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CONTENTS

<i>Early New Zealand Printing Presses and Their Products</i>	149
<i>A Voice for the Training College Libraries</i>	156
<i>Survey of Newspaper Indexing in New Zealand</i>	159
<i>News and Notes</i>	163
<i>Correspondence</i>	169

EARLY NEW ZEALAND PRINTING PRESSES AND THEIR PRODUCTS

G. C. PETERSEN

When the first white people came to New Zealand they found themselves in contact with a native population with a Stone Age culture. Retarded by a lack of metals the material advancement of the Pacific peoples was still at a stage that had been passed by those of Europe perhaps four thousand years previously. A comparison of the tools and weapons of the Stone Age European with those of the Maoris of a century and a half ago shows a startling similarity in design and technique, indicating that at the two ends of the earth peoples possessed of equal intelligence had learned to utilise the same material in the way most practical and to achieve a similar result.

But while the European passed from stone to bronze, iron and steel, the Polynesian was still restricted to wood, stone and bone, the only durable materials available to him. This fact, and the continued

An address delivered at the Palmerston North Branch weekend conference, 3-4 October 1959.

isolation of the Pacific peoples from the outside world retarded their cultural development with the result that the first impact of the invading European was that of a highly civilised race with one still possessing a Stone Age culture and wholly illiterate.

While the Maori in his rock paintings and carvings was essaying to express to a most limited extent his ideas in visual form, the European had evolved or adopted a complete script enabling him to intelligently and intelligibly record his thoughts and ideas. With the Maori communication and interchange of thought must still be direct and verbal. He relied solely on word of mouth and a highly developed and retentive memory for the preservation of his folk lore and traditions. To him the European method of conveying a message by written signs was nothing short of miraculous.

The introduction to New Zealand by the Christian missionaries of the first printing presses was wholly actuated by their desire to render more effective and widespread their efforts to introduce Christianity. The history of New Zealand between 1814, when Marsden established his first mission station at Rangihoua, and 1833 when James Busby arrived as British Resident, was largely written by the missionaries. Their efforts were directed towards the introduction to a race of savage cannibals of the Christian ideals of peace and brotherly love, and in this they were stimulated by the efforts of the general white population of the Bay of Islands towards their exploitation and demoralisation.

Early missionary progress was slow, and the work was restricted to verbal precept and personal example owing to the illiteracy of the Maoris. It was, however, early recognised that the Maori possessed a high order of intelligence and could readily be taught to read and write. The need of literature in the Maori language for widespread dissemination was keenly felt.

The first step to satisfy this need was taken by Thomas Kendall who in 1815 persuaded Samuel Marsden to have printed in Sydney a small book of instruction. Only a few hundred were printed and of these only one is now known to exist. This is now in the Auckland Public Library, being an item of the Grey Collection. It is called *A Korao no New Zealand*.

Nothing further was done until 1820 when Kendall visited England in company with the Maori chiefs, Hongi and Waikato. He took the chiefs to Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge who obtained from them the information necessary to establish the rules of grammar of the New Zealand language and settle its orthography. The resultant work *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand* made it possible for the missionaries to plan the printing of suitable works in Maori.

It is easy to imagine the miseries Hongi and Waikato must have suffered at Lee's hands; the long hours they had to spend answering the ceaseless and, to them, silly questions with which they were bombarded. If Hongi knew what it was all about, it is apparent that he was not convinced that the pen was mightier than the sword, for we know

how eagerly he exchanged the presents received in England for muskets wherewith to carry out a merciless decimation of his countrymen.

Some years were still to pass, however, before the missionaries received the printed matter they needed so badly. In 1827 and 1830 Rev. William Yate superintended the printing at Sydney of portions of the Bible, hymns, etc., in Maori. These supplies were totally inadequate, the issue of 1830 being of only 550 copies. The need of a press in New Zealand, where it would be immediately under the supervision of the missionaries, became increasingly urgent.

THE MISSIONARY PRESSES

After supervising the Sydney printings of 1830 Yate paid a visit to England and on his return to New Zealand brought with him a small press, the first to come to this country. He got to work with it and on 1 September 1830 he recorded "Employed with James Smith in printing off a few hymns in the native language. We succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations." This success was not followed by much in the way of production, for all that issued from the press was a short catechism and a few sheets of hymns. None of the hymn sheets seem to have survived, and only two copies of the catechism are known, one in the Alexander Turnbull Library at Wellington, and the other in the Grey Collection in the Auckland Public Library.

After this effort the press lay idle in the mission store at Kerikeri, and it has been determined as the result of research by Dr W. J. Cameron of Auckland University that this was the press that was sold to Benjamin Isaacs, the proprietor of *The Bay of Islands Advocate* at Kororareka who removed it to Sydney and used it there.

It was not until December 1834 that another press arrived in New Zealand. This was for the use of the Church Missionary Society at Paihia and was in the charge of William Colenso. Colenso was a professional printer and his work was of high standard. Under his hands the press produced what the missionaries had long waited for, a large quantity of printed matter in Maori dealing with all phases of the Mission's work. Such was the industry of the printer that it has been calculated that during the first five years over 74,100 books of four pages and over came from the press. Colenso's first book, printed under great difficulty owing to the absence of equipment, was issued on 17 February 1835. It was *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians and the Ephesians*. Many other works followed, but Colenso's most famous work was the New Testament in Maori which appeared on 30 December 1837. The products of Colenso's press had a tremendous effect on mission work and were a major factor in the Christianizing of the Maori people.

With the removal of the printer to Te Waimate to study for ordination the stream of printed matter dwindled, and when in 1844 Bishop Selwyn removed to Purewa, Auckland, he took the press with him. Colenso used both a Stanhope and a Columbia "Eagle" press at Paihia.

but what eventually became of them is still unknown. It is of Palmerston North interest that some of the type used by Colenso found its way to Palmerston North and was used by the late Mr Alexander McMinn to print the *Manawatu Standard*.

It may be noted that this famous press was also connected with important events in the early history of New Zealand. When Hobson arrived in 1840 he called on the Mission press to print his early proclamation, copies of the Treaty of Waitangi, and other official documents. The first Bay of Islands newspaper *The New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette*, made its appearance at Kororareka on 15 June 1840. Governor Hobson used this paper for his official announcements, but when it became too critical of Government policy to please him, he used, or misused his powers to suppress it and consequently found himself without a means of publishing his notices. On 30 December 1840 Colenso printed the famous *Government Gazette, No. 1*.

The first printing in English in New Zealand was done on this press. It was the *Report of the Formation and Establishment of the New Zealand Temperance Society*. This Society was formed not, as some enthusiasts have proclaimed, to enforce prohibition in New Zealand, but as a means "of restraining and of diminishing the uncontrolled tide of Intemperance with which the Bay abounded." A formidable task in Kororareka in 1835.

Following on the advent of Colenso and his press the Wesleyan Mission, with headquarters on the Hokianga, had obtained a press which arrived in 1835 and was established at Mangungu under the direction of Rev. William Woon. This press produced a great deal of material, the first item appearing in 1836. Printing ceased in 1845 up to which time thirty items had appeared.

The Roman Catholic Mission had its headquarters at Kororareka. It did not obtain a press until 1839 and even then was handicapped by the absence of a competent printer. Only seven items were produced, the most imposing being *Ko te Ako me te Karakia* (377 pages) which appeared in 1847. This press was sold to *The New Zealander* newspaper in the early fifties.

EARLY NEWSPAPERS

While the Bay of Islands was the site of the earliest settlement of Europeans in New Zealand and the location of the country's first capital, the earliest organised settlement was at Port Nicholson where the New Zealand Company planted its colonists at Britannia, now Petone. Here New Zealand's first newspaper *The New Zealand Gazette* was established and got out its second issue on 18 April 1840. The first issue had made its appearance in London prior to the sailing of the colonists. The editor was Samuel Revans and the press was a Columbia. The main characteristic of this paper was a rabid criticism of the Governor's policy. It ceased publication in 1844. Revans with his *Gazette* preceded the first issue of *The New Zealand Advertiser and*

Bay of Islands Gazette by two months.

The anti-government bias of the *Gazette* annoyed many and a party of Government supporters brought out the *New Zealand Colonist and Port Nicholson Advertiser* in opposition. It did not prosper in the revolutionary if salubrious air of Port Nicholson and expired at the age of one. Revans's *Gazette*, being further from the vengeance of the Governor than its unhappy contemporary at the Bay, managed to survive for another two years. The vacuum was filled by the *New Zealand Spectator and Cook Straits Guardian* which sailed along comfortably enough, though beset by practical difficulties, until Revans, the erstwhile editor of the *Gazette*, who may have felt aggrieved by its modest success, slyly induced McKenzie & Co., the paper's printers, to insert a libellous advertisement without the knowledge of the editorial committee. The committee sacked the printers. The printers retaliated by bringing out a rival paper of their own. The *Spectator* purchased the leased premises and plant where McKenzie and his associates worked and ejected them. Even this blow was not fatal. A new plant was imported from Sydney and *The Wellington Independent* again made its appearance. The two rivals happily incorporated in 1874 as the *New Zealand Times*.

Meanwhile the Bay of Islands' newspapers also had their vicissitudes. We have seen how *The New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette* like Revans's *Gazette* was outspoken against the Governor's policy and was suppressed at the age of six months. The consequent *New Zealand (Government) Gazette* was really also a newspaper containing not only Government notices but also advertisements and news.

When the seat of government was removed to Auckland in 1841 the printing of *The New Zealand (Government) Gazette* ceased. The coast being clear, Mr Quaife, who had been the editor of *The New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette*, again emerged and founded a new paper, the *Bay of Islands Observer*, and, remembering past sufferings at Hobson's hands, commenced to castigate the Government more painfully than ever. He received warnings to mend his ways, including the threat of a libel action from a Government official who was later found guilty of serious defalcations, and after eight months things got so difficult that he had to cease publication of his paper. To prevent any further trouble the Government Printer was sent up to the Bay to purchase the press and plant.

For more than a year the Bay had no newspaper. Then *The Bay of Islands Advocate* appeared under the motto *Nil desperandum*, lasted for three months and succumbed. The glory of the Bay had passed. Its four newspapers had an average life of ten months.

Before we leave this brief look at a few of our earliest newspapers, may we turn nearer home to Hawke's Bay and take a glance at the origins of printing there.

The printer, William Colenso, who had made such an impact with his press at Paihia, had in 1845 come to Waitangi, near the present

site of Napier, as a missionary and the district's first white resident. Before leaving the Bay of Islands he realised the assistance a press would be to him in the mission field and ordered from England in October 1843 an Albion press and all accessories and this he took with him to Ahuriri where he arrived at Christmas 1844.

Colenso got his press into operation and in 1847 the first production made its appearance. This was *He Korero tenei mo Ani Kanara*, and was followed by a number of other items for distribution amongst his scattered flock. In his extremely isolated situation the printer found himself compelled to resort to expedients similar to those he had used in his early days at the Bay of Islands. He was handicapped by a lack of type and many of his Ahuriri printings give evidence of the way in which he had overcome them. Italic letters are intermingled with roman, there are mixed sizes of capitals, a paucity of h's is compensated by cutting off the lower part of a "b", and so on, but the printing throughout is of the highest standard. Colenso's printing ceased with the termination of his connection with the Mission in 1852. His Albion press, still in excellent order, is preserved in the Hawke's Bay Museum at Napier.

Five years were to pass before the progress of settlement was such as to justify the appearance of the *Hawke's Bay Herald and Ahuriri Advocate* on 24 September 1857. The *Herald* continued in issue until 1937 when it was incorporated in *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*. On 3 February 1931 the premises of the *Herald* and all its plant were destroyed in the Napier earthquake, but even this disaster did not silence it for on the following day it brought out in conjunction with the *Daily Telegraph* a news bulletin of one sheet. The series of bulletins that appeared during the following days provide an interesting example of newspaper production under the most difficult circumstances.

THE MAORI PRESS

We have noted that when Hongi said goodbye to Professor Lee, no doubt with a sigh of relief, he did not appear to have been convinced that the press would be of any practical or political importance during his time, and when he reached Sydney and a decent distance from his benefactors he sold the presents with which he had been loaded (excepting his suit of armour), purchased muskets, and with these proceeded to decimate rival tribes.

When Colenso arrived with his press fourteen years later the immediate interest of the Maori in his lead type was as material badly needed for bullet manufacture. With the issue of material from the press, however, the Maori quickly learned to read and write and his interest in written matter rose to a high pitch. He was insatiable in his demand for books and within twenty years the Maori who had just emerged from a Stone Age culture was thinking of a printing press of his very own.

This ambition first took practical form in 1856 when Waata Kuku-tai, a Queenite chief of the Waikato, under the promptings of C. O. B. Davis, began collecting money for the purchase of a press. One was

duly secured and installed in Auckland, but nothing emanated from it until 1861 when *Ko Aotea or The Maori Recorder* made its appearance. At that time the Maori War was brewing and the Government regarded with suspicion the expression in print of Maori opinion. In 1865 Davis himself was prosecuted for sedition because of a leaflet he was said to have written, but which proved to be the expression of opinion of loyal Queenite chiefs. After this episode the press seems to have discontinued printing and nothing further is known of it.

A far more romantic story tells the history of another Maori press that operated contemporaneously with that set up by Kukutai and Davis.

The Austrian frigate *Novara* had come to Auckland in 1858. When it left Auckland in January 1859 it had on board two Maoris, Wiremu Toetoe, a postman, and Hemara Rerehau. When they got to Austria they were made much of and shown many wonderful things. They were of opinion that the noblest invention of the Pakeha was the railway engine, but chose as the gift to take with them back to New Zealand a printing press.

This press was first set up at Mangere. It seems that Toetoe and Rerehau were given little say in its working and political interests gently shouldered them out. Toetoe was soon carrying letters again.

The new press was given the rather ominous name of *Te Hokioi*. Te Hokioi was a mythical bird whose peculiar night cry was said to be a portent of war. Nothing much is known of its early products but after it was removed to Ngaruawahia in 1862 it came into greater prominence. To the consternation of the Government a newspaper in Maori began to circulate in the disturbed Waikato. As a counterblast the Government ordered from Sydney a press which was to issue an opposition paper to be called *Te Pihoihoi Mokemoke*, "The Lonely Sparrow". This press was placed under the charge of the Government Agent at Te Awamutu, John Gorst. When it reached its fifth issue the Kingite Maoris lost patience and a war party under Rewi visited the printing house, confiscated the press and equipment and removed it to Ngaruawahia. Gorst was captured and threatened with shooting unless he left the Waikato. This he refused to do without orders from Sir George Grey. A letter from the Maoris to the Governor demanding Gorst's recall was ignored but Gorst was informed by Grey that he was free to use his own discretion. He left the Waikato shortly after.

His press was removed to Auckland and is now preserved in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The Hokioi press for many years lay discarded on the banks of the Waipa river at Te Kopua, but in 1935 it was recovered by members of the Te Awamutu Historical Society. Following the Waikato War several newspapers in Maori were produced but all under Government control, and it was not until 1895 that the Maori again essayed to control his own printing press.

At the present time considerable research into the origins and history of early New Zealand presses is being made, in particular by Dr W. J. Cameron of the University of Auckland, to whose papers I am indebted for some of the foregoing information.

A VOICE FOR THE TRAINING COLLEGE LIBRARIES

C. TIBBLES

Two incidents concerning the training college libraries have prompted this brief statement: firstly, the strictures in the Osborn Report, and secondly, the remark of a speaker at Conference that "the training colleges have no voice". As an ex-training college librarian (1947-51) I have some concern with both and an impulse to suggest explanations and possible first steps towards solution.

It certainly is strange, and requires some explanation, that while according to Osborn the training colleges have "adequate libraries" (adequate in stock and staff, presumably) they "are not doing anywhere near enough by way of instruction, reading or demonstration to give prospective teachers and school administrators a knowledge of the workings and capabilities of school libraries. If principals at present do not attach sufficient importance to school libraries, the oversight can surely be traced back to a failure in the teachers' college to convey insight into the part a library can play as a teaching medium". There are at least two points to be considered here.

The librarians are responsible to the principals to start with, and they have, it is clear, twin functions to organise the library for the use of students, staff and local teachers, and to instruct the students in the "workings and capabilities of school libraries". That is a great deal more than a librarian normally has to face: and librarians are not usually experienced in teaching, though some in the teachers' colleges have been selected with that qualification. Since the librarian is appointed to manage the library, that function rather naturally takes first place, the function of instruction coming second, though it is vital for the schools. If sufficient emphasis has not been placed on this second function, it is perhaps not the fault of the librarians. Lectures on school library procedures and on children's books certainly find a place in the curriculum of the training colleges, but have hardly been considered to form the core of the whole programme. If the use of books is not at the heart of our educational system, then I wonder