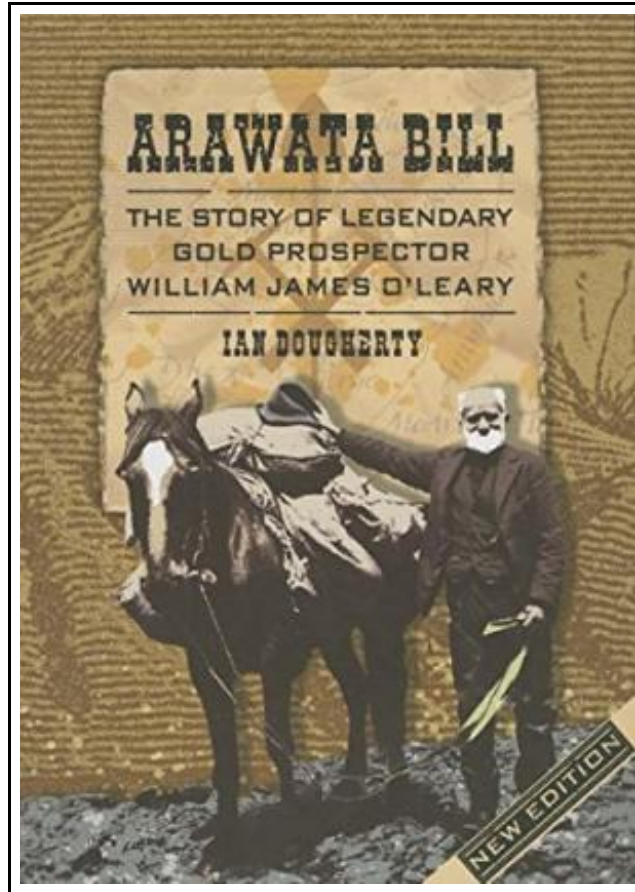


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ARAWATA BILL: THE STORY OF LEGENDARY GOLD PROSPECTOR WILLIAM JAMES O'LEARY (3RD NEW EDITION)



Exisle Publishing (New Zealand). Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Arawata Bill: The Story of Legendary Gold Prospector William James O'Leary (3rd New edition), Ian Dougherty, This is the story of a pioneering folk hero. It is a colourful tale of adventure, discovery and survival in the remotest areas of New Zealand's Southern Alps. William James O'Leary was a man of humble origins. His lifetime (1865-1947) spanned a period of New Zealand history when the country was searching for homegrown heroes in whose lives the young nation could discover clues to the question of its identity. The decades O'Leary spent in the unforgiving mountain country of North-West Otago and South Westland, prospecting for gold and other minerals and making new tracks in unexplored areas, was bound to be regarded with envy and admiration by townsfolk. The myth-making process was assisted when the nickname 'Arawata Bill' stuck, but it is the man's astonishing feats of endurance, tenacity and charming eccentricity which capture the imagination. Add in the mystery of a lost ruby mine, a seaboot full of gold sovereigns and the aura of secrecy surrounding the quest for precious metal, and you have the stuff of which legends are made. Generations of New Zealand schoolchildren are familiar with Denis Glover's poem Arawata Bill, yet the subject of that work was only loosely based on William O'Leary. The man himself, in his solitary and self-effacing way, was both smaller and greater than the legend. He emerged as one of those archetypal New Zealanders who helped to define a distinctive nationality. In this biography, Ian Dougherty has separated the man from the myth, with a warmly human portrait of an ordinary man who lived an extraordinary life.



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