



The Colenso Society
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eColenso

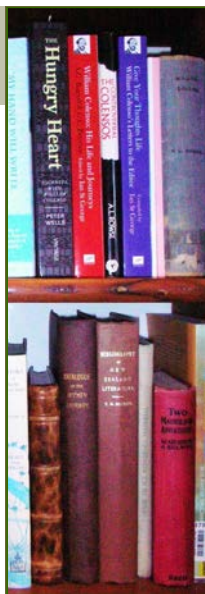
James Williamson Fedarb

On 27 June 1840 William Colenso wrote to Governor Hobson,¹

Sir,

It should appear that in May last, Mr Mair chartered a small Vessel to go a Trading to the Bay of Plenty placing a younger man (whose name is J.W. Fedarb) on board as trading master. This Vessel touched at Tauranga, and Fedarb was furnished by Mr Stack (one of our Missionaries) with a copy of the Treaty and instructions to get as many signatures from the chiefs, at the places at which he should touch, as he possibly could. He, accordingly, copied the Treaty, and has got it signed by several, as Your Excellency will perceive by the enclosed Document.—At Opotiki the chiefs, who are well-disposed towards us, the Prot. Misss., wished him to make a distinction bet. them & those who had made a profession of adherence to the R.C. Bp.—wh. he did by prefixing a † before their names: there were four names so prefixed, but one, aflds, begged to have the mark erased, as he wod. belg. to them no longer. I mentn. this as accounting for the erasure in the document.

It shod. also appear, my dear Sir, that Mr Stack had desired Fedarb to give them a little Tobacco, &c, which he has done from the stores he had in chge. the property of Mr Mair. The



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eColenso is a free email publication which should be forwarded to interested people. Contributions on William Colenso might be emailed to the editor, Ian St George,

Bill for which I enclose—

Fedarb was once in my employ; this accounts for his bringing me the Documents &c.—wh. I now have the honour to transmit to Yr. Excellency.

*Hoping that Yr. Excellency enjoys good health, and praying for a cont. of the same
I am — My dr Sir — Yr mo ob servt — WC.*

Colenso's "Day and Waste Book" has (23 October 1839), "Paid J.W. Fedarb for work done in the Binding Department." and "for folding, pressing, and fitching 2000 Tracts (covers)".²

Episode 5 of the 2009 television series on the Treaty of Waitangi, *Lost in translation*,³ has host Mike King on the trail of the two Treaty sheets that travelled around the Bay of Plenty in 1840. One, "carrying a forged signature," travelled east with young trader James Fedarb (and King asks why, despite gathering 26 signatures in 28 days, the salesman is largely absent from the history books).... King learns the reason that Fedarb didn't venture into Tuhoe territory from Tamati Kruger (he was allegedly too frightened to do so).

James Stack, the Church of England missionary at Tauranga, had made copies of the Treaty (not forgeries!), and wrote to the Colonial Secretary returning the original,⁴

Church Missionary Station, Tauranga, 23rd May 1840.

Sir,—

In the absence of the Rev. A. N. Brown, I have, agreeably to Major Bunbury's directions, copied the Treaty of Waitangi, and I have now the honour to forward you the original by the "Aquila" cutter, the first opportunity since Major Bunbury left Tauranga.

Two who are considered "high chiefs" have refused to sign the Treaty. Their minds have been disturbed by some evil-minded person trying to prejudice them against Government. They may possibly sign the copy I have taken by-and-by. Major Bunbury told me signatures on the copy would be as good as those on the original document you sent. As Major Bunbury was hindered, in consequence of war between the tribes, from visiting Rotorua, I sent a copy of the treaty to Rotorua to-day to Messrs. Chapman and Morgan, to use their influence to get the signatures of the chiefs. An unexpected opportunity occurring yesterday by the arrival of the schooner "Mercury," with James Fedarb on board as supercargo, I prepared a copy of the Treaty, which I gave in charge to him, with letters to our Native teachers at Opotiki and Te Kaha to do what they could in obtaining signatures of chiefs in that quarter.

Either the Rev. A. N. Brown or myself would feel most happy by personal visitation amongst all the tribes in the Bay of Plenty to forward the views of Her Majesty's Government were it just now practicable, but unfortunately it is not. Mr. Brown being on a missionary visit in an opposite direction, of necessity one of us must

remain at home to take charge of the station.

I have distributed the eight blankets left by Major Bunbury to those chiefs who he directed should have them. I have added four others out of our Society's store. Several more blankets may yet be wanting if Tupaia and his friends should sign.

I beg to apologize for the very soiled state of the Treaty, but the Native habits are so filthy it could hardly be avoided.

All the names marked\ in red ink are either head chiefs or sons of deceased chiefs of rank. Nuka and Tau are the two greatest chiefs who have signed the treaty in Tauranga as yet.

*I have, &c.,
James Stack.*

*Willoughby Shortland, Esq., Acting Colonial Secretary,
Kororareka, Bay of Islands*

We know little of James Williamson Fedarb 1816–1890, and no photograph has survived. A family descendant, Stephen Williamson, deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library in 2003 a typescript of Fedarb's brief (March 1839–June 1852) diary with commentary,⁵ and these are the main sources for what we do know.

He was the son of Horatio and Elizabeth (nee Williamson) Fedarb and brother of Stephen Williamson Fedarb, with whom he arrived at Kororareka aboard the celebrated *Samuel Enderby* (see next page) on 20 March 1839.

Fedarb's diary is full of observations on the weather, ship arrivals and departures, tallies of whale oil, texts for sermons preached by various missionaries, dates of letters home, sailors' stories. He rapidly acquired the habit of writing some of his entries in te reo. He was a habitual attender at church services and prayer meetings and he heard Colenso preach several times. There is little mention of Colenso otherwise, and none, of Fedarb's work with the printer.

Here are a few interesting snippets (with Stephen Williamson's notes),

12th (June 1839) Calm and clear; 10am received note from Mr Colenso; with boat to take things to Paihia.

21st (October 1839) Brisk W and fine; settled with Mr C<olenso>.

14th (January 1840).... Spanish Tracts to crew of "Especulacao"; "Rifleman" sailed; tooth extracted e <by> te <the> Tauti o' etc.

29th (January 1840) Moderate NNW gloomy squalls appearing; HMS "Herald" came to an anchor off Kororareka with Governor Hobson on board.

30th (January 1840) Fresh NE mizzly rain; Waitangi Proclamation issued; evening on board "Matilda".

The *Samuel Enderby*



In *Moby Dick* (Ch. 100: “Arm and Leg”) Melville has the *Pequod* meet the *Samuel Enderby*,

“Ship, ahoy! Hast seen the White Whale?” So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, bearing down under the stern. Trumpet to mouth, the old man was standing in his hoisted quarter-boat, his ivory leg plainly revealed to the stranger captain, who was carelessly reclining in his own boat’s bow. He was a darkly-tanned, burly, good-natured, fine-looking man, of sixty or thereabouts, dressed in a spacious roundabout, that hung round him in festoons of blue pilot-cloth; and one empty arm of this jacket streamed behind him like the broidered arm of a hussar’s surcoat.

“Hast seen the White Whale!”

“See you this?” and withdrawing it from the folds that had hidden it, he held up a white arm of sperm whale bone, terminating in a wooden head like a mallet.”

Each captain had lost a limb in pursuit of Moby Dick.

5th (February 1840) Moderate NNW and cloudy; meeting at Waitangi; Governor whites and natives.

8th (February 1840) Moderate SE and fine; Proclamation by Governor.

8th (May 1840) Left in “Mercury” for trip to Bay of Plenty at 1pm.

27th (May 1840) Moderate and fine; obtained signatures of chiefs to Government Treaty.

31st (May 1840) Light airs SW went on board “Black Joke”; to Wakatani; distributed tracts to natives; slept at Mokai and Tautari’s.

25th (June 1840) Brisk SSE to SSW; 7am at Mr Colenso’s.

11th (December 1840, Waiapu) Strong gale WNW fine; smooth; am I and Mr B<ristow> to beyond bluff to see crayfish divers; Kohua returned with signature.

31st (May 1842) Strong NW with rain; with Mr M<air> to Waitangi to arrange Ngunguru Books etc; 4pm at Mr Colenso’s; obtained some tracts from him to distribute among the natives on the coasts.

By 1843 Fedarb was no longer Master of the *Mercury*. Colenso clearly used him to distribute tracts, to the Spanish ship at Kororareka and to Māori along the coast. On 27 May 1840 he did mention obtaining signatures for the Treaty, and as late as 11 December 1840 (six months after Colenso had returned the Treaty copy to Hobson) “Kohua” (not further identified) collected one.

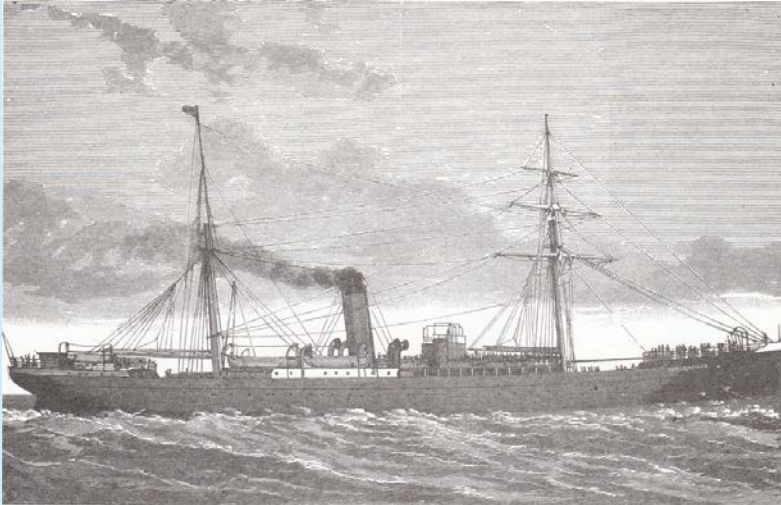
In 1848 he was farm manager of Motuihe Island for William Brown and John Logan Campbell. In 1856 his name appears in the Australian Electoral Rolls for Dundas and Follett, Victoria.

He died in 1890 and the *New Zealand Herald* 7 June 1892 reported “The thanks of your committee (British & Foreign Bible Society) have been forwarded to Mr. C.M. Calder, solicitor, for the prompt payments to your treasurer of £7 17s, being a legacy to this auxiliary on behalf of Messrs. J. H. Scott and W. Parker, as executors under the will of the late Mr. J. W. Fedarb, Esq., of Ponsonby.”

References

1. ATL MS-Papers-0675. Annotated “Copy of a Note to Governor accomp. Document from Opotiki”.
2. ATL MS-Copy-Micro-0687.
3. <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/lost-in-translation--bay-of-plenty-sheet--episode-five> clips 2 and 3.
4. <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-TurEpit.html>.
5. MS-Group-1375.

The s.s. *Wairarapa*

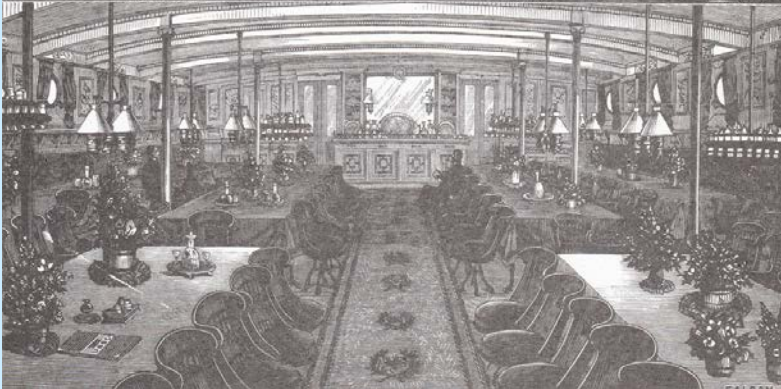


William Colenso wrote to his nephew William Colenso of Penzance on 4 November 1894:

Here, only a few days ago, we have been awfully excited—and, also, the whole Colony of N.Z. together with the neighbouring ones,—at a dreadful shipwreck, in fine weather too!! by which more than 100 miserably perished! one of the worst (if not the very worst) N.Z. has yet known: I send you a paper containing it.

... and on 14 November 1884 he wrote to Coupland Harding,

Re, the sad “Wairarapa” affair, I say nothing: only I am grieved at the line taken by the Auckland lawyers, & others, in endeavouring to blacken the conduct of the Captain—poor fellow!

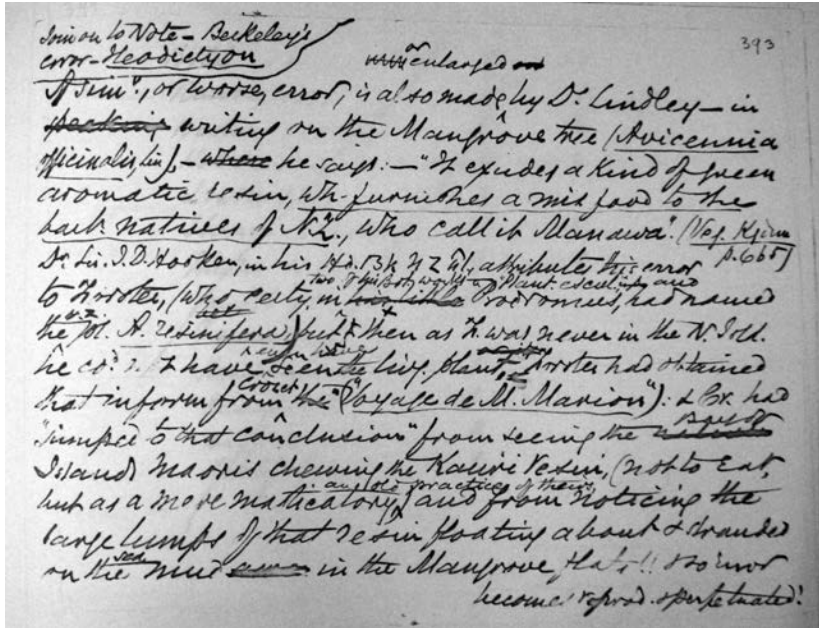


Built by Messrs Denny, of Dumbarton, Scotland, the S.S. *Wairarapa* was the latest acquisition of the Union Steamship Company and was described by an English traveller as “the most beautifully decorated ship in the world.” The Ladies’ Boudoir had “panels of Chinese silk, with crewel work of brilliant colours and quaint design, and are covered with glass like so many pictures.” She ran aground on Great Barrier Island in fog just after midnight on 29 October 1884; 121 of the 251 people aboard were drowned.

—From Hargreaves RP, Hearn TJ. *New Zealand in the Mid-Victorian era*. John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1977.

Be careful what you repeat! (or, don't quote secondary sources)

Among the Colenso papers at the Alexander Turnbull Library is this fragment... It is a draft of a footnote to his paper, "On the vegetable food of the ancient New Zealanders before Cook's visit," read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute on 9 August and 13 September 1880 and published in *Trans. NZ Inst.* 13: 3-38.



A similar or worse error is also made, or enlarged, by Dr. Lindley, in writing on the mangrove tree (*Avicennia officinalis*, Lin.); he says,—"It exudes a kind of green aromatic resin, which furnishes a miserable food to the barbarous Natives of New Zealand, who call it manawa."—Veg. Kingdom, p. 665. Dr. Hooker, in his Handbook of the New Zealand Flora, attributes this error to Forster, who—certainly in two of his botanical works ("Plant. Escul." and "Prodromus")—had named the New Zealand mangrove, *A. resinifera*; but, as Forster was never in the North Island of New Zealand, where alone the tree grows, he could not have even seen the living plant. Forster had obtained that information from Crozet (*Voyage de M. Marion*); and Crozet had jumped to that conclusion from seeing the Bay of Islands Maoris chewing the kauri resin (not to eat, but as a mere masticatory, an old practice of theirs), and from noticing the large lumps of that resin floating about and stranded on the sea-mud among the mangroves,—and so error grows and is perpetuated!

List of Members of Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, 1890.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

Prof. W. G. Farlow, M. D.	Harvard University
Prof. Daniel C. Eaton	Yale College
Prof. A. E. Verrill	Yale College
Mons. De Sessac.	
Prof. J. G. Lemmon	Oakland, Cal
W. S. M. D'Urban, F. L. S.	England.
Dr. Wolfred Nelson.	
Wm. Colenso, F. R. S., F. L. S.	New Zealand
Don Hugo Finck	Mexico
Dr. Earl Flint.	Nicaragua

Lorenzo Gordin Yates 1837–1909, b. England but by the age of 14 moved to New York. He studied dentistry and medicine, chemistry and mineralogy. He practised dentistry in Wisconsin and moved to Centerville, California 1864. There, he continued dentistry and a search for fossils at the Mission Peak.

He participated in a search for elephant and horse remains and discovered a tusk and a jaw of a mastodon in 1871 in Mission San Jose. He also discovered amphibious animals which he called The Marine Monsters of Alameda County.

He moved to Santa Barbara in 1881 and founded the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, was its leading light in a role equivalent to Colenso's with the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute. He was associated with many organizations—the Anthropological Society of Washington, California Academy of Sciences, California Dental Association, the Historical Society of Southern California and various Victorian Institutes. He was an Honorary Member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, a fellow at the Geological Society of America and was FLS. After his death his collections and papers were dissipated, and now form part of the collections of a number of institutions worldwide. No letters from Colenso have been traced.

His great work was *The ferns of Ceylon* and it was about ferns that he and Colenso corresponded, eventually awarding each other Honorary Membership of their respective societies. His biographer concludes,

Dr. Yates was probably the most famous scientist who ever lived in our area. He was the first to interest the scientific world in our local fossils and publicize the Irvington fossil beds. He wrote over 300 scientific articles for magazines and newspapers. Few scientists in the world ever contributed so much in such a wide variety of fields. [http://cnhm.msnucleus.org/information/yates.htm].

HBPI & the Lindauer portrait

Sixth Meeting: *12th November, 1894.*

Mr. T. Humphries, President, in the chair.

Papers.—1. “Memorabilia of certain Animal Prodigies, Native and Foreign, Ancient and Modern.” by W. Colenso, F.R.S., F.L.S. (Lond.), &c.

2. “The Modern History of a Block of Greenstone.” by W. Colenso, F.R.S., F.L.S. (Lond.), &c. (*Transactions*, p. 598.)

3. “Description of a few Newly-discovered and Rare Indigenous Plants,” by W. Colenso, F.R.S., F.L.S. (Lond.), &c. (*Transactions*, p. 383.)

4. “The Nuhaka Hot Springs.” by H. Hill, B.A., F.G.S. (*Transactions*, p. 478.)

5. “The Hawke's Bay Pleistocene Beds and the Glacial Period: Part II.” by H. Hill, B.A., F.G.S. (*Transactions*, p. 466.)

At the close of the meeting, the President, in the name of the Institute, presented to Mr. Colenso a fine portrait in oils of himself, by Herr Lindauer.

In making the presentation, Mr. Humphries referred to the valuable services rendered to the Institute by Mr. Colenso by his scientific researches. The members of the society had for some time thought that some remembrance of the work Mr. Colenso had done for the Institute should be obtained, and he was exceedingly pleased they had secured so fine a representation of the pillar and founder of the institution.

Mr. Hill, on being called on by the President to say a few words, said it gave him great pleasure to be present on such an occasion, because it seemed to him that they were for once trying to carry out the object which the society had had in view for a number of years past. While in their midst they had a man of scientific attainments such as were recognized in Europe and America, yet he (the speaker) often wondered whether Mr. Colenso was as well known here in this town, where he had resided for half a century, as the ordinary handicapper or jockey who rode in a race. They had a man amongst them of whom the citizens of Napier, and other inhabitants of New Zealand, should be proud. Whilst listening to Mr. Colenso reading his remarkable papers those present must have been struck by the variety of knowledge which he brought forward from time to time to interest and instruct. Year after year the same untiring energy was manifested by him, and that, too, at an age when most men would have given up pursuits of a scientific nature. Mr. Colenso still came to them trying to point out the pathways of science which he himself had trodden with pleasure—a pleasure that he transmitted to his audience. Was it not sufficient to urge the younger members on, to think that here was a gentleman of over fourscore years, who yet followed the

hobby of his life, and was yet desirous of leaving a record behind him of things he had seen, of conclusions he had arrived at from his scientific pursuits? He (Mr. Hill) had looked upon Mr. Colenso as a teacher; and he had never been in his presence without feeling that his life was an example, a sermon, and everything that was good and noble. He was pleased to think that the Philosophical Society was at last trying to recognize its duty towards the founder of the Institute. Mr. Colenso had nursed the society since its inception, and looked after it until it had come to be known throughout New Zealand as one of the strongest in the colony. The present members of the society did not need anything to remind them of Mr. Colenso's qualities, of goodness, but they must remember that nature in time to come would demand her own, and he, like all others, must pass away. Those who came after would need a reminder, and, when they saw this picture hanging in the Museum which would become theirs some day, they would know that it was the picture of a good and gracious man. He trusted that there were many years before Mr. Colenso yet in which he would come amongst them, and inspire them as he had inspired them in days gone by, and that he would be encouraged by this small effort which the society had made to keep him in remembrance.

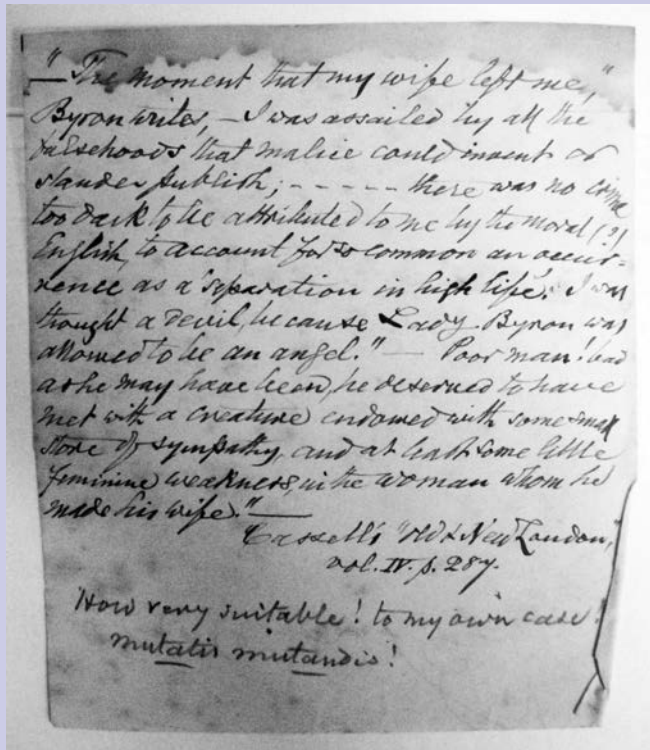
The Rev. Mr. Colenso, in returning thanks for the present, said he hardly knew what to say, so many things in his remembrance were crowding into his mind. The coming month of December would make it sixty years since he first came to Hawke's Bay, having landed in company with the late Bishop Williams, first Bishop of Waiapu, and the bishop elect, who was then a mere boy. Since his arrival in Napier on that occasion he had resided here up till the present time. Mr. Colenso then went on to refer briefly to his connection with the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, remarking that, though he last year to all intents and purposes bade farewell to the Institute, it had pleased God to restore him to health and vigour. He also referred to the services rendered by Mr. Hamilton as Curator before his removal to Dunedin, who, by his interest and whole heartedness in the work, was, in a very large measure, responsible for the splendid collection of specimens the society now held. He (Mr. Colenso) hoped the time would come, and at no distant period, when the Institute would own a museum, where their valuable specimens could be properly taken care of. In conclusion, he asked the society to accept the picture as a present from him.

Meeting: 4th. February 1895.

A fine portrait of the founder and former Secretary of this branch, the Rev. W. Colenso, F.R.S., F.L.S., &c., which was painted by Herr Lindauer to the order of the Council, has been presented by Mr. Colenso to the Institute, and now hangs on the wall of the Museum. The likeness is a capital representation of one of the pioneers of science in this colony.

Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.

—William Congreve: *The Mourning Bride* (1697) Act III, Scene VIII



This is a fragment from the Alexander Turnbull Library: Colenso identifying with Byron...(mutatis mutandis = changing that which needs to be changed”).

He wrote to his son Wiremu, in his “autobiography”,

But it would require many words to give you a correct outline of what strange and false charges I have had to meet and to bear; 1 was that I had turned Mrs. C. out of doors; another that I had cast her off with the 2 children; another that I was living disreputably with Mao. women; another that I was a complete drunkard and common card player with the low whites....

James Hamlin confirmed this in his journal,

... the Country was soon filled with disgusting reports, many of which could not be gainsaid.

The Landowner

—From the *Hawke's Bay Herald* 13 April 1861.

Male landowners were the only people qualified to vote.

It seems astonishing that within nine years of his dismissal from the Church Colenso should own so much land.

LIST OF THOSE PERSONS who during the month of March, 1861, sent in their Claims to the Registration Officer of the District of Napier and Clive, for the purpose of having their names placed on the Electoral Rolls for the year 1861-62.

Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 1, Porangahau, sub. secs. Nos. 41, 53, 71 and 72, acres 97.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 2, Blackhead, township, sections No. 39, 41, 55 and 57.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 3, Havelock, township, sec. No. — and sub. Nos. 15 to 19.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 4, Abbotsford township, secs. 8 to 10 and 81, 83, 84, 85, being 3½ acres of Nos. 16 and 46 Government map of Waipawa.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 5, west bank of river Tukituki, and opposite Te Tamumu, 180 acres, application 146.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 6, Tarawera 686 acres, applications Nos. 27 and 49.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 7, Mangatarata, 100 acres, application No. 50.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 8, Clive, sub. secs. Nos. 216 to 236.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 1, Napier, suburban sections 39 to 44 inclusive.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 2, Meanee river, sub. sections Nos. 7, 9 and 23.
Colenso William, Napier, freehold, 3, Whareponga, western side of harbour, sub. secs. Nos. 58 and 59.

The Board of Reviewers heard appeals against land valuations and reported

—From the *Daily Telegraph* 8 April 1886. ▼

Mr Colenso, 4 sections, Nos. 39 (5 acres 2 roods), 40 (1 acre 3 roods), 41 (4 acres 1 rood), 42 (1 acre 3 roods 10 perches), valued at £3,300, valuation sustained; suburban section 40, 4 acres, valued at £800, valuation sustained. Suburban sections 42A, 43A, and 42B (5 acres 30 perches), valued at £1075, valuation sustained; sections 43A, 44, 92 (6 acres 3 roods 32 perches) valued at £2800, reduced to £2100; sections 311, subdivision 8, 309, subdiv. 8, 316, subdiv. 7 (3 roods 7 perches), valued at £500, reduced to £320; sections 29 and 30 (2 roods), valued at £200, reduced to £100; lower section 108 (1 rood), valued at £265, valuation sustained; section 100 (1 rood 10 perches), valued at £200, valuation sustained; 327 sub-division B (1 rood), valued at £233, reduced to £175; section 554, sub-division B, (1 rood 6 perches), valued at £350, reduced to £325; town section 556 (½ acre), valued at £450, reduced to £350.

From the *Daily Telegraph* 31 May 1889. ▼

After we went to press yesterday afternoon the following cases were heard before the Board of Reviewers:—

William Colenso, section Milton road, valuation £350.—Valuation sustained.

William Colenso, seven acres of land and residence, Milton road, valuation £2860.—Valuation sustained.

William Colenso, four sections, Sale and Munro streets, valuation £500.—Reduced to £450.

William Colenso, town section 560, Hastings street, valuation £500.—Mr Colenso said the borough valuer last time valued the property at £400; it had not increased since then.—The Chairman supposed that the improvements of the Marine Parade had added to the value.—Mr Colenso did not believe in the improvement, in fact, he looked upon it as the greatest bug-bear that had ever happened to Napier.—The valuation was sustained.

An Essay on Pope

In the *Transactions* (vol. 21, p.527) there is reference to a paper Colenso gave at the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute on 10 September 1888 ("Pope, the English Poet"). It was illustrated with "original letters" by Pope.

FOURTH MEETING: 10th September, 1888.

The President, W. Colenso, F.R.S., in the chair.

Papers.—1. "The Moa and its Hunters," by L. Moore.

2. "On a Recent Find of Moa-bones in the Te Aute Swamp," by A. Hamilton. Part II. (*Transactions*, p. 311.)

3. "On Coloured Sheep," by Taylor White, of Herbertville. (*Transactions*, p. 402.)

4. "Pope, the English Poet," by W. Colenso, F.R.S.

Original letters of Pope were exhibited.

Specimens from the Kermadec Islands, presented by Mr. J. S. Large, were shown—among them a large *Patella*, also the skin of a tropic bird (*Phaeton rubricauda*), and a starfish.

The President read a letter from Mr. Balfour, of Glenross, concerning some experiments in fish-hatching at Glenross.

Colenso sent the paper to Hector for publication but it was never published. He asked Coupland Harding to try to get it returned, then asked the President of the Wellington Philosophical Society Walter Buller...

To Harding 12 July 92,

Could you by any means ascertain from Gore re my "Memoir on Pope"? could I get it back?

To Harding 27 July 92,

In my letter yesty. to President B. I mentioned my Paper—Memoir of Pope, &c

I cannot find in his extant writing any record of its having been returned to him, and Simon Nathan could find no record of it among the *Transactions* editorial material at Te Papa. A reasonable assumption is that it was returned to him, but suffered the same fate (along with Pope's letters) as his other manuscripts.

I wonder who Alexander Pope (1688–1744) had written to and how Colenso had the letters? (*Bibliotheca Cornubiensis* mentions Pope's letters to Cornishmen William Borlase and William Oliver MD).

Colenso remarked in his *In memoriam* (1884), In my longer journeys I always carried a few choice books with me, and among them a pocket edition of *one of our Poets*:—Ossian, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, Burns,

Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Walter Scott, Longfellow, Tennyson, &c.

Indeed, he was inordinately prone to quoting Pope, surely recognising the sharp satire, the scholarly expertise in scripture and Christian history, the moral humanity and the linguistic genius. Pope: third most frequent source of English quotations, after the Bible and Shakespeare...

28 August 1854 to Hooker

I still dare to think that you are not quite correct in your opinions respecting some of our N.Z. species. (Pardon me this). For instance, speaking of Phormium, you say, – “I will say, that if you endeavour to unite your Ph, by intermediate forms you will do so too.” Now here (as I have already said, in a former letter,) as I think, lies the whole error – in the seeking to unite 2 species by taking their aberrant – branching out right & left – sportive, or hybrid forms, which are themselves ever varying, while the species (as species) remain distinct. Such a union may, no doubt, be done with almost any 2 (or more) species of any larger genus; but, as far as I at present see, all such reasoning – or definition – will certainly end in this – the breaking up of all species & genera. A few lines from Pope’s “Essay on Man” are running in my head – not inapplicable here – “What a nice barrier!

“Forever separate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance & reflection, how allied!
What thin partitions sense from thought divide!
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass the insuperable line!”

I have long been of opinion, (which right or wrong, is daily getting more & more confirmed,) that could we but take a full entire & comprehensive view of both the Animal & Vegetable kingdoms (past & present), – or, further still, – animate and inanimate matter – from the highest created intelligence in the heavens, down down down to the lowest & most vague & amorphous clay or earth, we should see one uninterrupted & effluent stream, which could not (naturally) be divided into families, genera or species! Perhaps some such delightful & amazing contemplation may form part of the work of man (mind) in a future higher & better state of existence. At present, however, we can only move as children, & so creep on towards walking. – My writing this, brings to mind another portion of that same “Essay” – (which, by the-by, is an old favorite of mine), –

“Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing.”

28 August 1858 to the Hawke’s Bay Herald

“Shut, shut the door, good John! fatigued, I said;
Tie up the knocker; say, I’m sick, I’m dead.”—

Thus (if I recollect aright) our great English poet, Pope, commences one of his epistles: the occasion—his being tired with so many folks asking him to correct their verses. And surely I, wretched mortal! (and the generality of your readers) must be equally tired at seeing my name so often thrust tost fetched and jerked before the public, on account of my political sins.

1878 June 12: to Luff

Do you recall those lines of Pope, (speaking of “the Happy Man”)?:—

—“Whose trees

In Summer, yield him shade,

In Winter, fire.”—

Well, that, at all events, is *my lot*.

In the Transactions (1880; 13: 57–84) on Māori poetry

“From grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

In his “A few remarks on the hackneyed quotation of ‘MACAULAY’S NEW ZEALANDER,’” (Read before the Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute, 12th June, 1882.) The Alexander Turnbull Library copy of this paper has a handwritten endnote by Colenso, which reads,

“Since writing the above, I have also noticed in Pope’s ‘Windsor Forest’ the following lines:—

‘The time shall come, when free as seas or wind,
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the regions they divide;
Earth’s distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,
And feather’d people crowd my wealthy side;
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire,
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire. l.397.

13 September 1890 to Hooker

I, a seeker after Truth in every place & form, and moreover finding her, more or less, everywhere, cannot, & must not, take up with any precious forms or guises. As I told my Congns. in a late Sermon on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man (quoting Pope preferentially),

“Father of all in every age
In every clime adored
By Saint, by savage and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.” —

12 July 1894 to the Hawke’s Bay Herald

SIR,—For the sake of the rising generation I would ask permission to correct an error in the letter from your correspondent “Hopeful,” in your paper of this morning.—I do so, because it is a very common one. He concludes his letter by saying,—

– “Burns wrote, ‘An honest man is the noblest work of God.’”

Of course, I am well aware, that Burns has that line in his delightful heart-felt poem the “Cotter’s Saturday Night”; but the idea was *not* original with Burns. The line occurs in Pope’s “Essay on Man,” (Epistle IV, line 248) whence Burns got it. And, indeed, in the large and superior editions of Burns’ works, the line itself is always placed between quotation marks, and Pope, I may observe, died before Burns was born.

But I would go a step further: and state (again) my belief—that Pope did not originally use the superlative, “noblest,” but either the comparative, “nobler,” or the positive, “noble”; more likely this latter, as the word is undoubtedly the more correct one there, and more in keeping with Pope’s well-known careful grammatical writing. Though, very likely, Burns, to make it more suitable for his subject, altered “noble” to “noblest.”

In my so saying, let no one suppose for a single moment, that I would ever write or utter a word of detraction against Scotland’s first and greatest poet—Burns; for I have ever had the highest opinion of him as a true and great poet, of whom Scotland may ever and increasingly be truly proud.—I am, &c.,

WILLIAM COLENSO.

13 August 1897 to Hooker

I not unfrequently repeat (sometimes in pulpit) Pope’s “Universal Prayer,”

“Father of all in every age,
In every clime, adored;
By saint, by savage, & by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.”

In various publications...

Extremes in Nature equal good produce;
Extremes in man concur to general use.

POPE: *Moral Essays*.

A generous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows.

POPE: “Iliad,” book ix., 1. 275.

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature up to Nature’s God.

POPE, “Essay on Man.”

... some zealous priests of the Church of Rome might possibly think strange things of an interloping preaching heretic; which serves to remind me of the forcible language of one of our celebrated British poets,—himself, too, a Catholic:—

“The good must merit God’s peculiar care:
But who but God can tell us who they are?
One thinks on Calvin Heaven’s own spirit fell,
Another deems him instrument of hell:

Grasping the nettle

Colenso's Journal 10 April 1850, near Dannevirke....

I met with an accident on leaving Te Hautotara this morning, which I am not likely soon to forget.—In leaping across a streamlet in the wood (in order to escape wet feet), I did not closely observe the character of the vegetation on the opposite side, and inadvertently jumped among a species of Nettle, (probably *Urtica ferox*, of Forster,) a formidable shrubby plant, the large palmated leaves of which are beset with rows of spines the size of small pins. Fortunately, I only got stung in the two last fingers of my left hand; the pain, however, was immediately great, although I lost no time in pulling out the poisonous spines. My fingers swelled considerably, and the pain, soon extending to my arm, lasted throughout the whole day. Providentially this noxious plant is exceedingly scarce, I having only hitherto detected in in three places, viz., near Wellington, near Te Hawera, and near Epairima, and in each place only a single plant. It grows to the height of 4–6 feet, with a thick woody stem 1½ in. in diameter, and large palmated leaves somewhat resembling a deeply indented vine leaf.

Ongaonga (*Urtica ferox*) the New Zealand tree nettle is now common in regenerating bush, at least in Wairarapa—and in central Hawke's Bay where Ongaonga is a placename. I try to preserve (though avoid) it on our Admiral Road property as it is the host plant for kahukura (*Vanessa gonerilla*) the New Zealand red admiral butterfly.

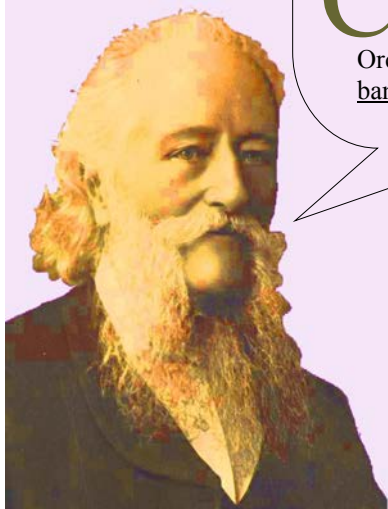


Kahukura ▲

Ongaonga ►



A facsimile of Colenso's will (Appendix 4 of Stuart Webster's book *Sainsbury Logan & Williams*) can be seen at <http://www.slw.co.nz/Common/Media/rSLW%20AppCloseIndex.pdf>



Doctor Colenso I presume? missionary medical practice in mid-nineteenth century New Zealand. 59 pages, available from the editor (istge@yahoo.co.nz): \$10, postage paid.

Second Colenso conference, Napier, 18–20 November 2016. Mark your diary now.

Colenso's collections. The specimens and letters to Kew. Available from the New Zealand Native Orchid Group: contact Judith Tyler at bandj.tyler@xtra.co.nz.