

## Remote in Southern Seas: 19<sup>th</sup> Century books on New Zealand.

### Introduction

Prior to 1807, there was nothing published specifically on New Zealand. There were the various narratives of the three voyages of Cook, the publication of accounts and images from brief visits of voyagers passing by, such as that of Labillardiere<sup>1</sup> in 1793, and the inclusion of New Zealand in compilations of early voyages, such as by James Burney in 1803<sup>2</sup>. But then in 1805, John Savage visited and published his account in London in 1807. The lines in Bagnall's chronology<sup>3</sup> are thin through these early years, until about 1830, when the numbers start to increase. By 1840, Bagnall records some 50 odd entries, not just accounts by visitors or residents, but of New Zealand literature.

The trends in publications are not hard to discern. The first books are very much those of the interested, often fascinated, visitor, curious and with an eye to the possibilities of trade, Christian conversion, and a growing anthropological interest in the Māori race exemplified by William Ellis and his ethnological observations of Pacific people in 1829. The writers stay only for a few weeks, as with Savage, Nicholas and Cruise, passing through on their way elsewhere. We then get those who stay for a while, almost residents, the missionaries and associated settlers, many arriving, leaving to go back to New South Wales or England, coming back again. In this period, true records of life in New Zealand are starting to be made, and beyond those of the itinerant visitors and there seem to be a couple of pivotal books. One is that by Yate in 1835. Yate's book is the first from a true resident, and additionally, one of the few accounts (Wade is another) written by a missionary. As has been pointed out<sup>4</sup>, most missionary publications were Māori translations of mission tracts and parts of the bible, not accounts of travel and life in the nascent colony. In this regard, Yate, who lived in the Bay of Islands for 7 years, was the first to describe the missions in some detail.

The second is that of Henry Petre, later in 1841, widely read and cited, who spent some years in the developing colony and led the charge of publications on and for the New Zealand Company, moving the focus away from the Bay of Islands, to the new settlements in Port Nicholson, New Plymouth and Nelson. J. D. Lang in Australia, stirring up the settlers and administration, also brings in the New Zealand Company at about the same time, and was so favourable to the Company that the latter used Lang's works for its promotional activities. London publishers such as Smith, Elder & Co mined the vein of interest in immigration through the early 1840s. With the focus in the writing moving further south, the conflicts between the new administration and settler demands become paramount,

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<sup>1</sup> **Labillardiere, J.J.H.de**, Voyage in search of La Perouse. Performed by order of the Constituent assembly, during the years 1791, 1792, 1793, and 1794, ..... London; John Stockdale, Piccadilly. 1800. Bagnall 3044, Hocken 2, Williams 10. The first edition, in French, was published earlier in Paris in the same year. There were about 4 English editions in 1800. Labillardiere was naturalist on the voyage led by d'Entrecasteaux and Kermadec, in an unsuccessful quest to find the lost expedition of La Perouse. They visited the north of the North Island, 10-11 March 1793.

<sup>2</sup> **Burney, James**, A chronological history of the discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean. Luke Hansard, London, 1803. Bagnall 779, Hocken 30.

<sup>3</sup> **Bagnall, A.G.**, New Zealand National Bibliography to the year 1960. Government Printer, Wellington, 1980. pp. 1171-1194.

<sup>4</sup> **Wevers, L.**, Country of Writers. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2002.

particularly with the Auckland settlers such as Charles Terry, Samuel Martin and John Logan Campbell. Similarly in Wellington, the conflicts between the Hobson administration and the New Zealand Company over land purchases and self-government come to dominate. Almost always the books are obsessed with land, the legalities of purchase and the inevitable litigation, often spreading over years and across the globe. Māori engagement slowly starts to move to a crisis with the dawning of what all this means for the Tangata whenua, the realisation of the losses, and growing resistance. This only gets a European description.

From 1840, the book numbers are now on a sharp increase, and the nature of them and their authors is changing. In 1840 is the Treaty, visitors come and stay longer, get involved in the nascent government, taking up administrative posts, moving south, most involved in some way with the New Zealand Company. The country is no longer run by missionaries, but by traders, businessmen, settlers and the humbler classes, colonial administrators, and then the military. They are not only here to observe and record, but also to get involved, to promote and encourage, and the writing is now much more specifically addressing prospective immigrants in Britain, sending home new information. In the back of Petre's 1841 book there are advertisements for books on New Zealand from the prominent London publisher Smith, Elder & Co:

*Maps of New Zealand, Lambton harbour in Port Nicholson, and a panorama of new Plymouth*

*Lang's letters to Lord Durham on colonisation*

*Observations on the climate of New Zealand*

*Edward Campbell's present state, resources and prospects of New Zealand*

*Jameson's New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales*

*Busby's guide to wine growing in Australia and New Zealand*

*Information on the settlement of New Plymouth from the NZ Company*

*Dieffenbach's New Zealand and its Native Population*

*A guide for building cottages for emigrants and the humbler classes.*

These books give information, provide guidance, sometimes to the extent of lists of things to bring and how to finance the emigration, buy land, and what to expect. There is a proliferation of handbooks and guides, and writing on the principles of colonisation, on economics and human concerns, led by Wakefield, and in England backed by the thinking and writing of philosophers, economists and politicians such as John Stuart Mill. Between 1841 and 1845 there were some 15 substantial books published in London with a strong emphasis on New Zealand immigration. This continued through to 1850 with the works of Charles Hursthouse, Jerningham Wakefield's *Handbook* in 1848 and his father's *Art of Colonisation* a year later.

Published women writers are rare in this growing list, but they have provided some of the liveliest and most incisive of later accounts, including Charlotte Godley, Lady Martin, and Lady Barker. The sketches and paintings - everyone seemed to draw - had their women exponents too, such as Emma Wickstead in New Plymouth and Caroline Abraham in Auckland. The women settlers are there, but mostly just glimpsed, heroines in the background.

From the 1850s onwards, the books become dominated by international travellers, businessmen and residents concerned with governing a new nation, and sufficient time has passed for some to be in the form of reflections and histories of the colony.

The writers of many 19<sup>th</sup> century accounts and narratives were members of a league of travellers whose observations were informed by a wide experience of extra-European places, societies and cultures. More than that, they were part of international networks that formed the advance guard for subsequent imperial objectives and colonisation, the tripartite networks of the missionary societies, the traders, and the military and naval forces. As Garnet Wolseley (later Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley) wrote in his account of the British-French expedition to China in 1860, *'In my opinion, a fair field for missionary work in China can only be obtained by a general extension of our commercial relations throughout the length and breadth of the empire.'*<sup>5</sup> In New Zealand, it was the missionaries who were at the vanguard, and the commercial and Governmental developments that followed were often at odds with the mission's original objectives. The networks appear when the lives and journeys are considered. Few sailed from England to New Zealand and back exclusively in these early days, but would often sail with traders (Savage sailing on a whaler) or, as traders or supercargoes on military vessels on the routes from England to India or China.

Occasionally comparisons might appear, but most accounts of New Zealand deal specifically with local observations. However, the interpretations and perspectives are more likely to be informed by a wider experience, and international knowledge. Across the span of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, visitors to New Zealand, or short-term residents, visited Australia, the Pacific Islands, India, Chile and China. They experienced the colonisation of Australia, the heights of Imperial India and the East India Company, the mutiny, missionary enterprises in the islands, and the developing western incursion into China, leading to the mid-century opium wars and a side-line view of the Tai Ping rebellion. They compared indigenous people, and their books became part of a great imperial, expansionist exercise, interpreting, authenticating, and in the end providing a justification for the subsequent European dominance of global geopolitics of the mid and later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Colonisation is constantly being re-evaluated and its effects perhaps now more intensely analysed and researched than ever before. The literature exposes both the worst of the views and objectives of the colonisers, but also the best, the sympathetic and the understanding. It seems essential still to be reading these accounts if we are to understand contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand.

Any compilation of early books rests on the bibliographies, firstly that of Hocken, and then the six volumes of Bagnall. In addition, there is Taylor's Pacific Bibliography and William's Bibliography of Printed Māori. Shorter, more itinerant bibliographies have appeared, such as that by Carter in 1887<sup>6</sup>, Johnstone's Supplement to Hocken<sup>7</sup>, Fair<sup>8</sup>, and Chapple<sup>9</sup>, but are superseded by the greater authorities. Beyond that, there is useful

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<sup>5</sup> **Wolseley G. J.**, Narrative of the War with China in 1860. To which is added an account of a short residence with the Tai-Ping rebels and Nankin and a voyage from hence to Hangkow. London, Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862.

<sup>6</sup> **Carter, C.R.**, Catalogue of Books on or relating to New Zealand; to which is added remarks on book purchasing and booksellers in London. London, Bowden, Hudson & Co., 1887.

<sup>7</sup> **Johnstone, A.H.**, Supplement to Hocken's Bibliography of New Zealand Literature. Auckland, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> **Fair, A.**, Guide to Book Values, New Zealand and Pacific. Auction records 1949 to 1952. Carterton, Roydhouse & Son, 1952.

<sup>9</sup> **Chapple, L.J.B.** A bibliographical brochure containing addenda and corrigenda to extant bibliographies of New Zealand literature. Reed, Dunedin & Wellington, 1938. Bagnall C558

literature on New Zealand books. Johannes Peterson and Pat Lawlor in the earlier parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> C wrote entertaining, though somewhat self-indulgent accounts of books and book collecting, Peterson's *Lure of New Zealand Book Collecting* being particularly valuable. McKay's collection of chapters on the history of New Zealand printing is a more authoritative publication covering printing up until 1940.<sup>10</sup> More recently, there has been the more academic approach of Lydia Wevers, which dissects many of the early books, with a welcome modern perspective on colonisation and race. Paul Moon looks at the accounts of 'The Voyagers', and there is a useful little book by Vincent O'Malley on 19<sup>th</sup> Century Māori who travelled to England and beyond.<sup>11</sup>

There is another valuable source, within the dealerships and collectorship. This is the catalogues, from, for instance, Bethune's book auctions, and others still active today, and the older dealer catalogues from the likes of Smith's and the particularly valuable set of Dunsheath, including catalogue No. 64, 1990<sup>12</sup>, which is a minor bibliography in its own right. There are also historical lists of publications that are worth browsing. For instance, at the end of Edward Jerningham Wakefield's *The Handbook for New Zealand* of 1848, there is a long list of publications on New Zealand which not only includes the books, from Cook and Savage onwards, but also speeches and pamphlets. There are items here never seen these days.

There are two other categories of resource. Reprints of a number of early books have appeared over the years including those of Savage, Nicholas, Earle, and Chapman, plus the series from Capper Press, and publishers such as Reed, Wilson & Horton, and others. In addition, there is a considerable set of biographies of major personalities such as Dieffenbach, Heaphy, and Maunsell, Busby, Kendall, the Wakefields, Colenso, Swainson and others published over the years, and continuing. Most of the writers, travellers, missionaries, militia men, traders and settlers, Government administrators and politicians who figure as authors, appear in the extensive popular and academic literature on New Zealand history.

Māori seem to miss out. This early literature is seriously European. There is no early book written by a Māori author although much in te reo Māori, starting with Kendall in 1815 and the subsequent missionary translations, Māori language printing blossoming with Colenso and the first established press at Paihia, then St Johns in Auckland, and with Colenso later in Hawke's Bay.

There are also modern edited accounts of diaries or journals from the early days that provide vivid narratives, much more immediate and compelling than the more formalised travel accounts in contemporary book form. Three stand out.

The Rev John Butler was the first ordained missionary to establish himself at the Bay of Islands, arriving there with James Kemp and the returning Samuel Marsden in August, 1819. His journals and correspondence were published in 1927, edited by R. Barton, and provide an exceptional, immediate account of the first days of missionary settlement.

**Butler, J.** *Earliest New Zealand. The journals and correspondence of the Rev. John Butler, compiled by R.J.Barton. Masterton, N.Z. Palamontain & Petherick. 1927. Bagnall B1862.*

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<sup>10</sup> **McKay, R.A. (ed.)** *A History of Printing in New Zealand 1830 -1940.* Wellington, R.A. McKay, [1940]

<sup>11</sup> **O'Malley, V.**, *Haeranga. Early Māori Journeys across the Globe.* Wellington, Bridget Williams, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> **Dunsheath, A.**, *Rare and Valuable Nineteenth Century New Zealand Books. Catalogue Sixty Four 1990.* Auckland, Anah Dunsheath, 1990.

Edward Markham, after a vivid career at sea with the East India Company, visited New Zealand between 1833 and 1835, and his journal is one of the liveliest accounts of the time, **Markham, E.** *New Zealand, or recollections of it.* ed. E.H.McCormick. Wellington, Government Printer, 1963.

Charlotte Godley sailed out with her husband John and son Arthur to establish the first Canterbury settlement, and her letters home give a vivid record of her time from the voyage out, life in Wellington, then in the early days in Canterbury.

**Godley, Charlotte,** *Letters from Early New Zealand.* Ed. John Godley. For private circulation, 1931.

An incomplete list of reprints, biographies and other literature includes:

### Reprints

**Bidwill, J.C.,** *Rambles in New Zealand.* Christchurch, Capper Press, 1974.

**Chapman, H.S.,** *The New Zealand Portfolio.* Dunedin, Hocken Facsimile No.9, 1969.

**Cruise, R.,** *Journal of a Ten Months' Residence in New Zealand.* Second Edition. Christchurch, Capper Press, 1824.

**Dieffenbach, E.,** *Travels in New Zealand; with contributions to the Geography, Geology, Botany, and Natural History of that Country.* Christchurch, Capper Press, 1974.

**Earle, A.,** *A Narrative of a Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand in 1827.* Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, 1909.

**Heaphy, C.,** *Narrative Of A Residence In Various Parts Of New Zealand Together With A Description Of The Present State Of The Company's Settlements,* Christchurch, Capper Press, 1972.

**Nicholas, J. L.,** *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand, Performed in the Years 1814 and 1815, in company with the Rev. Samuel Marsden.* Auckland, Wilson & Horton Ltd, c.1970

**Petre, H. W.,** *An Account of the Settlements of the New Zealand Company from Personal Observation during a Residence there.* 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Christchurch, Capper Press, 1971.

**Savage, J.,** *Savage's account of New Zealand in 1805 together with schemes of 1771 and 1824 for commerce and colonization.* Ed. A. D. McKinlay, Watkins, Wellington, 1939.

**Savage, J.,** *Some account of New Zealand; particularly the Bay of Islands, and surrounding country; with a description of the religion and government, language, arts, manufactures, manners and customs of the natives, &c. &c.* J. Murray, London, 1807. Christchurch, Capper Press, 1973.

**Wade, W. R.,** *Journey in the Northern Island of New Zealand.* Christchurch, Capper Press, 1977.

**Wakefield, E.J.,** *Adventure in New Zealand, from 1839 to 1844; with some account of the beginning of the British Colonization of the Islands.* Auckland, Wilson & Horton, 1971.

**Yate, W.,** *An Account of New Zealand and of The Church Missionary Society's Mission in the Northern Island.* Wellington, A.H & A. W. Reed Ltd., 1970.

### Biographies

**Busby, J.:** Moon, Paul, *Rise and Fall of James Busby: His Majesty's British Resident in New Zealand.* London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

**Colenso, W.:** Bagnall, A.G; Peterson, G.C., *William Colenso. Printer, missionary, botanist, explorer, politician. His life and journeys.* Wellington, Reed, 1948.

**Dieffenbach, E.A:** Bell, G.E., *Ernest Dieffenbach: Rebel and humanist.* Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1976.

**Dillon, P.:** O.H.K. Spate (ed). *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro. Chevalier of the South Seas.* Melbourne, Oxford University Press. 1975.

**Earle, A:** Murray-Oliver, A., *Augustus Earle in New Zealand.* Christchurch, Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, 1968.

**Heaphy, C.:** Sharp, I., *Heaphy.* Auckland, University of Auckland Press, 2008.

**Maunsell, R.:** Garrett, H., Te Manihera, The Life and Times of the Pioneer Missionary Robert Maunsell. Auckland, Raupo, 1991.

**Wakefield, E.G.:** Bloomfield, P., Edward Gibbon Wakefield, builder of the British Commonwealth. London, Longmans, 1961.

**Wakefield, E.G.:** Temple, P., A sort of conscience: the Wakefields. Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2002.

### **Bibliographies and books about books**

**Anderson, J.:** The lure of New Zealand book collecting. Auckland, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1936.

**Bagnall, A.G.:** New Zealand National Bibliography to the year 1960. Wellington, Government printer, 1980.

**Carter, C.R.:** Catalogue of Books on or relating to New Zealand; to which is added remarks on book purchasing and booksellers in London. London, Bowden, Hudson & Co., 1887.

**Chapple, L.J.B.:** A bibliographical brochure containing addenda and corrigenda to extant bibliographies of New Zealand literature. Dunedin, Reed, 1938. Bagnall C558

**Dunmore, J.:** French explorers in the Pacific. Volume II. The Nineteenth Century. Oxford, Clarendon, 1969.

**Fair, A.:** Guide to Book Values, New Zealand and Pacific. Auction records 1949 to 1952. Carterton, Roydhouse & Son, 1952.

**Hill, H.:** The early days of printing in New Zealand: A chapter of interesting history. Trans. NZ Inst. xxvii, p. 407, 1900.

**Hocken, T.M.:** Some account of the beginnings of literature in New Zealand: Part I., the Maori Section. Trans. NZ Inst. xxvii, p. 616, 1900.

**Hocken, T.M.:** Some account of the beginnings of literature in New Zealand: Part II., the English Section - Newspapers. Trans. NZ Inst. xxxiii, p. 472, 1901.

**Hocken, T.M.:** A bibliography of the literature relating to New Zealand. Wellington, Government Printer, 1909.

**Johnstone, A.H.:** Supplement to Hocken's Bibliography of New Zealand Literature. Auckland, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1927.

**Lawlor, P.A.:** Books and bookmen, New Zealand and Overseas. Wellington, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1954.

**McKay, R.A. (ed.)** A History of Printing in New Zealand 1830 -1940. Wellington, R.A. McKay [1940].

**Moon, P.:** The Voyagers. Remarkable European explorations of New Zealand. Auckland, Penguin, 2014.

**O'Malley, V.:** Haerenga. Early Māori journeys across the globe. Wellington, Bridget Williams, 2015.

**Taylor, N.M.:** Early travellers in New Zealand. Oxford, Clarendon, 1959.

**Wevers, L.:** Country of writing. Travel writing and New Zealand 1809-1900. Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2002.

### **General literature**

**Belich, J.:** Making peoples. A history of the New Zealanders from Polynesian settlement to the end of the Nineteenth Century. Auckland, Allen Lane, 1996.

**Ellis, E.M. & D.G.:** Early prints of New Zealand. 1642-1875. Christchurch, Avon Fine Prints, 1978.

**Platts, A.:** Nineteenth Century New Zealand artists. A guide & Handbook. Christchurch, Avon Fine Prints, 1980.

**Salmond, A.:** Between worlds. Early exchanges between Maori and Europeans 1773-1815. Auckland, Viking, 1997.

### **The physical book**

Early in the century, books were produced in what is called printer's boards, stiff card with a cloth or leather spine. The purchaser or subscriber would take this down to their favoured bookbinder and have the book bound, most commonly in full calf, or quarter or half calf and marbled boards. Sometimes there would be marbled endpapers included, and in fancier bindings, perhaps marbled or gilt edges. The original leaves would be unopened and uncut, or untrimmed, and the job of the binder was also to cut open the pages if necessary and trim the edges. There were often instructions, particularly, for instance, in quarto volumes of voyages, on where to bind in the plates and maps, and different issues of a publication might have these bound in different places, potentially fooling the later book collector. Titles were on labels on the spine, often gilt.

For instance, the first book on New Zealand, by Savage published in 1807, can be found in the original printer's boards, and in contemporary full calf, Nicholas in 1817 usually in full calf, Cruise in 1823 in the original printer's boards with a paper spine label, or contemporary full, or quarter calf. Soon after 1820, the first cloth bindings appeared, with a printed paper spine, introduced by London booksellers and publishers such as William Pickering, and Archibald Leighton, the latter the being the first to stamp gold lettering onto cloth<sup>13</sup>. A little later, around 1830, mechanised stamping of covers and spines was introduced, allowing greater automation, and resulting in the very familiar embossed or decorated cloth bindings of books from around 1830 onwards, mainly green, blue, purple or brown, and instantly recognisable. From the 1850s onwards, decorated, illustrated cloth boards start to predominate, some particularly elegant and well designed, some a bit amateurish. The early 19<sup>th</sup> C literature from the English in Australia, India and China is similar, though for some reason, New Zealand books of the age are rarely found in quite the same condition as, for instance, those of China, perhaps reflecting the deposition of the latter in stately libraries in England rather than in less carefully curated colonial conditions. There is still an active market for these books, with some fetching prices based on rarity rather than intrinsic value. Outside of the narratives of Cook, the Forsters, and Parkinson from the Cook voyages, the New Zealand literature is of value more for its content perhaps than its appearance. It is there to be read, and the reward is a much more complete understanding of our early history.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=1732> Accessed 20 October 2022