

THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN A NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOL:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

WAYNE LEONARD EDWARDS

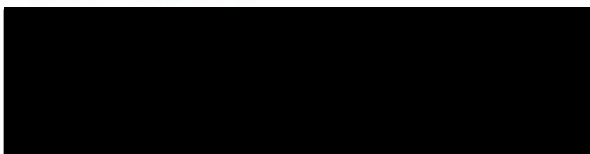
M.A.(Hons) (Auckland), M.Ed.Admin. (U.N.E.),
Dip.Ed. (Massey), Adv.Dip.Tchg. (N.Z.)

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of
the University of New England

March, 1986

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Wayne Leonard Edwards

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been presented without the aid of many people, to whom my appreciation is expressed. In particular, I wish to acknowledge:

- The members of the staff and Board of Governors at Manoa College, whose kindness, tolerance and willing assistance enabled me to share with them life in the college;
- Associate Professor A. Ross Thomas and Dr Patrick Duignan who stimulated and encouraged my research, and whose incisive advice and support were most important at each critical point of the study;
- Emeritus Professor W.G. Walker, who first encouraged me to undertake doctoral study and whose wisdom foreshadowed the belief that the field of anthropology held distinct possibilities for increasing our understanding of educational administration; Professor R.S. Adams, whose tolerance throughout the study and insight in beginning and focussing the work were important; and
- Mr "Jim Carr", Principal of Manoa College, who willingly became my key informant and the centre of the study. As with his colleagues, Jim is not mentioned by his real name due to my wish that these people and their school remain anonymous. However, for Jim Carr's unfailing patience, frankness, warmth and cooperation, my sincere thanks are recorded.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. To my daughters, Julie and Shelley, who have coped with all that is involved with a father "doing varsity work", my warm thanks are noted. There is no way in which nearly two decades of university study could have been completed without the limitless support

of my wife, Judith. This thesis, in particular, has become so much a part of her life, too. Judith's infinite patience, support, care of so many aspects of family life and faith that this work could be concluded have provided the real foundations of my study. My sincere thanks are offered, Judith. This ethnographic study having been reported, may the skills of the ethnographer now be applied, too, to the family world of a husband and father!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	vi
Glossary of Abbreviations	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	1
The Background to the Study	3
The Nature of the Study	6
Statement of the Research Problem	11
Justification of the Study	15
The Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	17
The Organization of the Thesis	19
Conclusion	21
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY	22
Introduction	22
The Concept of Culture	24
The Interpretive Paradigm	34
The Grounded Theory Approach	41
The Ethnographic Approach	45
Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	57
Introduction	57
Ethnographic Studies of Non-Educational Settings	59
Ethnographic Studies of Life in Schools	68
The Principalship: Literature from Outside New Zealand	75
The Principalship: Literature from New Zealand	101
Conclusion	123

	<u>Page No.</u>
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY: TECHNICALITIES OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH	124
Introduction	124
The Concept of Ethnography Revisited	125
Research Techniques	130
Technical Features	151
Conclusion	170
CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY: PRACTICALITIES OF THE RESEARCH PROCEDURE	171
Introduction	171
Selecting a Site for the Study	172
Data Gathering Techniques and the Under- taking of the Study	185
Ethical Issues Underlying the Study	198
Phases Involved in Undertaking the Study	203
A Note on the Processing of Data	208
Problems Occurring in the Field	210
Conclusion	213
CHAPTER 6: THE ETHNOGRAPHY 1: THE PERIOD OF EXPLORATION	214
Introduction	214
A Profile of Manoa College	218
The First Day	224
The First Month	235
A Profile of Jim Carr	257
Conclusion	263
CHAPTER 7: THE ETHNOGRAPHY 2: THE FIRST PERIOD OF INSPECTION	266
Introduction	266
"The Colin, Olive and Jim Level"	271
"The Second Most Important Gathering of People in the School"	280
"The Most Important Group of People in the Place"	286

	<u>Page No.</u>
"We Cater for All Who Come Here"	300
"A Very Fine Toothcomb"	307
An Arena of Miscellaneous Events	331
Conclusion	335
CHAPTER 8: THE ETHNOGRAPHY 3: THE SECOND PERIOD	
OF INSPECTION	339
Introduction	339
A Summary of the Arenas which Constitute Jim Carr's School World	343
A Synopsis of a Week in October in Jim Carr's School Life	349
An Interpretation of Jim Carr's Life in his School World	352
Conclusion	378
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION	379
Introduction	379
Toward a Cultural Theory of the Principalship	381
The Methodology of the Study Reconsidered	393
Suggestions for Further Research	396
Concluding Remarks	398
Appendix I Proposal for Educational Research Activity at Manoa College	399
Appendix II Facsimile of Fieldbook Entry Samples	403
Appendix III Informants Interviewed in November- December	411
Appendix IV Questions Used During Informant Interviews	412
Appendix V Facsimile Worksheets Used in Grouping and Labelling Business Items from Meetings of Carr, Black and Sumich.	413
Appendix VI Example of Categories Derived from Observations	417
Appendix VII Summary of Jim Carr's Activities on Five Days in October	418
Appendix VIII Facsimile Worksheets Used in Deriving Categories of Strategies	424
BIBLIOGRAPHY	427

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page No.</u>
TABLE 1: Summary of Phases in the Research Programme	207
TABLE 2: Summary of Observations in Each Arena During the Period of Exploration	253
TABLE 3: Summary of the Arenas which Constitute Jim Carr's School World	345

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

Note: A number of abbreviations are commonly used at Manoa College. These abbreviations are used throughout the thesis in the same way as they are used in general discussion in the college. The abbreviations and their meanings follow:

A-V	Audio-Visual
B & G	Buildings and Grounds (Sub-Committee)
B.Sc.(Hons)	Bachelor of Science (Honours)
DP	Deputy Principal
F & E	Finance and Equipment (Sub-Committee)
HOD	Head of Department
List A Teacher	Teacher in first three years of service
List B Teacher	Teacher confirmed as professionally competent after three years of service
P & A	Policy and Appointments (Sub-Committee)
PDC	Professional Development Consultation
PPTA	Post-Primary Teachers' Association
PR	Position of Responsibility: graded from PR1 (most junior) to PR4 (most senior)
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SM	Senior Mistress
SSBA	Secondary Schools' Boards' Association