

eColenso

eColenso is the free email publication of the Colenso Society, 32 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington 6011: please forward it to interested others. Contributions should be emailed to the editor, Ian St George, istge@yahoo.co.nz.

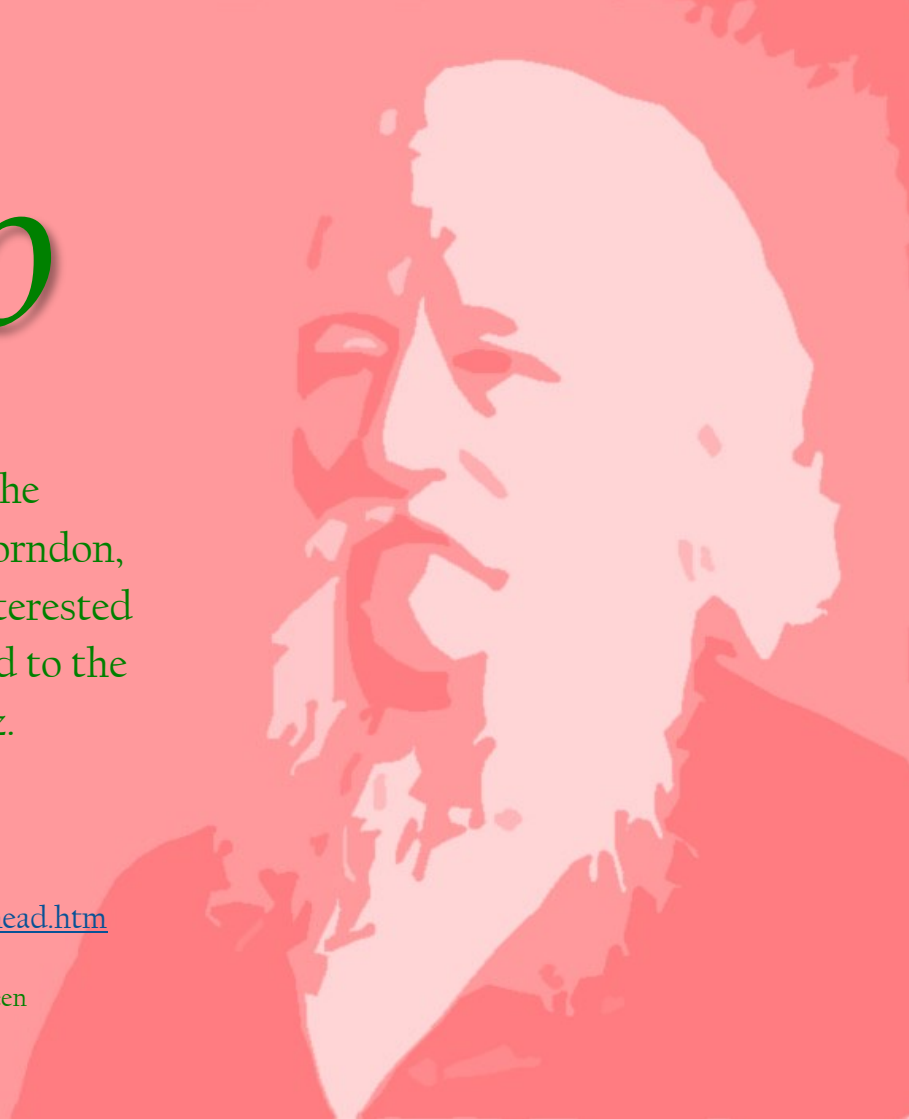
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<http://www.colensostudy.id.au/Newletter%20Masthead.htm>

"At ground level, all history is microhistory, accumulated and aggregated."

—Nile Green



Contents

Colenso Conference 2	3
The mission schooner <i>Columbine</i>	4
The <i>Columbine</i>	
Sold to the missionaries	
Gilbert Mair and the <i>Columbine</i>	
The emancipation of the missionaries	
Sold again—and again—and again	
Colenso and the <i>Columbine</i>	
What did she look like?	
Voyage to Castlepoint	
<i>L'Héroïne</i>	20
<i>eColenso</i> contents in 2016	21
Waitangi Regional Park	22



Please
relax
be safe
and have a
Happy Christmas

POHOTUKAWA.
METROSIDEROS TOMENTOSA.

PLATE 10

Colenso Conference 2

In the end it was a very successful conference – enjoyable, stimulating, refreshing, immersing us in that extraordinary world that was 19th century New Zealand and in the life and times of that extraordinary nineteenth century polymath William Colenso, his work and that of his contemporaries.

“In the end” because the Director and staff of the Stout Research Centre at the Victoria University of Wellington (the conference organiser) had to find a new venue after the earthquakes had closed Molesworth St and thus access to the National Library; because (for the same reason) the ceremonial opening of William Colenso Square by the Mayor of Wellington had to be cancelled; because (for the reason of a family death) I had to miss the first day.

What impressed me were first, the buzz of excitement and pleasure I heard about the first day; and second, on day two, the depth of research, the clarity and insight of speakers who had thoroughly researched their subjects, who were familiar with the contexts and mores of colonial New Zealand, who did not make judgments based on twentyfirst century concepts and dogmas and ideals, who understood the Māori and European men and women of the time, who were able to place themselves in those places and those times with empathy, intelligence and scholarship.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the people of the Stout Research Centre for achieving so much under such adverse conditions.

I enjoyed it; I learned a lot; I renewed old acquaintances and gained new contacts; I look forward to Colenso Conference 3—sooner than 2021?

Ian St George

THE WORKS

The complete writing of William Colenso, published papers, booklets, letters to editors, unpublished letters, journals, diaries, all as Word files on one searchable memory stick. Plus .pdfs of all copies of *eColenso* to December 2016. Plus e-copies of *Colenso's collections*, *Doctor Colenso I presume?*, Bagnall & Petersen's *William Colenso*.



\$50: proceeds to the Colenso Society.

Contact Ian St George: istge@yahoo.co.nz.

The mission schooner *Columbine*

William Colenso described his first voyage on the mission schooner *Columbine* in “*Memorandum of several visits among the natives on the E. Coast of New Zealand; performed during the years, 1836, 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1841; extracted from private journal.*” Despite his habitual seasickness he sketched several scenes.

1838. Jan'y. 1.—Went on board “*Columbine*” at 7. p.m., with Revd. W. Williams; and, at 10. p.m., weighed anchor: vessel full, slept on deck.—

2nd and 3rd. Slowly progressing, winds light: off Wangarei this evening: dreadfully sick—

4th. Off “*Mercury Isles*”: one of the outermost of these Islets, is worn by the Sea into a beautiful and majestic arch.... Made entrance of Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, by sunset.



5th. This morning I landed at the Mission Station, Tauranga; glad enough to escape the confinement, sickness, and monotony of the vessel....



12th.... About 3. p.m., went on board, the *Columbine* to resume our voyage; wind contrary, anchored under Maunga Nui; went on shore, collected a few more shells & Geol. specimens. Weighed anchor again about midnight.—



13th. This morning found us off the Tumu.... This afternoon off Waihi, where we landed Messrs. Chapman and Morgan, and their ladies, who were to go from this place to Rotorua by land. Great swell in crossing the bar at the mouth of this little river. Took a

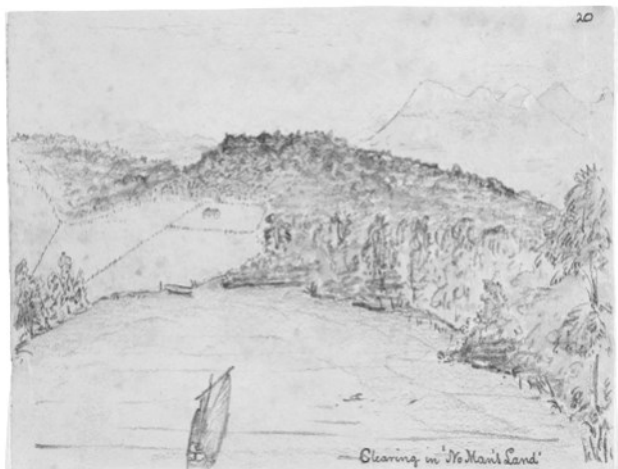
sketch of the place, collected a few shells; and, while Goods were landing, strolled up a little way by the river side to visit a party of natives, gave Medicine to the Sick child of the Chief. Returned on board vessel; set sail; passed White Island, a volcano, at about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles distance; much wished to land on the same; great quantities of smoke and steam arising from it, apparently from a long ravine extending from the shore to the summit of the same. As usual, very sick.



14th. Lord's Day. Off Cape Runaway; land very rugged, and high.

15th. Wind contrary; Warekahika (Hick's Bay) in sight; for which we were now "beating up". Anchored at 8, p.m.

16th. Landed this morning about 10 o'clock.



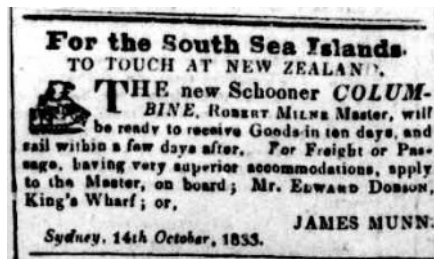
"Clearing in 'No Man's Land'," undated. [Mitchell Library: ref. PXA236 CY283; image 20].
A bay and mountainous hinterland from the sea, perhaps Hicks Bay from the Mission schooner *Columbine* in January 1838.

The *Columbine*

The *Columbine* is an important vessel in our history and I was surprised, in searching for information about her, at how little coherent intelligence there was.

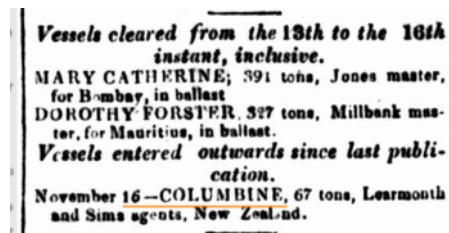
Newspapers preserved in "Trove" the Australian parallel to our "Papers Past", fortunately do contain a good deal of information about her.

She was a 67 ton wooden schooner built by James Munn of Sydney in 1833 [1]. The newly launched vessel was tied up at King's Wharf, awaiting the patronage of passengers and merchants.

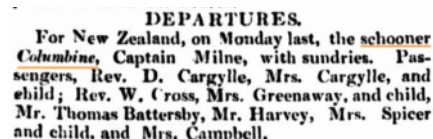


◀The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser
15 October 1833

They were slow in coming but at last she departed Sydney on Monday 2 or 9 December 1833,



◀The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser
19 November 1833



◀The Sydney Herald
12 December 1833

POLICE INCIDENTS.

SATURDAY.—Robert Milne, master, or acting master of the schooner *Columbine*, appeared in Court on information of Mr. Jilks, chief constable, for having refused to remove that vessel from the King's Wharf, where she was loading, to make room for the *Currency Lass*, which was ordered alongside the Wharf to discharge, and for which refusal, or impediment to the Harbour Master's orders, an Act of Council had provided a fine of £5, or six months imprisonment.

Robert Milne pleaded that he was not master of the vessel, and therefore, not liable to the penalties of this breach of law, if proved.

John Murray Gray, Deputy Harbour Master, stated that Robert Milne was acting as master on board the *Columbine*, and that when ordered by him to remove the vessel from the King's Wharf, he refused to do so, contrary to the Port Regulations.

Robert Milne.—I said that I could not remove her myself, but you may go and slack her off if you like.

John Nicholson, Esq., Harbour Master, stated that the *Columbine* had been alongside five or six days, he thought; and the Act limited three days to vessels under one hundred tons; the *Columbine* might be seventy or eighty tons burthen; she was loading at the Wharf, and the *Currency Lass* was waiting to come alongside to discharge. The regulation was, that a vessel loading should give place to one that wanted to discharge her cargo. If the Captain had given permission to remove the *Columbine*, it was Mr. Gray's business to remove her; and he believed the master had been so inclined, but he understood that the owner, Mr. Munn, had ordered that he should not remove the vessel, which if he disobeyed, he might lose his employment. The accommodation required now was rendered to Mr. Munn himself, but a few days ago. It was not absolutely necessary that the master should be on board when a vessel was removed from the Wharf, but the officers generally were.

The Bench was of opinion, on referring to the Act provided in this case, that no impediment or personal obstruction had really been thrown in the way to prevent Mr. Gray from removing the vessel, and, therefore, dismissed the case.

It seems she waited rather too long at the King's Wharf for patronage, for the Harbourmaster flexed his bureaucratic muscles...

◀ *The Sydney Herald* 28 November 1833

The Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser 4 March 1834 reported in its "New Zealand and Whaling News" column, that among "arrivals in the Bay of Islands" was

January 2. *Columbine*, Milne, [from Sydney; sailed for Tongataboo January 13.]

So she arrived at the end of her maiden voyage, at the Bay of Islands, on 2 January 1834 & left for Tonga on 13th. She returned to the Bay on 5 March to load potatoes from businessmen Gilbert Mair and William Powditch, as the *Sydney Herald* New Zealand correspondent reported, ("Mills" = Milne),

Arrived, March 5th, the schooner *Columbine*, Captain Mills, to load with potatoes, on account of Messrs. Mair and Powditch.

She sailed for Sydney on 12 March arriving on 27th (*Sydney General Trade List* 29 March 1834).

March 27—**COLUMBINE** (schooner), Milne master, from New Zealand, Learmonth & Sims, agents, 1412 baskets potatoes, *Campbell & Co.*; 239 baskets potatoes, *R. Duke*; 10 baskets potatoes, *Mrs. Battersby*; 1 cask arrowroot, 60 baskets potatoes, 1 basket tortoiseshell, *Munn*; 1 case slops, *J. Quigley*; 1 case papers, *Rev. Mr. Marden*; 1 case papers, *Rev. Mr. Orton*; 2 casks oil, sundry packages returned goods, *J. Dobson*.

The *Columbine* brought news to NSW ("the Colony") from unruly New Zealand and the potatoes met with approval. *The Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser* reported on 15 April 1834,

Extract of a letter from the Bay of Islands per *Columbine*.—"The natives are at present holding the great annual feast, and some talk has been about a war, from family differences, between Pomaree up the Kowa River, and the Nabooies River, at Kororadika. Some of the older residents think it will be attended with attacks upon the whites, but as there exists no animosity towards them from the opposite parties, others augur that the whole will end in usual talk. The feast will terminate in about a week, when matters will be better understood; but should there be any differences, the slightest show of authority or support for the whites from the *Alligator* (now supposed to be on the coast) will render them perfectly secure."

The *Columbine* has brought up a cargo of remarkably fine potatoes from New Zealand.

Captain Milne seemed to court trouble,

MR. GREEN.
SIR—At your request, I certify that the plan by which the wreck of the "Ann Jamieson" is to be raised, was projected by me, for which you promised to pay me £50, but from the breach of agreement on the part of Messrs. Grose and Street, and their singular conduct throughout the completion of the raising up the wreck, has been hitherto prevented, which I am sorry to say so much to your loss and inconvenience. I proceed to sea to-morrow morning.
I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
ROBERT MILNE.
Schooner Columbine,
May 5, 1834

Back to NZ with a passenger...

DEPARTURES.

For Newcastle, on Tuesday last, the steam-packet *William the Fourth*.

For New Zealand, same day, the schooner *Columbine*, Captain Milne, with sundries. Passenger, Mr. Thomas Florance.

... and back again to Sydney, with flax...

ARRIVALS.

From Newcastle, on Sunday last, the brig *Bee*, with coals.

From New Zealand, on Monday last, having sailed from thence the 7th instant, the schooner *Columbine*, Captain Milne, with flax, &c.

... and news,

The *Columbine* has brought up the man belonging to the *John Duncombe*, who was left as an hostage with the New Zealanders, for the return of that schooner, with some more property. It appears that the man contrived to make his escape from the savages at night, assisted by some of the persons on board the *Columbine*.

The *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* of 29 July 1834 reported goods imported into New South Wales from the islands and NZ via *Columbine*—including red wine (surely our first export of it)...

July 22.—*COLUMBINE* (schooner), 67 tons, Milne, master, from New Zealand, H. Bell, agent; 4 casks beech-le-mer, 10 tons pearl shell, J. H. Grose; 10 tons flax, R. Jones, & Co; 3 tons potatoes, R. Milne, 9 cases claret, 1 case hardware, 1 mat shoes 10 anchors, Order.

... and gossip, as the *Sydney Monitor* of 26 July 1834 reported,

The schooner *John Duncomb* left Launceston on the 23rd January last, on a trading voyage to New Zealand, and arrived at the Bay of Islands in about 17 days. A Chief of the Bay of Plenty was at the Bay of Islands, and he engaged with the Capt. of the *John Duncomb* (McLean) to take him to his own place, stating, he had plenty of flax to give him. Accordingly, McLean sailed for the Bay of Plenty, and arrived there in about a week, but not liking the appearance of the harbour, he bore away; he returned in ten days, and in attempting to get into the harbour of the Bay of Plenty, the vessel struck on the bar and stuck fast. After discharging the ballast, the vessel was got off into the inside the harbour, where the water was fresh. After lying there about six weeks, the natives robbed the people on board (capt, mate, and six men) of every thing they had, but returned the chests and their contents, save the paper (to make cartridges). The blankets, guns, ammunition, and the cargo, were all seized.

The captain and crew at length got the vessel over the bar into the main, but they left one lad ashore named *George Budd*, the natives demanding him as a hostage or surety for their returning to the port another time. The natives on their part promised to prepare flax to load the vessel

when she came back. The boy remained among the natives about a month, when receiving a note from an European, one *J. Taylor* (a servant of Mr. McLean, who was trading within 35 miles where the boy was prisoner), he ran away and reached the next tribe. This tribe being at war with the tribe from whom the boy had run, conveyed him to Voca hereny, where Taylor was; thence he travelled a hundred miles on the sea-coast till he came in sight of the *Columbine* (Captain Milne), who took him on board and brought him to Sydney. The natives gave the lad food, but did not make much of him. They are a new colony of natives. They consist of runaway slaves from other tribes. They are disliked on this account by their neighbours; and but for the hostility and jealousy between the latter, they would unite and extirpate or subjugate them. This slave-emancipated tribe consists at present of about 250 men and 300 women, with great quantities of children; it is daily increasing by runaway slaves, and if not interfered with, will become a powerful tribe. They kill and eat all the captives they take in war. There were about half a dozen chiefs among them, who seemed to have equal authority. They had not been established above eighteen months, and were still employed in building houses and planting potatoes.

The chief cause of the lad's running away, was the extreme pain he experienced in being tattooed. He exclaimed against this honour, but in vain; all he could prevail was to be tattooed on the back parts of his body, in lieu of his face; but they placed one ornament of the kind on his chin; and the figure being of a light and elegant description, does not disfigure him. As they


wished the lad to marry, and as he had heard of the safety attending such an alliance, he received this proposal with less reluctance than the one of tattooing. One of the girls having been accustomed to the society, and habits of white men, he selected her as his wife, and the ceremony was solemnized after the New Zealand fashion, with presents, prayers to their Attua. &c. &c.

Capt. Milne of the *Columbine* procured Captain McLean's watch and about 9 *l.* in silver from an American servant of Mr. McLean. When Captain Milne arrived at the Bay of Islands, he learnt that Mr. Busby had offered 50 *l.* to any captain who would go down to the Bay of Plenty to fetch up the crew. Captain Milne accordingly waited on him to offer his services. Mr. Busby told him, that since he made the offer, he had been given to understand the vessel and crew had got away safely, and therefore must withdraw his offer. Captain Milne then went southward, with the intention of calling at the Bay of Plenty; and thus the lad *Budd* fell in with him to his great joy. Capt Milne is to be applauded for his endeavours to aid the crew of the *John Dunsecomb*, to the utmost of his power consistently with his duty to his owners.

Two weeks later the *Columbine* was "refitting" in Cockle Bay (*Sydney Monitor* 9 August 1834),

COLUMBINE, (schooner), Milne master, Munn's agent, in Cockle Bay, refitting.

She was to be ready by September,



THE SHIP COLUMBINE.
 Captain R. MILNE, will be ready to receive goods, by the end of the present week, and sail in about fourteen days, for the Bay of Islands, and Tongataboo; for freight or passage, apply to the Captain on board, or to
JAMES MUNN.
 September 10, 1834.

... and the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* of 11 October 1834 would reported her off to NZ, the "Eastern Isles,"

PROJECTED DEPARTURES.
The Columbine, for the Eastern Isles, this day; the *Surry*, for Singapore, via Hobart Town, to-morrow; the *Sophia Jane*, for Newcastle, on Monday; and the *Caroline*, for London, the 18th instant.

The *Sydney Herald* reported on 13 November 1834 that she arrived at the Bay of Islands on 31 October,

The following vessels were at the Bay of Islands on the 31st ultimo:—*Elizabeth Currie*, of Hobart Town; *Guide*, Buckle, with bad success; *Proteus*, Brown, with about 300 or 400 barrels of oil, and the *Columbine schooner*, from Sydney.

Sold to the missionaries

Then the *Sydney Herald* of 29 January 1835 reported a change of hands,

To COLONIAL SHIP-BUILDERS.—The fine little schooner *Columbine*, recently built by Mr. Munn, of Sydney, was sold to the Church Missionary Society, at New Zealand, by Captain Milne, it is said, for £1,250.

Navy man Henry Williams had spotted the *Columbine* in May 1834 and wrote in his diary,

16/5/34 At day light a Schr. obs'd at anchor by the black rocks, which proved to be the Columbine schr. from Sydney.

He determined to buy her for the mission, *Saturday, 1 November. Fine. Examined the Columbine schr. with a view to purchasing her should she be a desirable vessel for the Mission. I was much pleased with her. She is a fine little vessel.*

Thursday, 27 November. The great question of the purchase of the Columbine brought before us, a difficult matter.

23 Dec 34. Columbine arrived from Tongatapu.

Saturday, 27. Gale at S.E. with heavy rain. Ret'd to business; at much difficulty respecting the purchase of the Columbine; however it was resolved to be done.

Gilbert Mair and the *Columbine*

Lawrence M. Rogers, editor of *The Early Journals of Henry Williams*, referred in a footnote to,

The *Columbine* schooner owned by Gilbert Mair and later bought from him by the Bay of Island missionaries on the authority of the local committee.

The Colonist of 17 March 1836 on the other hand, reported

... the schooner *Columbine* was purchased by the Church Missionary Society, from Mr. Munn, for we believe £1200.

Scotsman Gilbert Mair 1799–1857 first visited New Zealand in 1820 as crew on a whaler. He returned to the Hokianga in 1823 and 1824. On his third visit Henry Williams asked him to help build a trading schooner, the *Herald*, to provision the mission stations around the coast. Mair became the sailing master for the *Herald* until it foundered at the entrance of Hokianga Harbour in 1828. Then he bought land at Te Wahapu Point, south of Kororareka, and became a successful merchant and trader.

The earliest reference I can find to Gilbert Mair and the *Columbine* appeared in the *Taranaki Daily News* 10 January 1914, the writer confusing the *Columbine* with the earlier *Herald*,

He was a shipbuilder by trade and he built many small vessels for the coasting business, and was himself master of the first mission schooner, the little *Columbine*, in which the famous Williams brothers and other early missionaries voyaged along the shores of New Zealand carrying the message of Christianity to the heathen tribes.

He was never master nor owner of the *Columbine*, though he certainly shipped potatoes to Sydney in her. Henry Williams bought her from her Sydney shipbuilder James Munn.

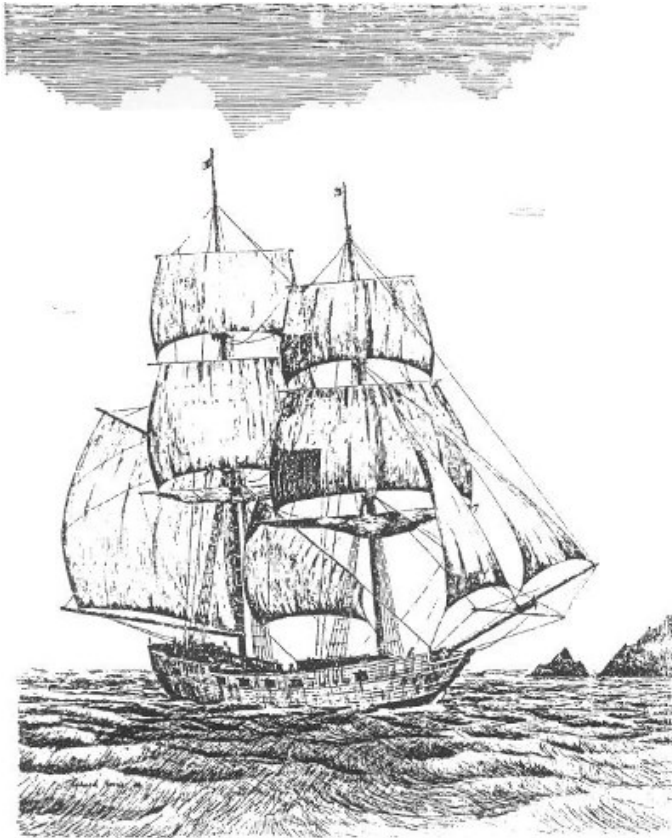
The *Columbine* was to replace the 1810 built, 120 ton brig *Active* (overleaf). The CMS Correspondence Committee for Australasia met in Sydney and refused to pay for the *Columbine*, on the basis that the NZ missionaries had not kept them fully informed. Williams was embarrassed and angry. He wrote that the *Active* was cumbersome, slow, expensive and dangerous and pointed out that the Committee's failure to sell the *Active* (which he saw as the real reason for their refusal to pay for the *Columbine*) was hardly the fault of the NZ missionaries. The arguments can be read in the ATL: Henry Williams's letters (qMS-2231) and the CMS minutes (Micro-MS-Coll-04-40). Clearly Williams had acted too quickly and spent too much, as her later sale prices testify.

The *Sydney Herald* announced the sale price to the missionaries as a "Notice to ship builders"—ie, that big profits were possible.

William James Lewington 1808–1883 had been mate on the *Herald* and master of the *Karere* before he transferred to captain the *Columbine* for the missionaries. When later (in 1841?) he entered into partnership with James Busby and Gilbert Mair in a timber industry at Ngunguru, Albert Stratton took over.

WP Brown 1814–1896 first landed in the Bay of Islands in 1836. For the next three and a half years he was mate of the *Columbine*, leaving her in 1840 to become a ship-builder in the Bay.

The merchant Gilbert Mair's cashbook for 1837–1839 is in the Grey Collections at Auckland City Libraries; Mair carefully recorded sales of merchandise to customers—noting the occupations of landmen and the vessels of seamen. The seamen from the *Columbine* in those years included Lewington and Brown, as well as "Tyrrell, H. Downing, Kelly, Henry Johnson, G. Gage, George Cardon, Oliver, Morgan, Windsor, Murphy, Cairns, John Wilson, James Anderson, Edwd. Wilson, Roseman." She had a steward, mentioned by Colenso in *50 years ago*.



The brig ACTIVE redrawn by Auckland artist Richard Horner in 1988.

Artist's impression of the brig *Active*: at 120 tons Henry Williams thought her too slow, expensive, cumbersome and dangerous as a missionary coaster.

The *Columbine*'s role in the emancipation of the missionaries

Judith Binney argued that at first the work of the missionaries was hampered by their failure to become independent,

The Maoris of the northern Bay of Islands believed, quite rightly, that they controlled the missions; they also believed that the missions were there to suit their own purposes, which had nothing to do with the Christian religion. Because the missions appeared to be manifestly at the mercy of their protectors, the settlers' attempts to persuade the Maoris of their moral inferiority and religious errors were hardly to be taken seriously.

Europeans would bring other Europeans and would increase trade, especially in guns: "Almost without exception, Maori tribes sought to acquire a missionary because of the trade they associated with him."

Economic independence was the first step towards effective mission work—perhaps one positive result of their land grabbing. Then there was a decline in the demand for muskets— "from 1823 probably every warrior in the area had a gun". A new leader, Henry Williams, arrived and prohibited the arms trade. And Maori were weary of war, sick of the carnage that the musket had made possible.

The second factor was the launching of the missionary ship *Herald*, which permitted trade with Maoris outside the Bay of Islands until wrecked in May 1828. She was soon replaced by the *Active*, the small cutter *Karere*, and, finally, in 1835, by a ship suited to coastal navigation, the schooner *Columbine*.

Once the missionaries were relatively independent of Maori for food, they could go further in search of congregations and classrooms. They could spread the word, that "word" translated into te reo and printed by William Colenso.

The mission schooner *Columbine* carried the books and the people.

MISSIONARIES AT NEW ZEALAND.

WE have been informed by a gentleman just returned from New Zealand, that the Missionaries (we presume those of the Church Missionary Society), are endeavouring to monopolize the whole of the trade with the natives, and that by means, which would be considered as compromising the character of any respectable person, much more so of those who profess to be teachers of the Gospel. We believe that the trade (that is, property for trading) sent from this port by the agents of the Church Missionary Society, is intended by that Society to be used solely as presents to the native chiefs, and as the means of procuring by barter, a sufficient supply of the necessities of life, for the Missionaries and their families, and certainly not for the purchase of lands, flax, pork, &c., as we are informed is the case at present. From the same authority, also, we learn that, in order to prevent the natives from trading with masters of vessels, they tell them that all captains of ships, but particularly whalers, are demons, but that they, the Missionaries, are God's people, and are sent to New Zealand by him—of course we receive this information with a few grains of salt, knowing as we do, that some of the whalers are no better than they should be, and that if the Missionaries restrict the natives from trading with them, which they may find it necessary to do, to a certain extent, they will magnify the circumstance to the prejudice of the Missionaries. Upwards of twelve months since, the schooner *Columbine* was purchased by the Church Missionary Society, from Mr. Munn, for we believe 1200*l*. It is reported that she is employed trading to the various ports of New Zealand for flax, &c. Certain it is, that she has not been here for a long time, and it is equally certain that the *Columbine's* dancing to and fro along the coast cannot greatly promote the instruction of the savages in the doctrines of Christianity.

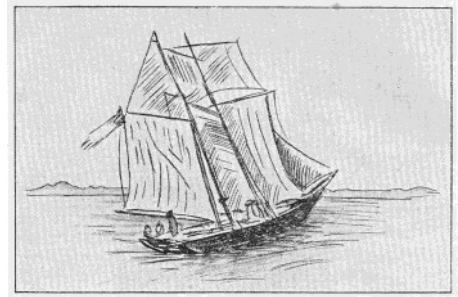
◀ *The Colonist* of 17 March 1836 was deeply suspicious of the missionaries' trading activities, but over the next 10 years *Columbine* was to carry many of the important churchman-teachers of New Zealand's formative years. Eventually, though, the economics didn't stack up. Colenso to the CMS secretaries on 24 January 1840:

... our Vessel, the Columbine, might, in my humble opinion, be dispensed with: at present there are general vessels from the size of the Columbine downwards, trading to several ports and harbours in N. Zealand, to all places where we have Stations; and their number is annually increasing. And, I think it will be seen in the last year's accounts, that some hundreds of pounds have been expended in Shipping, exclusive of what the Columbine has cost. I don't wish to say too much on these subjects, my dear Sirs,—yet, whilst I would remember that there is "a time to be silent," I must, also, to do my duty, remember that there is "a time to speak".

1841 November 17: to the CMS Secretaries,

The Columbine has not yet been offered for sale. In fact, another vessel is spoken of as about being purchased!

Colenso may have been referring to Selwyn's imminent purchase of the *Undine*, a 23 ton two masted topsail schooner he used around the coast.



The college schooner *Undine*, from Selwyn's sketch

On 14 January 1842. Captain Stratton was fined £50 for a pennant being hung out on the *Columbine*, while the people were at church on Sunday.

Sold again

15 April 1843: Colenso to Mair,

The Columbine is sold to Stratton for £600;—I suppose he will have a £100 for this first voyage.

She arrived at Whanganui on 30 April 1843. Sadly, it wasn't such a successful voyage for new owner Albert Stratton—the *New Zea-*

land Colonist and Port Nicholson Advertiser of 26 May 1843 published a letter from "K" (15 May), detailing the events,

To the Editor of the New Zealand Colonist.

SIR,—I regret to acquaint you that the *Columbine* schooner is stranded inside the entrance of the Wanganui.

This little vessel lately came from the north, chartered by the Rev. Mr. Taylor. Captain Stretton, unacquainted with the coast, and not seeing any landmarks, went to Kapiti, and there taking a pilot, entered our river in safety. On Friday he cleared for Port Nicholson, and was being towed out by some Maories, when the vessel touched on the South Spit; the natives, scared by the mishap, cast off the tow-line, pulled ashore, and made off, leaving the captain comparatively helpless, his own small boat not being available. With an ebbing tide and a dead calm, and the vessel being of an exceedingly sharp build, she soon became fixed; succeeding tides banked up the sand, and she now lies bedded to her copper.

The local Magistrates were not aware of any peril to the vessel until late on Saturday night, and then only from rumor. On Sunday they invited the co-operation of the inhabitants, in an attempt to get her afloat, which was readily granted, and several boats went down, but on arrival, they found the captain of opinion that nothing effectual could be done.

The *New Zealand Colonist and Port Nicholson Advertiser* reported (9 June),

The *Columbine* schooner, which tailed on the South Spit in the Wanganui River, was got off with damage. Her keel was wrenched away, and she was brought up the river with difficulty, and unceasing baling out. Opposite the town she heeled over and sunk. Efforts are

making to float and right her for the purpose of repairs.

They refloated her, but that wasn't the end of it: Rev. Richard Taylor recorded (*Te ika a Maui*),

On the 8th July, 1843, a series of shocks were felt at Wanganui. The most severe one took place about 5 p.m., and lasted several minutes. It did considerable damage to the little settlement, most of the brick chimneys in it were thrown down; part of the gable end of the church at Putiki, which is built of brick, fell, the bricks falling into the pulpit, and smashing its floor, this occurred during the time of evening prayer. Providentially, I was from home, or, in all probability, the consequences would have been very serious. So great was the shock, that the earth opened in fissures, the chief one being in the bed of the river, which was deepened several fathoms. These fissures were parallel to each other: they were of considerable length, and diminished in breadth as they receded from the river. One in the water, which was very visible when the tide was out, was about two feet wide, and the last one which I noticed was five inches across; they were several hundred feet long. The

"*Columbine*," a vessel of 70 tons, was laid down on a bank opposite the town, to have her keel repaired. The bank on which she laid dry sunk, and left five feet of water in its place. Large portions of the cliffs were thrown down....

She must have soon been shipshape though, for on 23 Aug 1843 she sailed again to Whanganui from Wellington.

Over the next couple of years she traded in the South Sea islands, from Tahiti and Fiji, bringing yams, coconut oil, tortoise-shell and arrow-root to Sydney; back to Fiji ("calling at Auckland if sufficient inducement offers"). Mrs Stratton went too: *Morning Chronicle*, 12 November 1845,

9.—*Columbine*, schooner, 68 tons, Stratton, from Tahiti, 27th August, Navigator Islands 14th September, Vavau, 26th September, and Tongataboo, the 16th October. Passengers—Mrs. Stratton, Mrs. Proctor, Rev. M. Colena (Catholic missionary) Mr. Cotton, and Mr. G. King.

On Christmas Eve 1845 the *Wellington Independent* repeated a *Sydney Herald* report,

The schooner *COLUMBINE* has been taken up by the Roman Catholic Mission, to proceed to New Caledonia.—*Ibid*.

and indeed she carried priests and mission supplies to New Caledonia, then resuming her usual island voyages, arriving back in Sydney on 17 May 1846.


She was chartered by the London Missionary Society (*Sydney Morning Herald* 9 June 1847),

The schooner *Columbine* has been chartered to proceed to Tahiti, with stores for the use of the missionaries connected with the London Society, and will sail about the 16th instant.

She was back in Sydney on 20 November 1847, discharging at Kellie's wharf, and soon to be sold. The *Sydney Chronicle* 9 December 1847 reported,


The schooner *Columbine* has, we understand, changed hands, having been purchased by Mr. Robinson from Captain Stratton for the sum of £630. Mr. James Wilson, late chief officer of the *Wanderer*, has been appointed to the command of her.

She was soon back at work, under Captain Wilson, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 14 December 1847 reported,

FOR PORT NICHOLSON.
 **THE SCHOONER COLUMBINE,**
 Captain Wilson.
 For freight only apply to
J. B. METCALFE.
 December 14. 9424

Sold again—and again

She was soon on the market again: *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 February 1848...

FOR SALE,
THE SCHOONER COLUMBINE,
 68 tons register. This vessel has recently undergone a thorough repair, and can be sent to sea without any expense; has been supplied with new sails, boats, &c., and is in every respect well found. For inventory of stores, and further particulars, apply to
J. B. METCALFE,
 February 25. 3587


... and sold: "The schooner *Columbine* has also changed hands, having been sold by Mr. Robinson for the sum of £650," (*The Australian* 17 March 1848). A Mr Jackson was named Captain and agent. She was refitted for passengers and on 15 April took 53 people to Moreton Bay; the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported (29 April 1848),

THE "*COLUMBINE*."—This schooner has had a fine run, arriving at Moreton Island seventy-two hours after having left Sydney. She has already obtained the repute of being a fine passenger vessel; her accommodations being of a very superior description, and her arrangements very complete. Several of her cabins to Sydney are already engaged, and we understand that previous to her leaving Sydney all her cabin berths were bespoke for next trip. As Mr. Watson intends bringing down by every trip a number of labourers in the *Columbine*, her being placed on the line to Sydney as a regular packet vessel cannot fail to be of very great service to the district.

Henry Sargeant commanded her during this packet period but in February 1849 she was bound again for Tahiti with freight. In June she was back in Sydney after "a tedious passage of fifty-one days."

By September the Sydney papers were full of advertisements for passage to the California goldfields and in October the *Columbine* was cleared for San Francisco, arriving on 4 March 1850 after a 125 day voyage. On 1 August she was back in Sydney via the Marquesas and Tahiti.

She was again advertised for sale by auction "without reserve" on 3 September (see over-leaf). She didn't sell, and was re-advertised in the 5 September *Sydney Morning Herald*,

SCHOONER COLUMBINE,
 **HIS** fine schooner, so well known in the Moreton Bay and South Sea Island trade, is for sale by private contract. She is now lying off the Circular Wharf, and will be sold a bargain. Full particulars can be ascertained on application to
GEORGE A. LLOYD,
 Auctioneer and Agent,
 474, George-street.
 September 5. 4266

Apparently there were no takers and on 19 September she was to be re-auctioned,



SCHOONER COLUMBINE:

90 TONS BURTHEN.

THE FAVOURITE AND WELL-KNOWN TRADER
TO THE ISLANDS.

FOR UNRESERVED SALE.

Together with her Gear, Appurtenances, and
Stores, as she now lies off the Circular
Wharf.

MR. GEORGE A. LLOYD

Has been instructed by Captain Sergeant to
announce to Shipowners and parties inter-
ested in the Island and Coasting Trade, that
in consequence of his being about to leave
the colony, he has determined upon dispos-
ing of the schooner Columbine. She will
therefore be sold by auction,

WITHOUT ANY RESERVE,

At the City Mart, 474, George-street,

ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3,

At 11 o'clock precisely.

THE SCHOONER "COLUMBINE,"

68 tons register, but carries 90 tons dead
weight, and will be sold with all her boats,
stores, and appurtenances, as she now lies, and
will be found well and plentifully equipped.

The vessel being so well known in these seas
and in the coasting trade, as a fast sailer and
thorough sea-boat, requires no recommenda-
tion from the Auctioneer to any acquainted with
nautical matters; he will therefore merely re-
mark that she was built by Mr. James Munn,
who is reputed the most substantial and faith-
ful builder in the colonies.

Intending purchasers can inspect the vessel
any time previous to the sale, and an inven-
tory of her stores can be seen at the Au-
ctioneer's Rooms.

Terms—Liberal.

3323

Sydney Morning Herald 21 August 1850

SALE OF GROCERIES, AND THE SCHOONER COLUMBINE.—
We are requested to remind intending purchasers, that
Mr. George A. Lloyd's sales at the City Mart, this day,
commence at 11 o'clock, with the groceries and damaged
goods as advertised; the beer will be put up at half-
past 11 precisely, and the schooner Columbine will be
put up at 12 o'clock, and positively sold to the highest
bidder.—Communicated.

Sydney Morning Herald 19 September 1850

The *Shipping Gazette and Sydney General
Trade List* of 21 September reported she was
now owned by JS Hanson, a Mr Scott was her
captain and she was being refitted at the Cove.

She was reduced to carrying coal from New-
castle but she sank on 1 February 1851, as the
Geelong Advertiser of 1 March 1851 reported,

SYDNEY SHIPPING.

On the 1st of February, when the Columbine
was taking the bar at the Richmond River, she
struck heavily, but got off and proceeded up the
river, having nearly reached the usual anchorage,
when it was discovered that she was fast filling
with water. The Harriet and Jessie were imme-
diately alongside of her for the purpose of keeping
her up, but all their efforts were unavailing, and
she gradually settled down. The running rig-
ging and sails were saved, but the hull is totally
lost. She was a fine schooner, and owned by
Mr. J. S. Hanson of this city.—Sydney Herald.

She was only 18 years old.

Colenso and the Columbine

William Colenso made only three voyages on
the *Columbine*—the January 1838 voyage
(above), November 1841 to Turanga and
October 1843 to Deliverance Cove, Castle-
point. His seasickness prevented his travel-
ling by ship to missionary meetings during
his years in Hawke's Bay.

His 'Day & waste book' is full of references
to shipping printed material to distant mission
stations by the *Columbine*.

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Pegasus Press, 1961.
4. Judith Binney. Christianity and the Maoris to 1840: a
comment. NZ Journal of History; 1968.
5. William Williams. Christianity among the New Zea-
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6. Richard Taylor. Te ika a Maui. Wertheim and Macin-
tosh, London, 1855.

What did she look like?

The *Columbine* was a schooner. Ex-Navy Henry Williams always referred to her as a schooner, as did shipbuilder Gilbert Mair, and Colenso always called her the “mission schooner”—although the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* of 2 March 1844 called her “the brigantine *Columbine*”. Indeed the Wilkes Expedition’s ethnologist, Horatio Hale, noted that many of the Maori artifacts collected in 1840 were purchased “from the steward of a missionary brig”. Colenso’s sketch, from an impossible vantage and far from clear, suggests gaff rigging on the mainmast but a single spar on the foremast to carry a square topgallant sail. Perhaps she was a topsail schooner during her missionary years.

But see next page...



Two-Masted Schooner
gaff rigged



Topsail Schooner



Lynx: 1812 American topsail schooner



Brigantine



Brig





WAR CANOES AND MISSION BOAT.

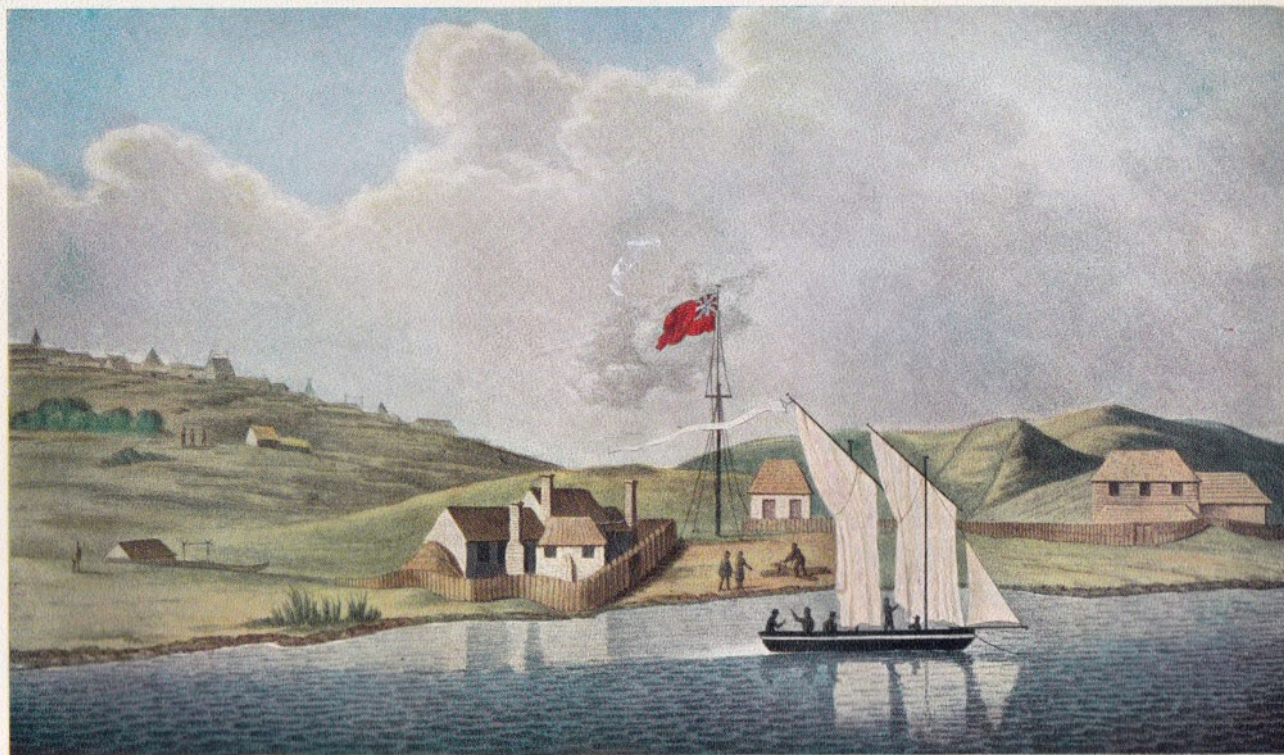
◀ The frontispiece of William Williams's *Christianity among the New Zealanders* 1867. Seeley Jackson & Halliday, London. Williams acknowledged, "For most of the drawings ... in this book, I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. J. Kinder and the Rev. T.B. Hutton...."

The "mission boat" here is a three masted Bermuda sloop. John Kinder came to NZ in 1865 and Thomas Biddulph Hutton in 1843: the *Columbine* was sold in early 1843. Did either of them ever see the *Columbine*? Or is this her successor? Williams's book is, in Colenso's understatement, an "imperfect work".

The Bermuda sloop is a type of fore-and-aft rigged sailing vessel developed on Bermuda in the 17th century. In its purest form, it is single-masted, although ships with such rigging were built with as many as three masts, and are then referred to as schooners. Its original form had gaff rigging, but it evolved to use what is now known as the Bermuda rig... the basis of nearly all modern sailing yachts' rig.



An 1831 painting, by John Lynn, of a Royal Navy Bermuda sloop



Lejeune Chazal delin.

Ambroise Tardieu sculp.

ÉTABLISSEMENT DES MISSIONNAIRES ANGLAIS À KIDIKIDI (NOUVELLE ZÉLANDE)

The missionaries bought *Columbine* in 1834; she was built in 1833; this Kerikeri scene was drawn in 1824, so it isn't she: reproduced in Elder JR 1932. *The letters and journals of Samuel Marsden*. Coulls Somerville Wilkie, Dunedin.

Voyage to Castlepoint

William Colenso's diary, 31 October 1843

This Evening arrived at Turanga. Columbine came into the Bay about the same time! Most cordially received by my good friend the Archdeacon.

November 1st. At the Archdeacon's request I accompanied him on board of the Columbine, it being his intention to proceed in her to Port Nicholson, and to return thence by Eastern Coast to Turanga; about 20 Natives went with us. Wind fair, we sailed about 7 p.m.

2nd. The wind suddenly changed, so we were obliged to put back this morning when about 20 miles S. of Warekawa, (Portland Isle,) and anchored in Wangawehi, on the N. side of Table Cape.

3rd. Sailed again this morning; beating about off Hawke's Bay, the strong current setting into which makes it very uneasy sailing.

4th. Very squally weather, about 30 miles from land; towards Evening obliged to bear up for Te Matauamaui, (Southern Headland of Hawke's Bay.)

5th. *Dies Dom*. Squally weather, off Cape Turnagain.

6th. Weather increasingly bad, under close-reef'd main and top-sail; very sick.

7th. Better weather, slowly progressing; Even- ing off Cape Palliser.

8th. Off Cook's Straits; Middle Island in sight; snow perceived on the high mountains, too ill to move out of my berth; afternoon, made Wairarapa Bay.

9th. Beating up and down Wairarapa Bay all day; wind greatly increased.

10th. Last night was one of the most awful weather, obliged to "heave to" in the Straits, the vessel laboured fearfully, and we every moment expected her to spring a leak; to- wards morning we found ourselves drifted towards Cloudy Bay, from within 3 miles of Port Nicholson, the lights of which place were seen in the evening of yesterday. Captain attempted to enter Cloudy Bay, but did not succeed; after some beating about, we were again obliged to heave to.

11th. Beating about all the morning in the Straits, without making any progress towards Port Nicholson, the current being so strong against us. Bore away for Wairarapa Bay, hoping to effect a landing there, being almost in want of wood and water. We could not, however, land, but, about 5, p.m., landed 14 natives and our baggage on a desert beach, at

a place called Pamoteo, hoping to follow them by return of boat; night coming on, and wind increasing (we, also, 4 miles from land,) we were obliged to take in the boat (when she returned at 9 p.m., amidst no little danger,) and bear away off the land.

12th. *Dies Dom*. A never-to-be-forgotten day! Battered down, lying-to, sea breaking over us, sick, and without temporal comfort. The Captain declared it to be one of the severest hurricanes he was ever in.

13th. Wind still blowing fearfully, in attempt- ing to go before it, as a last resource, we had our mainsail, topsail, staysail, foresail, and jib, all successively carried away. Found, on examination, that we had only 18 gallons of water, 20 lbs. flour, a few potatoes, and fire- wood sufficient for 2 days—and 19 hands on board! All hands immediately put on a pint of water per day.

14th. Weather still boisterous and wind unfavourable; a long way off the land. In serving out the water this morning it was found that a mistake had been made, and that we had only 5 gallons left! The Archdeacon and his Eldest Son (who had accompanied us) made a kind of bread with Flour, Lard, & saltwater, which tasted well: some gave up eating Salt Pork as there was no water to drink. *Our* hope was, however, in One whose word has never failed.

15th. After looking out all night in hopes of being able to land, the boat was lowered at this morning at ½ past 3, when we were about 4 miles off shore. We had not rowed far (10 persons in the boat, a dog, baggage, and water casks, and only 2 sound and one broken oar,) before the wind begun again to blow strong against us, so that we had no small difficulty to make way against it. As we neared the shore, we found, to our almost despair, the coast presented a perpendicular line of cliff, against which the sea broke incessantly. It appeared as if we must return again to the vessel, if we should be able to reach her, the wind having taken her considerably further off. In this strait, and after some search, we found a little opening, and got at last into a little harbour, just under Rangiwakaoma, (Castle point,) where we landed, and where I, (though I could scarcely stand through weakness, having never had my Clothes off and confined to my berth as well for 15 days,) in looking about, fortunately found water. GOD be praised for all His mercies! Having filled the casks belonging to the

vessel, and collected, also, a little firewood for her, (a scarce article hereabouts,) we lost no time in despatching the boat with these timely supplies. The Captain, a good seaman, was with us, and, as he could sail back before the wind, we hoped and prayed, he would reach his vessel safely. Our natives at length succeeded in procuring fire by friction, which enabled us to boil a little rice which we had from the vessel. While engaged in doing so, a party of Natives, seeing our smoke, came suddenly upon us; after a little conversation we agreed to go with them to their habitation, about 2 miles distant by the Coast, in a N. direction. This small village of only a few huts, called Waiorongo, serves merely as a resort for fishing for the Natives of Mataikona, a village about 12 miles further N. It was not without difficulty and pain that I walked so far as Waiorongo from the little cove where we had landed, & which I named Deliverance Cove. At the village we got a good meal of potatoes & crayfish....



Deliverance Cove, Castlepoint, eastern Wairarapa.

L'Héroïne

In Gilbert Mair's cash book for 1837–1839 in the Grey Collections is this testimonial from Jean-Baptiste Thomas Médée Cécille 1787–1873, Commander of *l'Héroïne* and his agent. Felicity Harper kindly translated it,

During the two respites that the war corvette Héroïne has made (from the 28th April to the 20th May and from the 18th August to the 26th September), Mr Gilbert Mair has furnished all the objects necessary for the vessel and imputable under divers headings under general maintenance and edibles [at the cost of] nearly 20,000 francs.

This merchant has rigorously observed the conditions of the commerce passed between himself and the receiving agent, and I very willingly leave to him this statement of satisfaction which will serve to recommend him particularly, to any French warships which might stop over in the Bay of Islands.

*Héroïne, 26 September 1838
Commissioner of the Admiralty,
(Signature)
Tupas of the Commander
Cécille*

Cécille wrote a report as a result of this trip down under. “addressed to the Minister of the Navy on the protection of whale fishing during the years 1837–1839”. That’s protecting whale *fishing*, not *whales*.

L'Héroïne must have taken passengers, for Allan Cunningham arrived at the Bay of Islands in her in April 1838.

*Pendant les deux relâches qu'a faites la Corvette de Guerre
l'Héroïne (du 28 Avril au 20 Mai et du 18 Août au 26 Septembre)
Monsieur Gilbert Mair a fourni tous les objets nécessaires
au Vaisseau et imputables sous divers Chapitres sous
le montant Général de près de vingt mille francs.
Ce négociant a rigoureusement observé les conditions
du marché et prouvé satisfait la Commission de réception
et j'ai bien volontiers ce témoignage de satisfaction
qui servira à le recommander particulièrement aux
Commandeurs de Vaisseaux Français qui s'y trouveront
la Baie des Isles.*

*Héroïne, le 26 Sept 1838
Le Commis d'Agence
Cécille*

Tupas de Commandant

2016 contents

16 1
The Tasmanian connection
Sampson Kempthorne
Josiah Pratt
Colenso falls out with Henry Williams
Nicholas Broughton writes to Henry Williams
The Briton's Land
I am but a plain man

16 2
Printing the résumé of signing the Treaty
The Office
Mr. Wade & the Treaty
Mr. Kemp & the Treaty
Waitangi as it looked

Supplement: *The Authentic and Genuine History
of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.*

16 3
The Colensos & the Governor
Mr Colenso
Mrs Colenso

16 4
Clem Earp: Colenso's Cyclopean wall
Napier cartoons revisited
Napier chromolithograph
Elizabeth Colenso's taste in art
Tapatahi

Supplement: *Colenso's sketches.*

16 5
Te Kuri Māori

16 6
Mr Colenso & Dr Hocken
Owls do cry
Willie's first English book
The demolition and apotheosis of John White
The ethnobotanist
Walking from Te Kaikokirikiri to Hurunuiorangi
Shock of the new

16 7
Conference programme
Clem Earp. Colenso's first foray into
Zoological Taxonomy.
Elizabeth Pishief. William Colenso and the
Promotion of Science in Hawke's Bay
Colenso's census

Supplement: *Kessock House.*

16 8
Whaling: an unpoetical and disreputable pursuit
Te rewarewha
McLean tried to dump Colenso in 1862
Nature's Colenso obituary
Colensoa physaloides
The Sydney Exhibition Medal

Supplement: *Ghost story*

16 9
William Colenso's *Māori Lexicon*
In *The Bush Advocate*
The Porangahau children
Colenso's Clint map
The moa lives!
Parrots for Wiremu the sailor
A most uncalled-for, most impertinent and
most outrageous letter
A Carnell compilation
An American off the Cape

16 10
Colenso's 1840 plant list
The Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute's
founding documents
The Earl of Derby & Colenso's grebe
Enteritis & Guillain-Barré syndrome
The trials of lexicographers

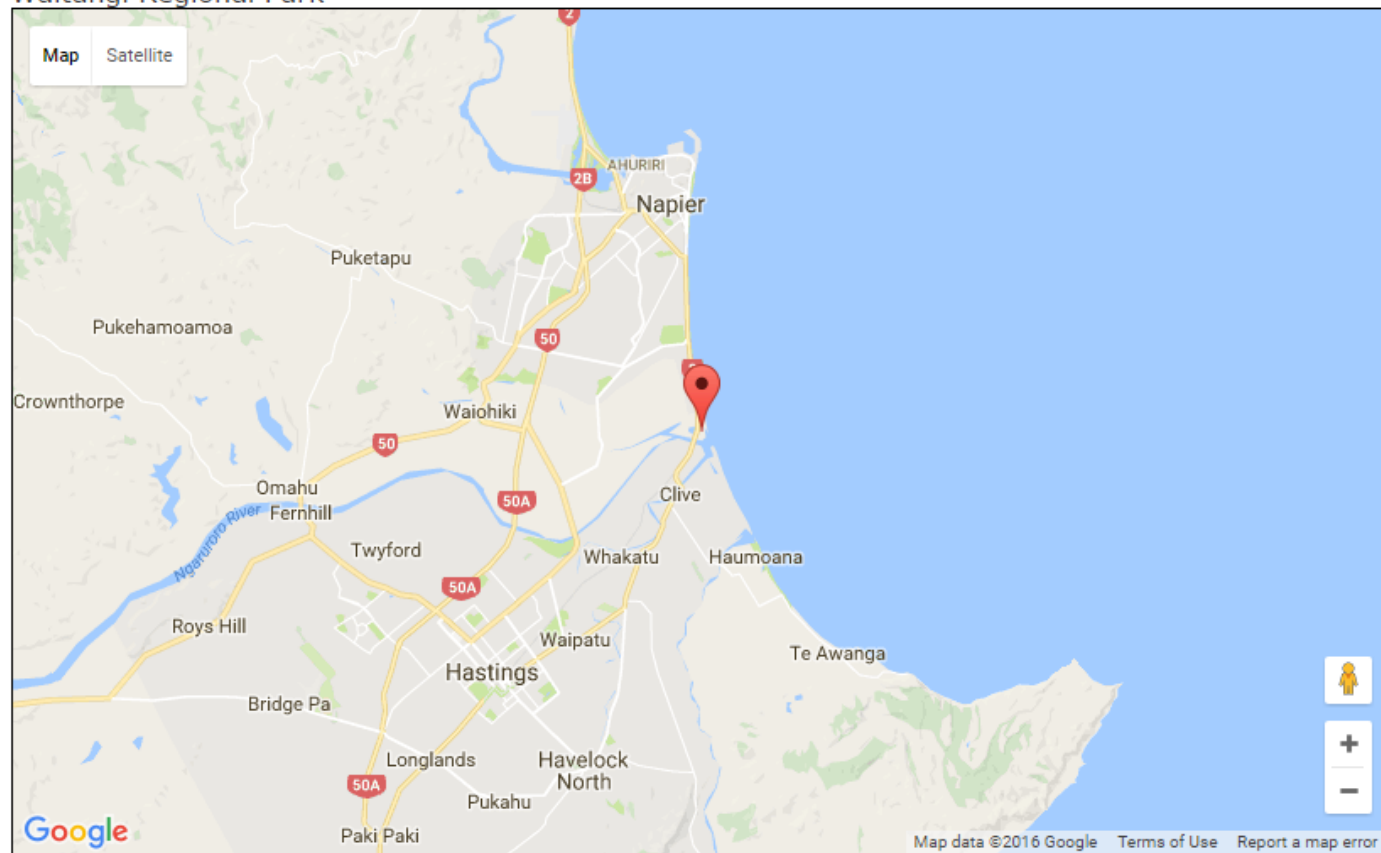
Supplement: *Bush botanical notebooks 1883–1896*

16 11
Colenso on truth
Colenso on lies
Who art thou? I am TRUTH.
Clem Earp: Colenso's first foray into Zoological
Taxonomy... continued: Patella solandri
Great oaks & little acorns
Alexander Turnbull in Napier
Colenso's sister's hussif
Brief von Colenso zu Suter
Latty in the Solomon Islands?
Koroneho, Neho, Nehu
Major General Robley
Tattoo pigment preparation
Latty the life saver
Sinners of Mataikona

16 12
Colenso Conference 2
The mission schooner *Columbine*
L'Héroïne
Contents for 2016

*All copy was written or collated by the editor
unless otherwise attributed.*

Waitangi Regional Park



Control-click [here](#) to see whats happening at the site of Colenso's mission station in Hawke's Bay