



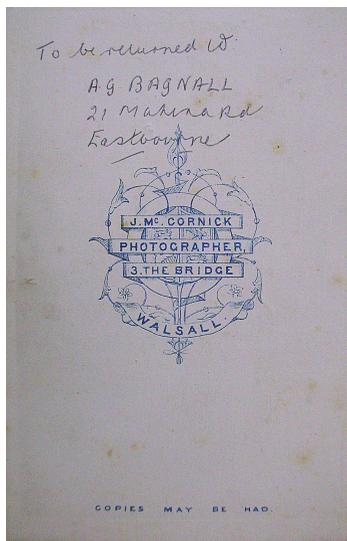
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# eColenso

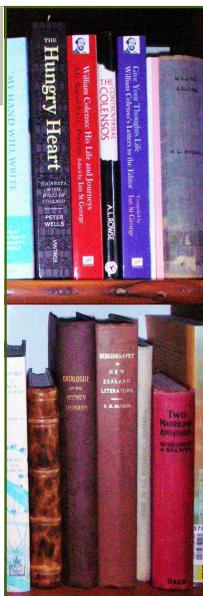
## Why was Willie at Walsall?

There is (overleaf) a carte-de-visite of Colenso's son Wiremu among the AG Bagnall papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library.<sup>1</sup> The photograph of Wiremu as a youth is typical of the posed, formal studies of the period.



The photographer is identified as J. McCornick, 3 The Bridge, Walsall. He is listed in the Staffordshire Photographers Index and in Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire, only for 1868.<sup>2</sup>

Sarah Carter has assembled the fragments of what little is known about William Colenso's second son Wiremu (Willie) and I gratefully acknowledge her work here.<sup>3</sup>



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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,

Wiremu, taken to Auckland by Elizabeth as a 2 year old, had



Wiremu Colenso c.1868, aged 17 (school cap in hand?)  
Carte-de-visite by J. McCornick, Walsall

been spurned by Auckland white society, was boarded with a Maori family, and somehow got to his grandparents in Hokianga. His grandmother was Ngai Tapuhara hapu of Ngati Kahungunu and was “originally a lady of rank, having been taken a captive in war from these parts (Hawke’s Bay) when very young and taken away to the Bay of Islands, and there became the wife of a chief of note, named Panapa.” His grandfather Panapa was Ngapuhi (“whom,” Colenso would write, “I had long intimately known,” yet there is no other mention of him in Colenso’s extant writing).

### Coming home

As a ten year old Wiremu was “brought back to me at last! from Hokianga in 1861, your maternal grandfather’s home, by your uncle Hamiora, the eldest brother of your mother, who also joined him here in his so doing.”<sup>74</sup> Wiremu’s grandmother came as well: “...you may remember how your mother (and her brother and your grandmother) acted in ’61 in bringing you to me.”<sup>74</sup>

The arrival of the four was “unexpected... at this place by ship in 1861, while I was absent at Auckland at the Parl.” Colenso had joined the opposition benches in mid-july, the Fox Ministry having taken over from the Stafford Ministry on 12 July 1861. While European passengers were usually named in the shipping news of the day, Maori were not. Perhaps they arrived in the schooner ► *Eliezer* on 29 July—a perusal of the shipping news from mid-july to midseptember when Parliament adjourned shows few other possibilities.

### PORT OF NAPIER.

#### ARRIVED.

July 29—*Storm Bird*, s.s., 107 tons, Malcolm, from Wellington, with 16 cases gin, (ex ‘Golconda,’) 2 bags pepper, 2 bales, 2 cases herrings, 3 kegs salt, 1 bundle fruit trees, 2 barrels syrup, 1 bolt canvass, 1 parcel, 1 plough, 3 packages, Stuart, Kinross, & Co.; 1 pckg, J. J. Kelly: 20 bags salt, Maltby & Co.; 1 cask drugs, Barraud & Bridge; 2 ½ chests, 1 package tea, 1 case, 1 bundle, 1 vice, 1 trunk, 2 parcels, Begg; 2 cases, F. Lawrence; 1 parcel Sutherland; 1 box, 2 bales leather, Robinson; 1 mattress, J. A. Smith; 1 parcel, J. Wood; 2 casks sugar, 1 box soap, 1 bale woolpacks, order. Passengers.—Messrs. G. Hunter, Alexander M’Lean, Captain Carlyon, Mr. Day, Miss M’Lean, Mrs. Kennedy.—Stuart, Kinross, & Co., agents.

July 29—*Eliezer*, schooner, 52 tons, Kean, from Auckland, with 6 iron ploughs, 1 hhd. ale, 6 cases porter, J. Marshall; 30 tons firewood, 50,000 shingles, order; 2 drays, A. Browne; 15 cwt. iron, 20 pckgs. sundries, 6 crates fruit trees, W. Kean; 600 posts, 2 tons potatoes, 20 bushels maize, order; 2 kegs tobacco, Richardson. Passengers,—2 females, and 4 Maories.—G. E. G. Richardson, agent.

#### SAILED.

July 29—*Sea Serpent*, schooner, 60 tons, Enright, for Wellington, in ballast.

Wiremu stayed at first with Alexander Alexander, as yet unmarried to Charlotte (Hārata Tawhi, who was of the Ngāti Te Ūpokoiri hapu of Ngati Kahungnu). But when, in the following year, Colenso “dined with the Govr. Sir G. Grey at Govt. House, as M.P. for Hawke’s Bay,” Wiremu was “comfortably residing with me.”

Colenso wrote of “all your boyhood here with me and in our going together among the natives” but he was a busy man in the 60s: MHR, Provincial Councillor, Exhibition essayist, elected FLS, starting work on the Lexicon, working his first term as School Inspector 1861–1864, building his house and moving from Waitangi to Napier. Wiremu later attended Mr Marshall’s school (which was to become Napier Boys’ High School) in 1865 and 1867, played cricket (when the boys “shewed by

their play that they had well profited by the physical training which Mr. Marshall so judiciously blends with mental and moral instruction,"<sup>5</sup>) won prizes,<sup>6</sup> and drew in pencil.<sup>7</sup>

**Going "Home" ▶**

On 25 January 1868 Wiremu was 16 and sailed for England, a passenger on the *John Bunyan*,<sup>8</sup> accompanied by an 11 year old Alfred Carter (see box next page). The voyage was uneventful, as a relieved father reported to the *Herald* in August.<sup>9</sup> ▼

We have already mentioned the arrival in England of the ship *John Bunyan*. We have been obligingly favored by W. Colenso Esq. with the following incidents of the voyage:—"The *John Bunyan* made Cape Horn in 24 days from Napier; saw no ice; was a whole week off Cape Horn—the Cape of storms—becalmed. On the Equator, on the 6th of April, she fell in with the *Strathallan*, also on her homeward voyage from Akyab, India; and, the day being fine and calm, Capt. Paddle went on board and spent three hours there. At this time, and for three days, there were ten ships in sight, all of which, however, the *John Bunyan* left behind. There was a bit of a race from the line to England, between the *Strathallan* and *John Bunyan*; the latter, however, got home 6 days before her. The voyage into St. Catherine's Docks occupied 104 days, 12 of which were spent in working up the English Channel. The *John Bunyan* experienced fine weather throughout; no storms; plenty of calms, light airs, and baffling winds. Provisions and water were very plentiful. There were lots of whales seen in the tropics."

It seems he did precisely that, for by 1869 Wiremu was attending Wadham House School in Liskeard, ▶ Cornwall, close to the Colenso family roots in Penzance. He won prizes there in 1870, as the *Herald* proudly reported (p.6).<sup>10</sup>

**CLEARED OUTWARDS.**

**JANUARY**

25—*John Bunyan*, barque, 520 tons, Allan, for London, with 832 bales wool, Watt Brothers; 400 bales wool, Newton, Irvine and Co; 203 bales wool, Kinross and Co; 113 bales, 36 bags wool, Stuart and Co; 5 bales wool, Routledge, Kennedy and Co; 10 bales and 10 bundles sheepskins, 406 ox hides, 16 calf skins, 17 qr-casks and 4 hhds (70 cwt) tallow, Watt Brothers. Passengers, Mrs. Allan and child, J. W. Atkinson, Masters William Colenso and Alfred Carter.—Watt Brothers, agents.

Sarah Carter asks, "Did William send his son 'home' (as other colonials did their sons) to be re-educated and re-socialized to improve themselves and undo the perceived effects of miscegenation. Appropriate education was considered one way in which a mixed race child could be cleansed and disciplined into European comportment?"

**WADHAM HOUSE, LISKEARD, CORNWALL.**

The MANSION is pleasantly situated, in the midst of Ornamental Shrubberies that extend over some Acres of Ground. The SCHOOL ROOM contains upwards of 13,000 feet, with Class Room adjoining; and the Play Grounds are proportionally extensive: indeed, the Proprietor has spared no expense to render this Establishment superior to any thing of the kind in the West of England. The Food provided is of the best quality, unlimited in quantity, four meals daily.

The COURSE OF INSTRUCTION is adapted to prepare Young Gentlemen either for the Universities, for Professional or Commercial Life, or for Agricultural Pursuits, as may be desired.

**STUDENT LISTED.**

TERMS.—For Board and Instruction, 18 to 25 Guineas, according to Age, Studies, &c.

**W. B. SANDERS, M.C.P., PRINCIPAL.**

## Alfred Carter 1855–1917

The Canterbury *Cyclopedia of NZ* ....

Mr. Alfred Carter, Landing Surveyor. Custom House, Christchurch, was born at Maraetara (*sic*), Napier, in 1855. He was educated at Mr. J. F. Haye's school, at Guernsey, Channel Islands, from which he returned in 1871. Entering the custom house in Napier as a cadet in 1874 he was appointed clerk at Gisborne in the following year and transferred to Wellington in 1879 as second clerk. Eight years later he was promoted to be landing waiter and in 1894 was transferred to Wairau as collector. He has held the position he now occupies in Christchurch since 1897. Mr. Carter is the third son of the late Captain J. C. L. Carter of the 53rd Regiment and formerly Superintendent of Hawke's Bay. Mr. Carter was married in 1878 to a daughter of the late Mr. Brooke Taylor, of Napier, and has three children.

Both boys, it seems, were being sent “Home” for schooling.

There is an August 1874 letter from young Carter to Donald McLean thanking him for getting him the job at Napier Customs. That in turn seems to have resulted from a letter from Colenso to McLean (11 December 1871),

*I wish to say a little concerning young Carter, (who left here in the “Keera” for Wgn. on Saturday, to join the Constabulary force,)—could you not possibly find some more suitable situation for the youth? I am quite sure he has very good parts, and with a little more teaching, would become quite an acquisition to any Govt. Department. He is also very anxious to learn more, & I think would get on rapidly.*

*So impressed was I with this, that I sent word to his Father, that I would give £50. (the utu of a section I have on the White Road) towards his 1st. year at Dunedin, if Carter could find the remainder. I don't know anything of the charges there: but I think you have influence with the Dunedin folk. And if the £50 I offered (for the section) is required by you for that purpose, you shall have it.*

Colenso seems to have taken a fatherly interest in the boy, for he wrote later (18 July 1878 to Andrew Luff),

*Alfred Carter (who went home w. Willie) is just married to B. Taylor's daughter—I don't like the match: she is a poor weak little thing.*



Wadham House, Liskeard: in flats today.

A NEW ZEALAND SCHOLAR.—We are pleased to observe, from the *Cornish Telegraph*, that, at the half-yearly examination at Wadham house, Liskeard, the fourth prize in the first class, for diligence and improvement, was awarded to Master Colenso of Napier.

### The Walsall connection

Wiremu's carte-de-visite was printed in Walsall. Colenso wrote to Andrew Luff (25 August 1875), then in London to educate his own sons at Dulwich College, "I had gone to B.N.Z. to arrange the draft for Walsall." And (on 19 September 1876), "I see 'you have been to Walsall': perhaps I had better tell you, privately, that I have wholly ceased writing to that place." And (on 14 November 1876), "I should tell you, *confidentially*, that Mr Symons of Walsall & myself—do not now correspond."

James Symons, a widower, had married Colenso's sister Mary Ann in Birming-

NAPIER JUVENILE TALENT.—We were much gratified on seeing in the *Cornish Telegraph* of December 22, that Master W. Colenso, late of Napier, and who, as may be supposed, enters into competition with English students under many disadvantages, has been honorably placed at the half-yearly examination of the institution where he pursues his studies—Wadham house, Liskeard, and which is attended by about 80 boys. The newspaper paragraph we quote is headed "Good boy's Chronicle," and is as follows:—"On Thursday, the 16th, the half-yearly prizes, and also the writing and monthly prizes, were presented. Including the tickets awarded at four separate examinations, but deducting forfeitures, the accounts stood as follows:—G. Clyma, Truro, 2375; T. Mills, St. Sampsons, 2248; E. Hosking, St. Martins, 2082; C. Mason, Callington, 2019; W. Colenso, New Zealand, 1708; J. Head, Plymouth, 1624; J. H. Couth, Liskeard, 1576; J. H. Mutteen, Plymouth, 1538. In addition to the half-yearly prizes, which were all handsomely bound books, prizes in money were given as follows:—Clyma, 2 writing prizes, 2 class prizes; Mills, 3 writing prizes, 2 class prizes; Hoskin, 3 writing prizes, 2 class prizes; Mason, 2 writing prizes, 2 class prizes; Colenso, 3 writing prizes, 2 class prizes; Head, 1 class prize; Couth, 1 class prize."

ham in 1856. They had six children. He had lived at Liskeard, but became a successful saddlery businessman in Walsall, then the English centre for leathercraft. It seems likely Wiremu visited his aunt and cousins in Walsall, and may have met other members of the Symons family in Liskeard. Why his father was making a payment to Walsall in 1875 (for the school? The photographer?), and why he later fell out with James Symons is not known. Perhaps interestingly, Walsall was in Bishop Selwyn's new diocese of Lichfield.

Ann Collins sent me an excerpt from William Jenkins' 1863–64 diary. Jenkins accompanied the Maori chiefs on their trip to England, and at Walsall he wrote (p.51),

... Dr Gordon proposed a vote of thanks to me and expressed a wish to have a large gathering of schools next week. Mr White thought the Wesleyan Chapel would be the place. Here a lady, sister to Mr Colenso of New Zealand introduced herself to me, and invited me to her house when we next came to Walsall. We hastily gathered up our baggage and proceeded homeward at 11 p.m. and reached Birmingham at 1 o'clock, quite worked up. These late hours are playing sad work with my health.

Did schoolboy Wiremu visit his other uncles and aunts? How long was he at Wadham House? There are few clues. Years later his father wrote to Wiremu (3 September 1893), "I should again tell you, that you have much to thank Mrs Tucker for... Mrs T. has always been your best friend in England."—hinting, perhaps, that Wiremu was unaware of his aunt Emily Tucker (nee Colenso)'s friendship.

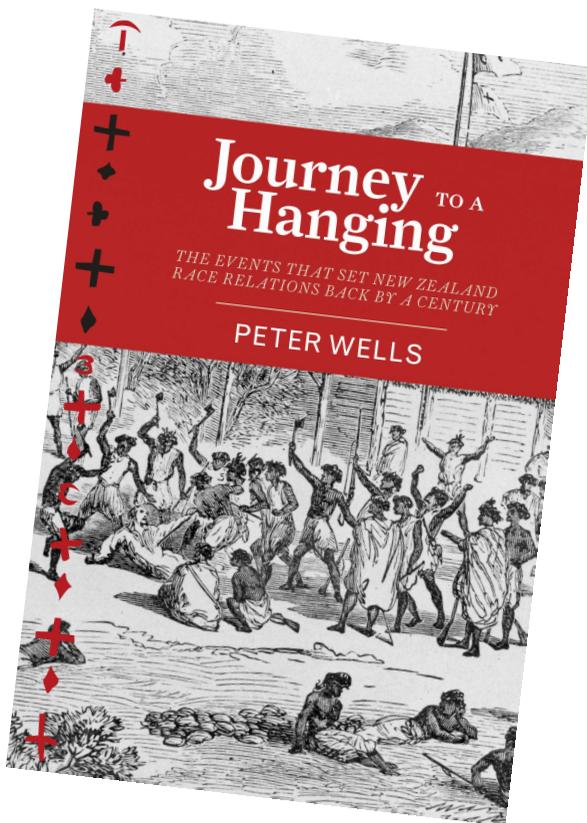
And to his nephew William Colenso (14 February 1897), enigmatically, "The best, truest, friend, that W. ever had in England, was Mrs Tucker, in that respect, Wm., far before my brother your father. As, in her case, all she did was from pure disinterested love—even, too, in some respects, against herself."

On 11 March 1898, the year before Colenso died, Wiremu was blind from an unsuccessful cataract operation (to be discussed in a future *eColenso*) and his father would write to nephew William, "'97 has been a sad year of great affliction to our family! Mrs. Tucker, & Edwin, Latimer's only child, daughter 18... myself, Willie, & then Mrs Symons.—May good result therefrom to us all."

## References

1. ATL Ref. 88-103-1/17; see *eColenso* 2011; 2 (11): 15.
2. <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/STS/Stshots.html>
3. Carter S 2013. From Hawke's Bay to Mount's Bay: searching for Wiremu Colenso. In Wallace E, St George IM, Wells P (eds). *Gazing with a trained eye*. Napier, MTG Hawke's Bay, 122–141.
4. Colenso W. Autobiography. Appendix G pp464–494 in Bagnall AG, Petersen C. *William Colenso*. 2nd edition. Otago University Press.
5. *Hawke's Bay Herald* 10 October 1865.
6. *eColenso* 2011; 2 (6): 20–21.
7. *Hawke's Bay Herald* 23 December 1865.
8. *Hawke's Bay Herald* 28 January 1868.
9. *Hawke's Bay Herald* 8 August 1868.
10. *Hawke's Bay Herald* 15 March & 30 September 1870.

# Journey to a Hanging



Peter Wells provides a vivid and colourful narrative of events which jeopardized race relations and shook New Zealand to its core.

*Journey to a Hanging* takes us back to 1865 when the Reverend Carl Sylvius Volkner was hanged, his head cut off, his eyes eaten, his blood drunk from his church chalice and his shrunken head carried around the country.

“The 19th century was a time of huge changes in Aotearoa New Zealand,” explains Peter. “Maori were trying to engage with all the new

forces of the global world and fight for their land, while the new migrants were suffering an extreme form of culture shock and reacting often with misunderstanding and incomprehension.

“By the 1860s (which is when my story is set) the situation had risen to a terrible crisis point — a kind of civil war erupted in the North Island and in the ensuing chaos Reverend Volkner, an Anglican minister, was killed in a shocking manner. This led to an explosion of anxiety in the Pakeha (and Maori) world and the killing became a global event of shock and horror. In turn this led to the capturing and trial and hanging of Kereopa Te Rau.”

Yet the question was — did Kereopa Te Rau actually kill Reverend Volkner? The issue is so alive that the Crown may soon apologise for the hanging. This makes the book very timely.

“In one way a historian is a detective. You develop a second sense and a great curiosity. You want to solve the riddle that lies at the heart of the story. This is what motivates you to move restlessly through archives, letters, documents and visits to historic places like the Napier colonial prison where Kereopa Te Rau was hanged. All the time you have to rely on your curiosity, your instincts to keep driving you forward. At times you lose your way, then you have to walk back up the corridors, or even take a break from it and do some other work. But your subconscious is engaged in solving the riddle, and to a degree, you can’t rest till you have worked out your own understanding.”

This is the story of the two hangings — the first of Reverend Volkner and then of his accused murderer Kereopa Te Rau. “I first became aware of the story in 2005. I did some initial research then I took up research for *The Hungry Heart*, my book on William Colenso.”

“I came across the story in Jessie Munro’s thrilling biography of Sister Aubert, the woman who will inevitably become New Zealand’s first saint. Munro talked of the duel for the soul of Kereopa Te Rau that took place during the night in Napier before he was hanged in 1872. I could see it in my mind’s eye — the urgency, the darkness, the sorrow and the pity.

“This led me to William Colenso’s fiery defence of Kereopa Te Rau. So suddenly I had two giants of colonial New Zealand befriending and defending Kereopa Te Rau. This alerted me to the fact that here was a remarkable untold story in our history.

“Sir William Martin, who like Colenso and Aubert, was a colonial figure of outstanding insight (New Zealand’s first Chief Justice) said at the time of the Land Wars ‘we have taken on burdens that are too much to bear’. He was speaking of the Pakeha world. He was right. Only now can we look back and accept that. I hope *Journey to a Hanging* helps people understand the stresses in our society in the 19th century — but also the really remarkable thing that, even at such a tense time, there were still voices like Colenso, Aubert and Martin that were raised to assert the importance of insight, understanding and, as I say, that most important of all emotions — compassion (and this means, at times, compassion for our own mistakes).”

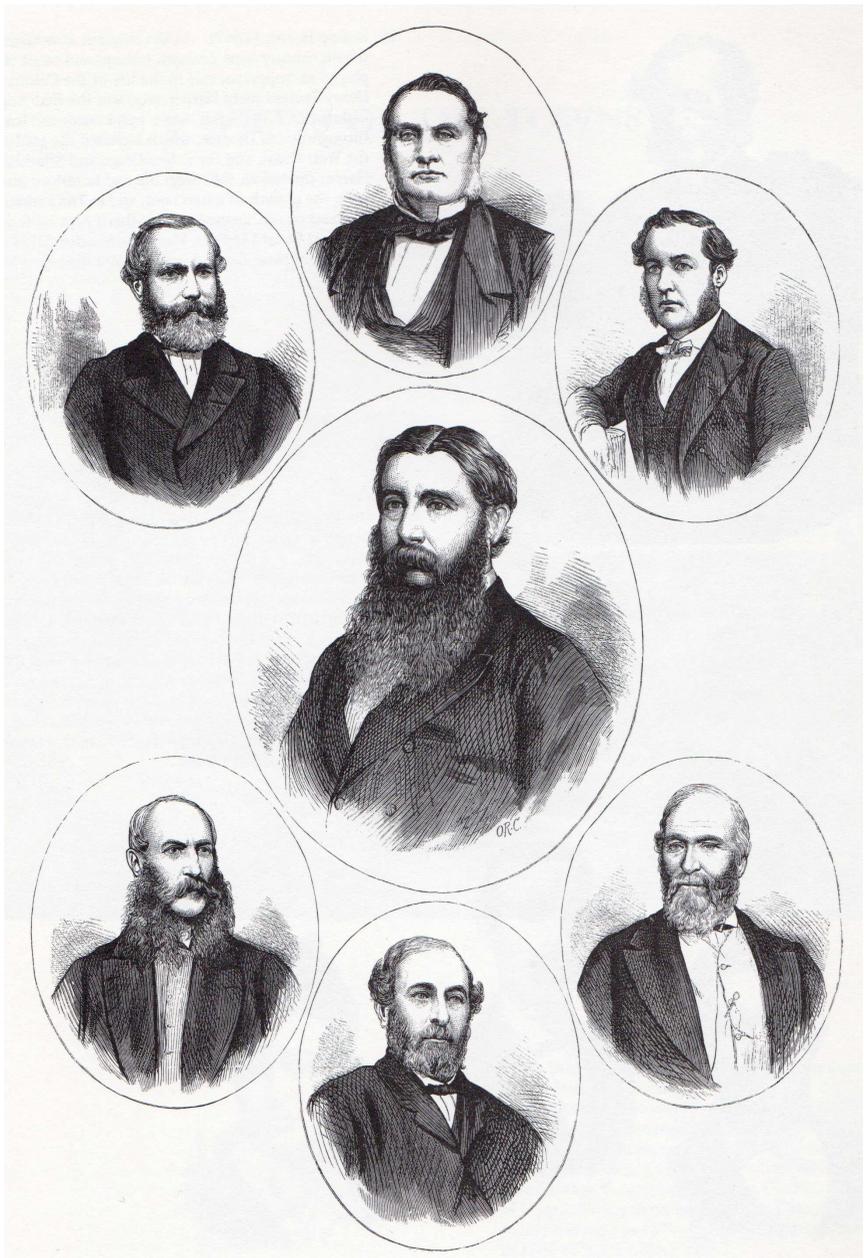
## **Journey to a Hanging**

Author: Peter Wells

RRP: \$44.99

Released: 04 July 2014

Imprint: Vintage



Who's on top here? The Vogel Ministry 1873. Sir Julius Vogel (centre) and clockwise from top left, Edward Richardson, Donald McLean, GM O'Rourke, Daniel Pollen, WH Reynolds and John Bathgate.

# Colenso's political career

By A.M.I.<sup>1</sup>

Colenso, no doubt fearing the domination by the runholding interests which became an accomplished fact from the inception of the H.B. Provincial Council, was not particularly in favour of separation from Wellington. So keen on separation were these same interests that it is said they threatened to dismiss any hands against it. There being 109 grazing licence holders with their families and hands, out of a population of 982 they could powerfully affect the signing of the petition.

A prominent figure throughout almost the whole of Provincial Government (1858-1876)—he was a Napier representative from 1858 to 1867 and again from 1871 to 1874, being Provincial Treasurer up to 1863 of the former period, and holding office as Speaker during the whole of the latter—from the beginning he identified himself with the town as against the runholding interests.

A staunch supporter of the first Superintendent Fitzgerald, he was inevitably as bitter an opponent of Donald McLean during the latter's Superintendency (1863-69), in opposition to whom he finally succeeded in building up a party nearly as powerful as his own.

He was also a Member of the House of Representatives from

1861 to 1868, finally losing his seat, together with his place on the Provincial Council, by an unwise and characteristically paradoxical support of Auckland separation, from the rest of N.Z.

His continued opposition to European settlement earned him ever increasing enmity, even the Maoris frequently objected to his opposition to their sale of land. He had a habit of making long speeches in the Council, two hours was frequent with him, and of enforcing his views by leaving the Chamber, or resigning and seeking re-election. In newspaper controversy he showed an astonishing gift of invective, and his letters were lengthy and not few.

The enmity which surrounded him from many quarters found expression in a merciless exaggeration of his foibles, which he had in full measure, like some greater men, and many lesser.

On Colenso opposing McLean and his Scotchness on the latter's election campaign at the end of 1862 for the Superintendency—a position Colenso appeared to think his by right, particularly with regard to native affairs, he being the "one man" for that—there appeared in the local newspaper a 13 verse lampoon, of which the following is part:—

"In his turn he came forward, to rave he began,  
He thanked his lucky stars he was a true Englishman.

He said the Scotch clique all around him did go,  
To try and depreciate Billy K'lenso

---

1. A typescript in the Alexander Turnbull Library (among the Bagnall papers, 88-103-1/24). I do not know who "A.M.I." was or when this was written.

Oh! Dear raggedy oh!  
Down with the Scotchmen said Bill  
K'lenso.

He raised too his voice against Donald  
McLean  
With the natives he owned Donald was  
once supreme.

Elect him for Superintendent? Oh, no!  
I'm the man for that billet, thinks  
Billy K'Lenso

Oh, dear! Raggedy oh!  
In native affairs none can lick Billy  
K'lenso."

Political controversy was  
carried on with real gusto in  
those days. McLean's opinion  
of Colenso's inveterate oppo-  
sition to land settlement may  
be seen from the following,  
spoken in Council in 1864"

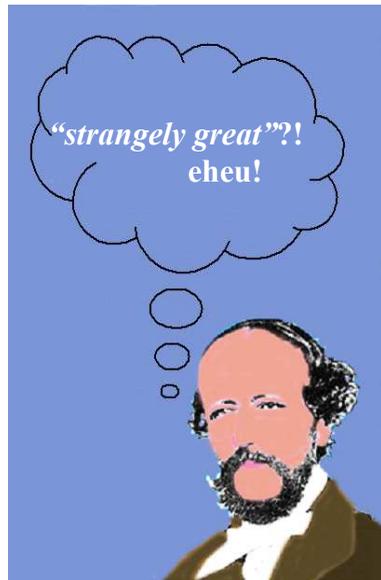
"From the time that the first  
European footsteps had trod-  
den the Ahuriri plains their  
advent into the province had  
been opposed by him (Colenso)  
and the same old song re-  
peated over and over again  
that the country was swampy  
and altogether unsuitable for  
purposes of colonization. Up  
to the present day his  
speeches had been delivered  
in the same dismal strain...  
Could recognize progress in  
no direction... everything was  
going backward."

None was more noted than he  
in the Council for factious  
opposition, but in many in-  
stances his opinion was  
sound. After land settlement  
became an accomplished fact,  
he transferred his opposition  
from the influx of Europeans  
as much to the selling of  
agricultural land as pas-  
toral, at an upset figure of  
5/- instead of 10/- per acre,  
a practice which was largely  
responsible for Hawke's Bay  
becoming predominantly a  
province of large holdings, a  
character which in some meas-  
ure it retains today. Had his  
voice (and Fitzgerald's) been  
listened to, N.Z. would have  
been largely in small agri-

cultural leaseholds, almost  
from the very beginning.

His work as first Inspector  
of Schools in the province, a  
position he entered and com-  
bined with his office as  
Speaker during his latter  
period on the Council, drew  
forth the unstinted praise of  
J.D. Ormond who reported to  
the Council as Superintendent  
that "the happy result in our  
schools clearly demonstrates  
and is largely due to the  
efficiency of the inspector."

He was connected in another  
manner with politics in after  
years (18-) in a long drawn  
struggle to obtain the means  
to assure him a livelihood  
while he completed his great  
Maori lexicon. But a change  
of Government occurred (18-),  
promises of funds were not  
kept, and his great lexicon  
remained an unfinished monu-  
ment to the linguistic knowl-  
edge and powers of one of the



From the *Daily Telegraph* 3 September 1886.

In a late number of the *Botanical Magazine*, Sir J. D. Hooker, M.D., C.B., F.R.S., &c., in describing a very rare New Zealand plant, "*Colensoa Physaloides*," writes thus:—"The name it bears is that of one who well deserves the name of the patriarch of living N.Z. naturalists, W. Colenso, Esq., the friend of Allan Cunningham, who botanised the Northern Island in 1838, the companion of Darwin in some of his rambles about the Bay of Islands in 1835, and the zealous aider of the naturalists of the Antarctic Expedition in 1841, and of whom it is written that 'during many successive years he has collected throughout the whole length of the Northern Island, with great care and skill, discovering more rare and new plants than any botanists since Banks and Solander,' and that 'in every respect Mr Colenso is the foremost N.Z. botanical explorer, and the one to whom the author of the *Flora* of that country is most indebted for specimens and observations.' Nor have Mr Colenso's researches been confined to botany; he was the first to bring to notice the former existence of the gigantic birds the moas, and his labors in the language, ethnology, habits, customs, arts, and manufactures of the natives of New Zealand are no less valuable than are his botanical ones."

## Botanising the subantarctic islands?

In the June 2012 *eColenso* we mentioned Colenso's seasickness, and quoted his letter to JD Hooker of 11 September 1865,

Sir G. Grey has been talking with me to undertake the visiting the Southern Islets, &c. – Auckland, Campbell, MacQuarrie, Emerald, – (but you know them all) – but I have been obliged to decline: it is not that I am too old, (though I can not now stand the wear & tear I have daily endured in travelling,) but, I suffer so much from seasickness! I never knew one to approach me in that abomination, (not even a delicate lady!) with me it does not wear off – I am as bad at the end as at the beg. of a voy., & medical men have assured me, I ought never to go to sea. But while I decline, I have a good (better?) substitute in Dr H.(ector)– whose fitness I have advocated.

It appears the idea had been Hooker's in the first place, for he had written to Sir George Grey on 3 May 1865,<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir George

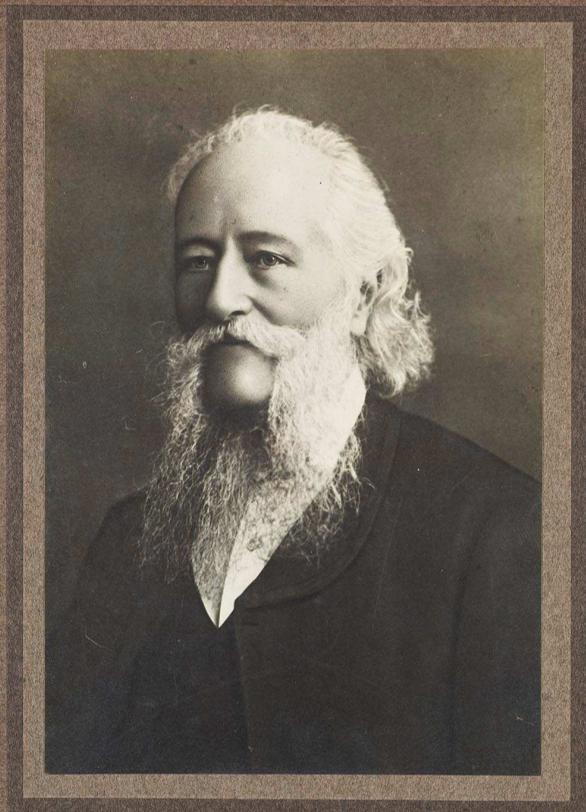
We have just received a stock of the finest smoking Tobacco seed from Persia. I am anxious to disperse it far & wide. The Northern Island of N.Z. may suit it & I therefore send your Excellency a packet.

My father has been seriously unwell this spring, with Bronchitis but is better—he desires his very kind regards, & hopes that the cases have reached you in good order.

I wish I could persuade the N.Z. people to send a vessel to explore the Bounty, Antipodes, Campbell Auckland & McQuarie Islands & put Colenso on board her, he is the best collector in the Islands, & I do wish he had gone on with his Botanical explorations.

Ever my dear Sir George  
Most respectfully yours

1. Grey collections (Transcription by Auckland Libraries staff).



William Colenso (1811-99)  
New Zealand's First Printer

A nice print from the series taken in 1887 for Coupland Harding's article on Colenso "New Zealand's first printer" in *Inland Printer* No.7 (1889-1890) p.504. (Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Wellington Office [AAUR W3549/110 P128 (R2152886)] *Glass Plates—William Colenso, NZ First Printer 1811-1899 (inscription on back of photo)—Donated to GPO [Government Printing Office] by FW Willey, (17 x 25cm)*

## The young printer in London

After his apprenticeship in Penzance, the 21 year old William Colenso found work in 1832 in St Ives, probably with the printer RD Rodda (who himself later moved to Penzance).

While he was at St Ives, as Bagnall & Petersen note,

William's growing concern over his spiritual state presently impelled him to a definite decision, and on 1st May, 1833, he formed a resolve that was to affect profoundly the course of his life. He felt constrained to record this decision, and for this purpose commenced a diary in which he daily set down his spiritual progress and his struggles with what he conceived to be his "inbred evil nature." In the opening entry of his new diary he wrote:

"I have for a long time past, about 6 years, been under convictions and drawings of God's Holy Spirit, but I can almost say that I have been striving to quench them, by entering more and more into the world. How many times when I have heard a Gospel sermon or read a striking passage have I been affected for some considerable time after—jeered by my acquaintances—and in order to banish the thought have entered deeper and deeper into Sin. I have therefore now made an agreement with myself to alter my course of life and live more godly. I have said my prayers regularly every night before retiring to rest for this 6 years past, never missed: should I go into bed without doing so, I should be sure to come out again before I could get any sleep, and repeat them. Now I do intend to pray mornings and evenings, to read the morning and evening service of the Church daily, and a portion of Scripture every night—may this beginning have a better end—amen!"

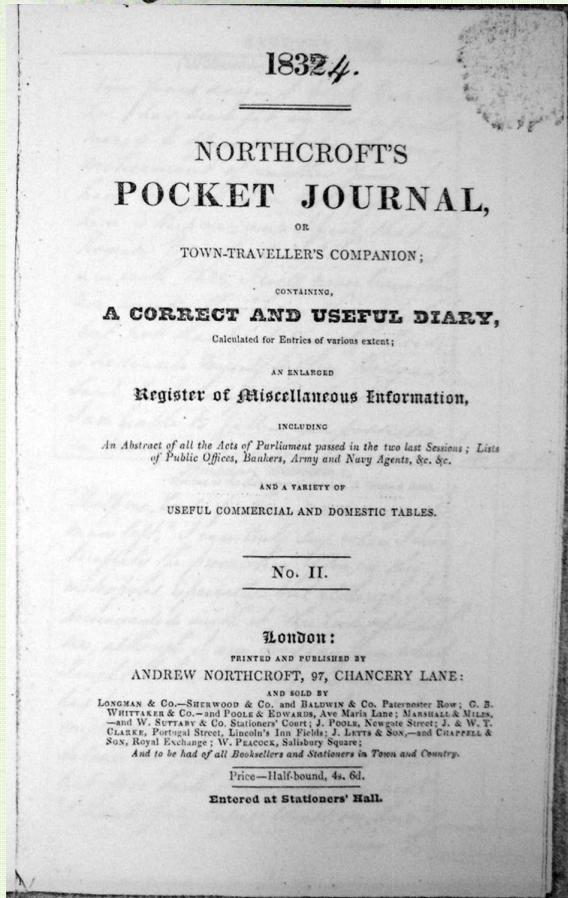
There is no evidence that the life William had led prior to making this decision was different from that of the average member of a respectable Cornish family, but a perusal of his diary indicates that his conception of the Christian life he was now constrained to follow was one which demanded energetic warfare with what he considered his "worldly disposition," and its ruthless suppression. The impact of this resolution on a strong and passionate nature resulted in a profound mental conflict; but having put his hand to the plough William, being William, must perforce drive a furrow that knew no compromise with difficulty, and no deflection from its objective.

In August 1833 he left his job at St Ives (and we don't know why he did) and in October RD Rodda presented him with an out-of-date 1832 Northcroft's diary (**overleaf**). Colenso changed the year and the days and started it on 1 January 1834 as a spiritual journal.

He went home to Penzance, but by September had decided to go to London for work, and on 16 October he set out, arriving on 21 October.

1837/33 1/2  
This Book was presented to Mr Colenso (on his leaving Committee for London) by A. D. Rodda, October, 1833.  
Began, as a Journal, by Mr Colenso, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1834.

RD Rodda's parting gift, an out of date diary.



Within a few days he had found work with Richard Watts & Son, of Crown Court, Temple Bar, printers for the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society.

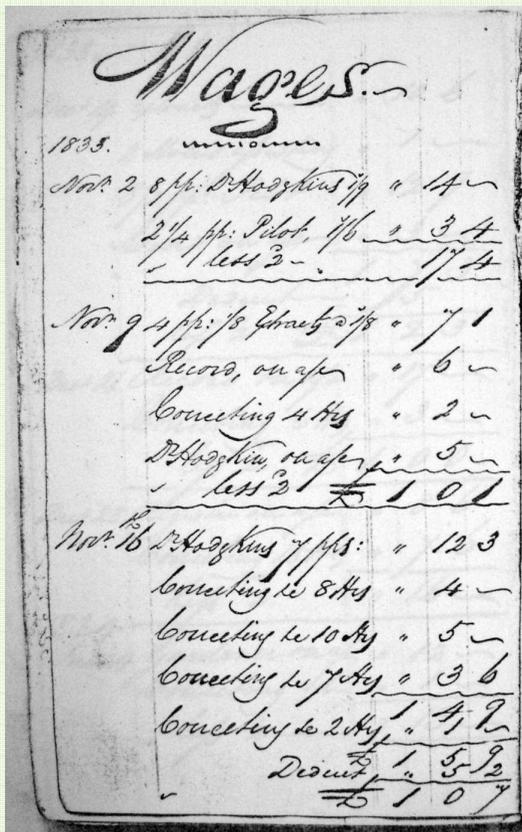
His diary of this period (he worked in London 28 October 1833 to 5 April 1834) is a small notebook, which he also used to record his income and expenditure, instructions for assembling a printing press, the nature of his work, lists of books, etc etc.

Many years later, Colenso wrote (in his "Autobiography"),

...through some of my religious writing (small pieces which appeared in the

"Pilot"), I became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Pratt, and, subsequently, with Mr. D. Coates, the Lay Secretary of the C.M.S., through whom, in the course of time, I was engaged to go out to N.Z. as a Missionary and Missionary Printer etc. etc. ... I may here briefly relate how those small and anonymous writings (referred to above) came to be known as mine. They were brought to be printed to the office of Mr. Rd. Watts, where I was at that time engaged, and my writing was detected, inquiry followed, and I did not, at last, deny the authorship.

His diary records the nature of the work at Watts' and I believe it gives important hints about the influences that led Colenso to become a missionary abroad. Every day at work he was reading missionary material.



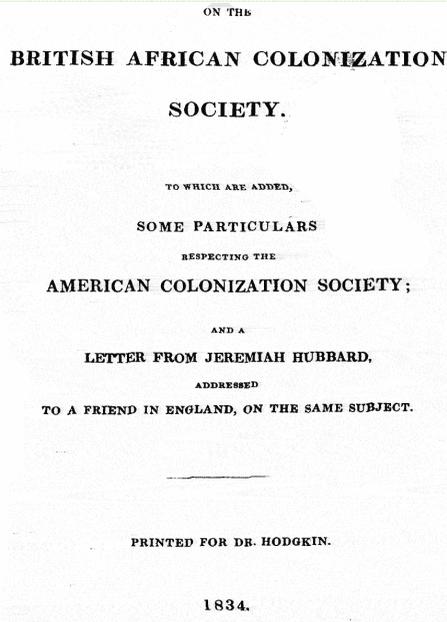
In his first week (ending 2 November 1833) he worked on 8 pages for *Dr Hodgkin* and 2¼ pages of *Pilot*. ▲ By January 1834 he was working on, among other things, *Gardener, Malagasse Psalter, Record, Register, Pilot*.

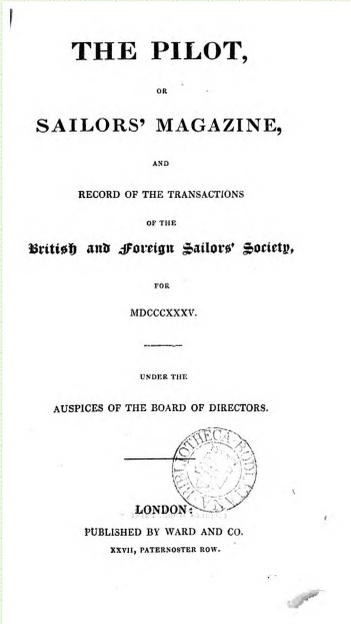
Thomas Hodgkin was the pathologist at Guy's Hospital, famous for his discovery of what would become known as "Hodgkin's lymphoma" in 1832. He was concerned both with the abolition of slavery and the reduction of the impact of western colonisation on indigenous peoples around the world. The Anti-Slavery Society took a different line on emancipation and colonisation in Africa and it refused in the early 1830s to publish Hodgkin's views. Hodgkin began to publish his own. He helped found the Civilization Society and the Aborigines Protection Society in London. He argued that languages constituted philological evidence of man's origins, and should therefore be preserved where threatened. His place in NZ history is covered by MI Murphy ([ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/10092/4670/1/Thesis\\_fulltext.pdf](http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/10092/4670/1/Thesis_fulltext.pdf)) and by AM Kass (NZ Medical Journal, 1988). Colenso was almost certainly working on his 1834 publication *On the British African Colonization Society*, printed by Richard Watts and published by Hodgkin in London. ►

Hodgkin's biographers wrote, "... biographers of complex and interesting personalities are faced with choices in the presentation. It is in the eye of the beholder that personalities are judged, and we took our role to be that of observers, but observers with feelings and biases. We were sympathetic and unhappy when injustices were heaped upon our subject for no apparent reason other than that his ideas were ahead of their time. Recognizing his propensity for placing himself in positions that would lead to pain and disappointment, angry as we uncovered evidence of the blatant expunging of his contributions to medicine by some of his contemporaries in the hospital in which he worked, we also admired the creativity, enthusiasm, persistence, and quixotic intensity with which he pursued reformist goals, goals which would not be received favorably by society until many years later." (Kass AM, Kass EH 1988. *Perfecting the world: the life and times of Dr Thomas Hodgkin*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York).

Those are sentiments very familiar to those who study William Colenso.

*The Pilot, or Sailors' Magazine* was a Christian monthly published by the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. Colenso had written material anonymously for it in 1834. (He wrote in his diary on 5 March, "I have written a little narrative for a





religious Periodical: Lord let it be to thy glory—do thou make it useful.”) I have been unable to find copy of the 1834 issues of *The Pilot*—but it is included in a list of books in Colenso’s 1834 diary, so a copy was presumably brought to New Zealand.

Malagasy is the official language of Madagascar; the Malagasy New Testament (*Ny teny n’Andriamanitra, atao hoe, Tesitamenta ny Jesosy Kraisty Tompo ’ntsika, sady Mpamonjy no Mpanavotra*) was published in 1835 by the British and Foreign Bible Society and printed by Richard Watts. There is a copy in the Grey collection at Auckland. Presumably Watts also published the Malagasy *Psalter*.

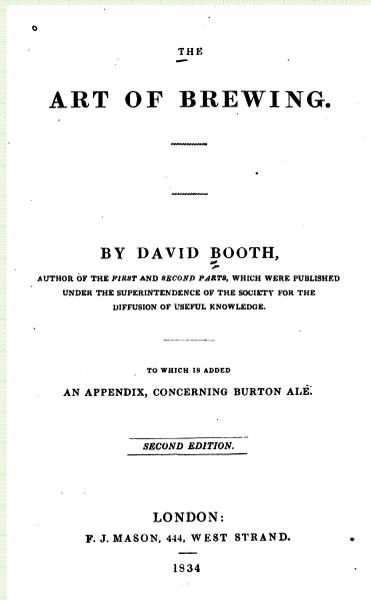
*The Church Missionary Record detailing the Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society* was printed by Watts. It aimed to be an “authentic and permanent record” of the Society’s proceedings particularly of the work in its missions.

From 1813 to 1855 the CMS also published the *Missionary Register*, “containing an abstract of the principal missionary and bible societies throughout the world”. From 1816, “containing the principal transactions of the various institutions for propagating the gospel with the proceedings at large of the Church Missionary Society”.

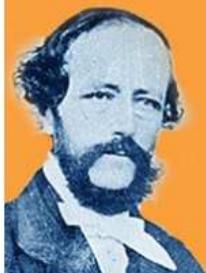
Colenso was also printing *Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch* printed by Watts in 1834 for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland.

All of this material the young William Colenso was reading at work—and he may even have been meeting some of its authors.

[He was also printing Booth’s *The Art of Brewing* which may have influenced his mature attitudes to alcohol consumption, ► and the periodical *The Gardener* which may have had some influence on his interest in plants].



## Colenso's collections



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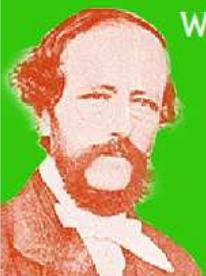
1833–1852



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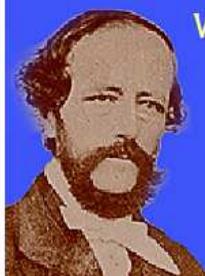
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