from Otago, global advances in photographic technology had made the process cheaper, faster and of higher quality. For many people this also meant that photography was for the first time, accessible even in the remote reaches of Southland.

Early pioneer photographers based in southern New Zealand (such as Christopher C. Ross and Hart & Campbell) eagerly embraced the new technology and all its possibilities. Although photographers were frequently commissioned for studio portraits and family photographs, many travelled widely to capture diverse subjects ranging from farming practices to architecture, cultural events to artistic images of virtually untamed southern landscapes.

This fortunate collaboration of history and photographic technology has left us with this stunning visual record of Southland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This photographic display is the first part in a series of exhibitions relating to Southland's history. In October 2011 we will be adding 150 objects relating to Southland in the late 19th century; and early in 2012 the exhibition will evolve to include portraits of 150 early Southland settlers and pioneers.

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